

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. **9190**



Introduced by **Rep. ANGELO MARCOS BARBA**
2nd District, Ilocos Norte

**AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING QUARTERLY TREE PLANTING
ACTIVITY IN THE PHILIPPINES, APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines is one of the most severely deforested countries in the tropics and most deforestation has happened in the last 40 years. Estimates place forest cover in the Philippines in the year 1900 at 21 million hectares, covering 70 % of the total land area. By 1999, forests covered 5.5 million hectares; only 800,000 hectares of this was primary forest. As illegal logging continues, the remaining forest is endangered.¹

Along with other Southeast Asian countries, deforestation in the Philippines is a major environmental issue. Over the course of the 20th century, the forest cover of the country dropped from 70 percent down to 20 percent.² Based on an analysis of land use pattern maps and a road map an estimated 9.8 million hectares of forests were lost in the Philippines from 1934 to 1988.³

With the steadfast implementation of the current administration's "BUILD, BUILD, BUILD" program which genuinely promotes the improvement of the general welfare of the people and with the prevailing consumerist culture of society, our natural resources particularly our trees must not only be preserved but must also keep up in these times of rapid modernization and industrialization in order to serve as further protection of our soils.

To express our inherent duty to protect the environment and for future generations to enjoy the legacy left by us, the would-be ancestors and in

¹ Walpole, P. (2012). *Low forest cover in the Philippines: Issues and responses at the community level*. Retrieved <https://essc.org.ph/content/view/full/579/1/#:~:text=The%20Philippines%20is%20one%20of,of%20the%20total%20land%20area> on March 11, 2021.

² Lasco, R. D.; R. D. (2001). *"Secondary forests in the Philippines: formation and transformation in the 20th century"* (PDF). *Journal of Tropical Forest Science*. **13** (4): 652–670.

³ Liu, D; L Iverson; S Brown (1993). *"Rates and patterns of deforestation in the Philippines: application of geographic information system analysis"* (PDF). *Forest Ecology and Management*. **57** (1–4): 1–16. doi:10.1016/0378-1127(93)90158-J. ISSN 0378-1127.

furtherance of the *Bayanihan* spirit of Filipinos, public participation must therefore be encouraged in order to protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology.

Accordingly, this representation intends to institutionalize regular quarterly tree planting activities in the country. It seeks a whole-of-government and a whole-of-nation approach in establishing a National Tree Planting Program that would not only engage all concerned government agencies, local government units, and environmental organizations, but most importantly the people to actively participate in tree planting activities for the preservation and conservation of our environment.

The popular proverb “the best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago, the second best time is now” can be taken in its literal sense at this instance. By compounding our joint efforts, surely after some decades, there will be an abundance of trees again for the future generation to enjoy and protect.

Therefore, premises considered, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



ANGELO MARCOS BARBA

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as “National
Quarterly Tree Planting Act”.

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to
protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology
in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature by encouraging people to
actively participate in tree planting programs and activities for the
preservation and conservation of our natural land resources.

SECTION 3. *National Tree Planting Program.* – The Department of
Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), in coordination with the
Department of Education (DepEd), Commission on Higher Education
(CHED), Civil Service Commission (CSC), Department of Interior and Local
Government (DILG), Philippine National Police (PNP), Armed Forces of the
Philippines (AFP), and other relevant government agencies, shall establish
and implement a National Tree Planting Program which shall mobilize all
sectors of society to participate in nationwide tree planting activities to
promote, protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and
healthful ecology.

SECTION 4. *Components of the National Tree Planting Program.* – The
Program shall be consistent with existing environmental protection laws and
shall include the following;

- a. Volunteerism and participation of both public and private sectors;
- b. Identification of underlying drivers of deforestation;
- c. Formulation of strategic initiatives to identify ideal tree planting sites
and species;

- d. Operationalization of online, real-time updates of Tree Planting Programs and Activities;
- e. Generation of data for tree planting programs and activities, and other related statistics;
- f. Prompt submission of Tree Planting Participation Report and/or updates to include the number of volunteers, local government unit participation and total number of trees planted as well as its types;
- g. Strengthening reforestation and tree planting program information drive; and
- h. Periodic evaluation of the Program to effectively manage, address and reduce the threats of degradation of our natural resources and forests for the benefit of present and future generations.

SECTION 5. *Tree Planting Days.* – National tree planting programs and activities shall be regularly held once every quarter without prejudice to the tree planting programs and activities of local government units, private individuals or entities.

SECTION 6. *Selection of Tree Planting Sites.* – The DENR, in coordination with the DILG and all concerned local government units, shall select the sites for tree planting activities.

SECTION 7. *Selection of Tree types.* – The DENR shall determine what types or kinds of trees are to be planted in a Tree Planting Site which will ultimately serve that best interest of the natural environment.

SECTION 8. *Role of Local Government Units.* – All local government units (LGUs) shall monitor the conduct of tree planting activities and ensure the active participation of their constituents. The LGUs shall likewise submit to the DILG and DENR participation reports.

SECTION 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within (6) months from the effectivity of this Act, the DENR, in consultation with the concerned government agencies and stakeholders, shall promulgate the rules and regulations of this Act.

SECTION 10. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the effective implementation of this Act shall be charged to the appropriations of the DENR under the General Appropriations Act (GAA). Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the GAA.

SECTION 11. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected by such declaration shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 12. *Repealing Clause.* – Any provision of law, decree, order, rule or regulation inconsistent with this Act is hereby repealed and/or modified accordingly.

SECTION 13. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,