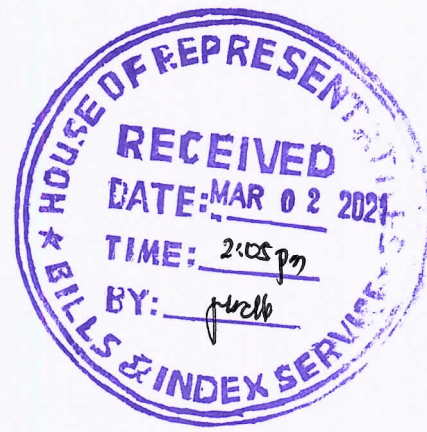


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

Eighteenth Congress
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 8859



Introduced by **HON. JUMEL ANTHONY I. ESPINO**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Trees and plants are being burned, degraded and logged at an alarming rate each year. According to tree facts and impacts of deforestation around the world:

- every 1.2 seconds, man destroys an area of forest the size of a football field;
- 20% of current greenhouse gas emissions is caused tropical forest destruction;
- 28,000 species are expected to become extinct by the next 20 years due to deforestation
- 48 lbs of CO₂ is sequestered by a mature tree each year;
- deforestation in the tropics increases the temperature by as much as 8.3 degrees;

Trees are the earth's best allies in fighting climate change. When trees are cut, they release all the carbon they have been storing back into the atmosphere which contributes more in the problem of global warming. In our own country, frequent flooding, soil erosion, landslides, and pollution are more issues that contribute in the problem when trees disappear. The challenge for us is to look for solutions in addressing these worsening effects.

The Constitution mandates the state to protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology, that is why this bill seeks a program that aims to bring about a sustainable solution. Tree-planting consciousness and responsibility need to be reinforced by starting them young through environmental education and the engagement of our youth. It should begin in schools by including it as part of the curriculum. We owe it to the future generation to develop among the youth a deeper understanding of the environmental issues confronting us to effectively make them participate in the protection and sustaining our environment for the future.

This bill mandates schools and colleges to establish tree-seedling nurseries within their premises prioritizing tree species native in the area. It shall also mandate students from grade levels 1-11 and those enrolled in the National Service Training Program (NSTP) class to plant these seedlings of native tree species and monitor its growth in areas suitable for permanent planting which will be recommended by the local government and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). All graduating students in all levels meanwhile should plant ten trees before they can graduate.

This proposed legislation aims to work in conjunction with existing environmental laws including Republic Act No. 10176, otherwise known as the "Arbor Day Act of 2012."

Given the importance of this endeavor, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


HON. JEMEL ANTHONY I. ESPINO
2nd District, Pangasinan

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AN ACT
PROMOTING TREE-PLANTING CONSCIOUSNESS
AMONG FILIPINO YOUTH THROUGH EDUCATION
AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT TO INCREASE THEIR
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT,
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines
in Congress assembled:*

SECTION 1. Short Title - This Act shall be known as the " ***Youth Tree-Planting Consciousness and Responsibility Act***".

SECTION 2. Statement of Policy — It is the policy of the State to adopt sustainable measures that will protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology. It also recognizes the vital role of Filipino youth in this endeavor as stewards of nature for future generations. Thus, educational institutions are mandated to intensify and ensure the integration of environmental education in the curriculum they implement. Awareness, coupled with actual engagement in greening activities, is the most effective means to shape and ingrain in young minds a stronger sense of social responsibility and proactiveness.

SECTION 3. Integration of Environmental Education in the Curriculum of All Students From Elementary to College Level. - Environmental studies shall form part of the regular Science curriculum for all students from elementary to high school level while it shall be incorporated in the National Service Training Program (NSTP) of students in college level.

SECTION 4. Establishment of a Tree-seedling Nursery - All schools and colleges shall establish a seedling nursery. It will be a place where tree seedlings of native species shall be grown until such time it becomes ready for permanent planting.

SECTION 5. Planting of Seedlings by Grades 1-11 and College Students - Each student from grade levels 1-11 and college students that are taking up National Service Training Program (NSTP) shall be required to plant and ensure the growth of at least two (2) tree-seedlings per year in the established seedling nursery of their school or college.

SECTION 6. Tree-planting as a Mandatory Requirement for Graduation - All graduating students from elementary, high school and college shall be required to plant at least ten (10) trees as a mandatory requirement for their graduation. For this activity, they shall utilize tree seedlings from the Nursery which are ready for permanent planting. In case the number of tree-seedling available at the time of planting is insufficient, the school or college may source it from other government seedling banks.

As far as practicable, the time of tree planting shall coincide with the designated Arbor Day of the particular province, city, or municipality that has jurisdiction over the school or college, as mandated by Republic Act No. 10176, otherwise known as the "Arbor Day Act of 2012."

SECTION 7. Preference for Native Species - The species to be planted should be compatible with the location, climate and topography of the area with preference for native species.

SECTION 8. Location - Subject to the recommendation of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the trees to be planted under this Act shall be located in any of the following areas:

- a. Forestlands
- b. Mangrove and protected areas
- c. Ancestral domains
- d. Civil and military reservations
- e. Urban areas under the greening plan of the LGUs
- f. Inactive and abandoned mine sites; and
- g. Other suitable land

SECTION 9. Management and Supervision of Tree-seedling Nursery – The nurseries shall be under the overall management and supervision of the particular school or college.

SECTION 10. Harmonization with Other Greening Efforts – The provisions of this Act shall be consistent with the existing greening efforts of the government, private sector, non-government organizations and civil society organizations in the country. Schools and colleges may work jointly and/or enter into a partnership agreement with said agencies and organizations with the end to attain the objectives of this Act.

SECTION 11. Inter-agency Greening Committee - A greening committee is hereby created consisting of an inter-agency body composed of the following:

- a. Secretaries of the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) as Co-Chairpersons;

- b. Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) as Vice-Chairperson;
- c. Secretary of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) or its duly authorized representative as Member;
- d. Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) or its duly authorized representative as Member; and
- e. Secretary of Department of Agriculture (DA) or its duly authorized representative as Member.

The responsibilities of these agencies shall include the following:

- 1. Nursery establishment;
- 2. Seedling production and site preparation;
- 3. Site identification;
- 4. Monitoring and evaluation;
- 5. Provision of security, transportation, fire protection amenities and medical support;
- 6. Technical support and extension services;
- 7. Other duties and responsibilities appurtenant to the proper implementation of this Act.

SECTION 12. Implementing Rules and Regulations. - The DepEd, CHED, DENR, DILG, DOST, and DA shall formulate and promulgate the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) necessary to implement this Act within sixty (60) days after approval.

SECTION 13. Appropriations - The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be included in the Annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 14. Separability Clause - In case any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, such declaration shall have no effect in the validity or constitutionality of the remaining provisions hereof.

SECTION 15. Repealing Clause - All laws, decrees, rules and regulations inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SECTION 16. Effectivity - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,