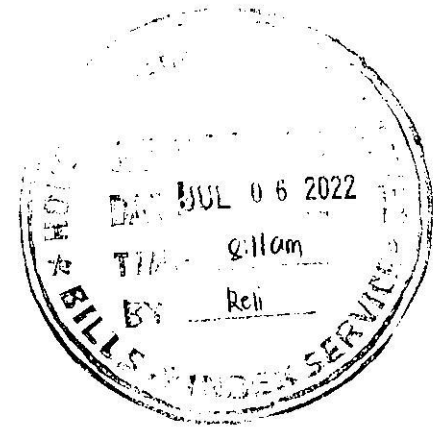


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

19th CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 1297



Introduced by **REP. WILBERT T. LEE**

AN ACT
ADDRESSING FOOD SECURITY CONCERNS THROUGH INTEGRATING INSTRUCTIONAL
GARDENS IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL CURRICULA AND PROMOTING
THE USE OF URBAN AGRICULTURE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Urban agriculture is defined as the practice of cultivating, processing, and distributing of food in or around a village, town, or city. Vertical farming, on the other hand, is defined as the method of farming that is brought to the urban space by employing the concepts of indoor agriculture in skyscrapers and other modern buildings.

With the international food crisis looming¹, it is crucial that we take every opportunity to enlist our citizens to take an active part in our food production. Urban agriculture and vertical farming presents the next frontier in our food program to ensure that we will have more opportunity to generate fresh and nutritious produce near urban areas where population is concentrated.

Urban agriculture programs can help local communities in both an economic way and a social way. They allow for people to have more immediate connection to their food, as well as help stimulate a local economy. Urban agriculture programs

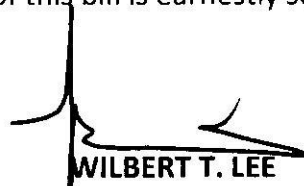
¹ The Economist. 19 May 2022. The coming food catastrophe. Accessed on 28 June 2022 on: <https://www.economist.com/leaders/2022/05/19/the-coming-food-catastrophe>

such as community gardens can target young people in non-traditional agriculture backgrounds, experts note.²

This bill mandates the Departments of Agriculture, Education, and Science and Technology to conduct research on urban agriculture and vertical farming and promote its practice to our next generation of farmers.

It is the hope of this bill that enlisting our youth to participate in non-traditional agriculture is one step towards food security for our country.

In view of the foregoing, the approval of this bill is earnestly sought.



WILBERT T. LEE
AGRI Party List

² Baker, Maurina. Farm Progress. 31 December 2016. *What is urban agriculture, and why is it important?*
Accessed on 28 June 2016 from: <https://www.farmprogress.com/marketing/what-urban-agriculture-and-why-it-important>

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

SECTION 1. *Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "Instructional Gardens and Urban Agriculture Act of 2022."

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It shall be the policy of the State to promote food security, food quality, improved health, fight hunger and malnutrition, poverty alleviation, improved quality of environment through greening, reduction in pollution, and creation of savings in household expenditures. Towards this end, key reforms for the development of appropriate, cost-effective, and environmentally safe agricultural practices are hereby encouraged in order to ensure the food security of the country.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* - For purposes of this Act, the following terms are defined as follows:

- a) "Instructional Gardens" refer to a program of instruction in all elementary and secondary schools, where knowledge and skills, not only in urban agriculture and vertical farming, but in agricultural food production in general, are imparted to school children through relevant theories and actual engagement in agricultural cultivation/production. The theories and actual production shall revolve around the concepts of composting, waste

management techniques, healthy and nutritious farm produce, sustainable farm practices, among others.

- b) "Urban Agriculture" refers to the practice of cultivating, processing, and distributing of food in or around a village, town, or city. Urban agriculture also involves animal husbandry, aquaculture, agro-forestry and horticulture.
- c) "Vertical Farming" refers to the method of farming that is brought to the urban space by employing the concepts of indoor agriculture in skyscrapers and other modern buildings.

SEC. 4. Promotion of and Comprehensive Research on Urban Agriculture and Vertical Farming. – For purposes of this Act, the respective Secretaries of the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) are hereby mandated to promote the use of urban agriculture and vertical farming in the country's urban areas and in other areas in the country where such farming methods are suited, as an intervention mechanism for further addressing food security concerns of the country. Idle and/or abandoned government lots and buildings owned by either the national government or local governments or available land resources in state universities and colleges shall be considered for growing crops, raising livestock, and producing food using the said methods.

SEC. 5. Institutionalization of Instructional Gardens in School Curricula. – Instructional Gardens program shall be integrated in the academic curricula for elementary and secondary level students of both public and private academic institutions, particularly in subjects in Agriculture, Practical Arts, Home Economics, and/or other related subjects. The Department of Education (DepEd), in coordination with the DA, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the implementation of this Section within six (6) months from the effectivity of this Act.

SEC. 6. Local Government Units' Participation. – Local government units (LGUs) shall formulate a policy on the practice of urban agriculture and vertical farming, utilizing unused spaces and idle lands. This shall require the enactment of local legislation institutionalizing urban agriculture in all levels of the LGU. LGUs shall also grant necessary incentives to their constituents who actively participate in urban farming activities.

SEC. 7. Tax Incentives. – All allocations of grants, endowments, donations, or contributions and technical assistance provided by private individuals or corporations to schools for the promotion and implementation of Institutional Gardens in the school curricula, as certified by DepEd, shall be exempt from taxes and duties.

SEC. 8. *Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR)*. – Within six (6) months from the effectivity of this Act, the DA and the DOST shall promulgate the necessary IRR to implement the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 9. *Appropriations*. – The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be included and incorporated in the annual general appropriations of the DA, DOST, and the DepED.

SEC. 10. *Separability Clause*. – If any provision of this Act, or parts thereof, is declared unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity and effectivity of the other portions.

SEC. 11. *Repealing Clause*. - All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees, and implementing rules and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 12. *Effectivity*. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,