

Republic of the Philippines  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS  
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 1730



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Introduced by: HON. RUTH MARIANO-HERNANDEZ

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AN ACT  
PROMOTING INTEGRATED URBAN AGRICULTURE IN URBAN AREAS NATIONWIDE TO  
ADDRESS FOOD SECURITY AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill aims to promote agriculture in all urban areas of the country to help address the burgeoning need to expand local food production for our nation to attain food security in the long term.

This bill was first filed by former AGRI Party-list Rep. Orestes Salon in the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress as House Bill 4337. This Representation filed her own version as House Bill 5640 in the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress. House Bill 5640 was consolidated into House Bill 8385 that was approved by the House on February 2, 2021 and transmitted to the Senate on February 3, 2021. The measure was overtaken by the recent May 2022 elections, hence the refiling of this bill.

The achievement of self-sufficiency and sustainability in food production and food security is paramount for the country as it is the policy of the State to promote the fundamental right of every person to adequate food and be free from hunger.

Toward this end, the State shall modern, appropriate, cost-effective and environmentally-safe agricultural technologies to ensure food security, promote a healthy citizenry, and advance an improved quality of life.

The measure defines urban agriculture as the development paradigm that encompasses principles, management, technologies, and the policies relating to the practice and application of agricultural production of food in urban areas.

The bill provides that urban agriculture shall apply to all urban spaces such as idle, government or private lots or buildings, available land resources in state or private universities and colleges suitable for growing crops and raising poultry and livestock, and for agriculture.

It is imperative that a policy platform to achieve food security is enacted by Congress considering that the Philippines ranked 64th out of 113 countries in the 2021 Global Food Security Index (GFSI) released by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).

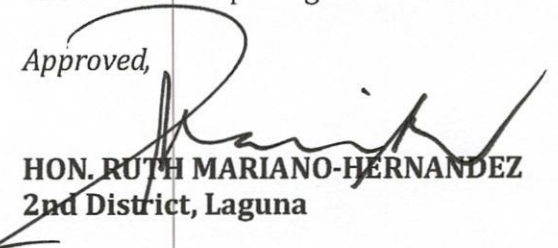
The GFSI offers a mechanism to assess the level of food security in four dimensions in 113 countries. Food security, as defined in the 1996 World Food Summit, is the state in which people have the physical, social and economic access to sufficient and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs for a healthy and active life at all times.

The GFSI measures food security in terms of food affordability, availability, quality and safety, and natural resources and resilience.

It is hoped that the country can attain food security - a situation wherein sufficient, safe, and nutritious food is accessible and affordable at all times - with the passage of this bill.

The immediate passage of this bill is hereby earnestly sought.

Approved,



**HON. RUTH MARIANO-HERNANDEZ**  
2nd District, Laguna

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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 the "Integrated Urban Agriculture Act".

**SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** The State shall promote and protect the fundamental right of every person to adequate food and freedom from hunger. Recognizing the challenges to food security and ecological balance in urban areas, the State shall optimize the use and productivity of urban land resources and spaces to support sufficient and sustainable food production. Towards this end, the State shall promote the development of modern, cost-effective, space-efficient, and environmentally-safe agriculture technologies in urban areas to contribute in achieving sustainable food production and food security, ensure adequate nutrition and public health, and improve the quality of life of urban populations. Accordingly, the State shall ensure the integration of principles, strategies and technologies on urban agriculture in urban planning.

**SEC. 3. Definition of Terms.** As used in this Act:

- (a) **Community gardens** refer to any piece of land cultivated by a group of people using either individual or shared plots on public or private land with the consent of the owner, to produce edibles, such as herbs, vegetables, fruits or ornamentals. Community gardens may be found in neighborhoods and schools, or connected to

institutions such as hospitals or located on the grounds or roofs of shared housing, such as, but not limited to, tenements and apartment complexes;

- (b) **Food security** refers to a situation wherein all people have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food, at all times, to maintain a healthy and active life;
- (c) **Food system** refers to a complex web of activities involving the production, processing, transport, and consumption of food. Issues concerning the food system include the governance and economics of food production, its sustainability, the degree to which we waste food, how food production affects the natural environment and the impact of food on individual and population health;
- (d) **Idle lands** refer to non-agricultural lands in urban and urbanizable areas on which no improvements have been made by the owner, as certified by the city, municipal or provincial assessor. Idle government lands refer to lands owned by any government entity that have been idle and have not been used for the purpose for which they have been reserved for the past 10 years;
- (e) **Integrated urban agriculture** refers to the development paradigm that encompasses principles, management technologies, and the policies relating to the practice and application of agricultural production of food and goods in urban areas;
- (f) **Peri-urban areas** refer to areas where urban and rural features and processes meet, interact and intertwine, usually located between city and countryside. Peri-urban areas are semi-dense clusters with a density of at least 300 inhabitants per square kilometer and a population of 5,000 or more but are neither contiguous with nor within two (2) kilometers of an urban area;
- (g) **Social preparation** refers to the series of activities designed to prepare the underprivileged and homeless families to cope with the changes brought about by government development projects;
- (h) **Urban areas** shall refer to any of the following, per PSA Resolution No. 01, Series of 2017-098:
  - If a barangay has a population size of 5,000 or more;
  - If a barangay has at least one establishment with a minimum of 100 employees;
  - If a barangay has 5 or more establishments with a minimum of 0 employee, and 5 or more facilities within the two-kilometer radius from the barangay hall;
- (i) **Urban planning** refers to multi-disciplinary art and science of analyzing, specifying, clarifying, harmonizing, managing and regulating the use and development of land and water resources, in relation to their environs, for the

development of sustainable communities and ecosystems in urban and urbanizable areas;

- (j) **Urbanizable areas** refer to sites and lands which, considering the present characteristics and prevailing conditions, display marked and great potential of becoming urban areas within the period of five (5) years; and
- (k) **Vertical farming** refers to the method or practice of indoor agriculture, or growing produce in vertically stacked layers in skyscrapers and modern buildings using geponic, hydroponic or aeroponic growing methods.

**SEC. 4. Coverage.** This Act shall cover idle or abandoned government or private lands, subdivisions/villages, public housing, open spaces in all urban, peri-urban and urbanizable areas in the country; and all available and appropriate land resources in state or private universities and colleges, and military camps suitable for growing crops and raising poultry, livestock and aquaculture.

**SEC. 5. Community Gardening and Vertical Farming.** Local government units shall identify and develop idle government and/or private lands, without prejudice to the rights of owners of private lands, and open spaces, including roofs of buildings, within their jurisdiction, for full or partial conversion to community gardens and/or vertical farms to support food security and nutrition; *Provided, That*, spaces allocated for urban agriculture shall not be prime lots. LGUs, in coordination with the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Cooperative Development Authority, shall capacitate neighborhood associations and people's organizations, and/or facilitate the organization and registration of community-based cooperatives, to undertake community gardening.

The Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD) shall ensure the provision of adequate spaces for community gardens and/or vertical farms in the design and development of subdivision, condominium and public housing projects. Towards this end, the DHSUD, in coordination with the DA, shall capacitate homeowners' association to undertake community gardening and/or vertical farming.

The DA shall provide the necessary technical assistance and support services, including the provision of seeds and seedlings and gardening tools, access to loans from government financial institutions, and agricultural training, to ensure the full productivity of community gardens and vertical farms.

The DA, in coordination with the Department of Science and Technology, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and the Department of Energy, shall also undertake the establishment of rainwater harvesting facilities, renewable energy systems and solid waste management systems, including waste-to-energy facilities, to provide sustainable supply of water, energy and compost to community gardens and vertical farms.

**SEC. 6. Urban Agriculture in Urban Planning.** The DHSUD, in coordination with the DA, shall ensure the integration of concepts and principles of urban agriculture and its

relationship to other processes in the food system in urban planning. Accordingly, the DHSUD and DA shall promote sustainable, smart and organic food production systems that harness the benefits of new technologies and methods in soil, nutrient, water and energy management, such as composting, rainwater harvesting and utilization of renewable energy. The DHSUD shall also ensure the rational use of land resources in urban planning to promote sustainable peri-urban interface, as well as for the spatial requirements of supply chain management and logistics to strengthen urban-rural foodshed linkages.

Towards these ends, the DHSUD shall promulgate guidelines for the harmonization of Comprehensive Land Use Plans and zoning ordinances of local government units with urban agriculture policies, frameworks, strategies and standards.

LGUs are hereby mandated to incorporate urban agricultural development in their respective Annual Development Plans, Annual Investment Plans, Physical Framework Plans, and Development Master Plans.

LGUs, with the assistance of the DA, Department of Interior and Local Government and the Department of Information and Communications Technology, shall establish and maintain a digital information system to facilitate the efficient collection, management and analysis of urban food system, agriculture and nutrition data, as well as monitoring and evaluation of LGU performance vis-à-vis food system, agriculture and nutrition targets, to inform local planning, policy-making and programming, and to ensure open public access to data.

**SEC. 7. Urban Agriculture Education.** Urban agriculture shall be integrated in the academic curriculum for elementary, secondary and tertiary level students of both public and private academic institutions offering courses in Agriculture, Practical Arts, Home Economics and/or other subjects related to agriculture. A course curriculum on gardening shall be developed and included in the regular curriculum of elementary and secondary education. Instructional materials shall likewise be developed.

The Department of Education shall strengthen the implementation of *Gulayan sa Paaralan* Program in elementary and secondary schools, establishing school gardens to ensure continuous supply of vegetables for school feeding, in accordance with Republic Act No. 11037, entitled 'An Act Institutionalizing a National Feeding Program for Undernourished Children in Public Day Care, Kindergarten and Elementary Schools to Combat Hunger and Undernutrition among Filipino Children and Appropriating Funds Therefor'.

For universities and colleges, urban agriculture shall form part of the required period of time spent by students in the National Service Training Program or the Citizens' Military Training. A plan for the utilization or maximization of space occupied by schools shall be formulated specifically for urban agriculture purposes.

**SEC. 8. Research and Development.** The DA and the Department of Science and Technology, as well as relevant state universities, government research and development institutions, and the private sector, shall intensify research on methods and technologies to support urban agriculture, including the development and operation of demonstration

urban community gardens and vertical farms.

**SEC. 9. Incentives.** Compliance by subdivision and condominium developers and/or owners with Section 5 of this Act may qualify them for incentives provided for under Republic Act No. 10771, entitled 'An Act Promoting the Creation of Green Jobs, Granting Incentives and Appropriating Funds Therefor', subject to rules and regulations promulgated by the Department of Finance and the DHSUD.

The commitment and performance of LGUs in the implementation of this Act shall be included in the criteria for the awarding of the Seal of Good Local Governance and the provision of incentives, provided for under Republic Act No. 11292, entitled 'An Act Establishing and Institutionalizing the Seal of Good Local Governance for Local Government Units, and Allocating for this Purpose the Seal of Good Local Governance Fund'.

Loans extended by government and private banks to participating individuals, corporations and partnerships shall be treated as compliance to Republic Act No. 10000, entitled 'An Act Providing for an Agriculture and Agrarian Reform Credit and Financing System through Banking Institutions'.

**SEC. 10. Inter-Agency Coordination.** There is hereby established a National Convergence Program on Urban Agriculture. The Department of Agriculture is hereby designated as the Lead Implementing Agency and the Secretariat of the Convergence Program. The following agencies shall perform duties and responsibilities in order to develop and sustain concerted action to promote urban agriculture:

- a) The Department of Agriculture shall provide technical assistance and support services to local government units, community-based cooperatives, homeowners' associations, neighborhood associations and people's organizations to ensure the viability and cost-effectiveness of urban agriculture projects;
- b) The Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development shall ensure the integration of urban agriculture principles, policies, strategies, frameworks and standards in the design and development of subdivision, condominium and public housing projects, and in the preparation or updating of development and investment plans, CLUPs and zoning ordinances of LGUs, promulgate rules thereof and monitor their compliance therewith. The DHSUD shall provide assistance to homeowners' associations to strengthen their capacity to undertake urban agriculture projects in their neighborhoods and communities;
- c) The Department of Interior and Local Government shall monitor the compliance of LGUs with the provisions of this Act in order to determine their qualification for incentives provided for under Republic Act No. 11292;
- d) The Department of Education (DepEd) shall integrate the principles and practice of urban agriculture into primary and secondary education curricula, including the establishment of school gardens under the *Gulayan sa Paarakan* Program. DepEd

shall ensure the adequate training of teachers and the development of appropriate instructional materials for this purpose;

- e) Department of Science and Technology shall conduct research on modern, cost-effective methods and technologies to support urban agricultural production, as well as post-harvest handling of surplus produce from urban agriculture projects;
- f) Department of Trade and Industry shall provide technical assistance in processing and packaging of surplus produce from urban agriculture projects and ensure access of local government units, cooperatives, homeowners' associations, and people's organizations to markets;
- g) Department of Finance shall administer the grant of incentives under Section 9 of this Act to qualified persons based on their compliance to Section 5 of this Act;
- h) Department of Budget and Management shall ensure adequate funding for the functions and programs provided for by under this Act;
- i) The Commission on Higher Education shall develop and implement curriculum and related standards and instructional materials in support of urban agriculture;
- j) The Cooperative Development Authority shall provide guidance and assistance to LGUs in the development of cooperatives within their jurisdiction;
- k) The Presidential Commission for the Urban Poor shall undertake social preparation activities to encourage participation and empower poor and underprivileged communities from the preparation and planning to implementation and evaluation of urban development projects; and,
- l) Philippine Information Agency shall undertake a nationwide information campaign, utilizing all forms of media, to raise awareness and encourage participation of the public in the implementation of this Act.

**SEC. 11. Periodic report to Congress.** The Department of Agriculture and partner agencies in the National Convergence Program on Urban Agriculture shall submit annual performance reports to Congress.

**SEC. 12. Appropriations.** The funds necessary to carry out the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the respective budgets of concerned agencies for the current year. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

**SEC. 13. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** Within six (6) months from the effectivity of this Act, the agencies under the National Convergence Program on Urban Agriculture shall promulgate the necessary implementing rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act.

**SEC. 14. Separability Clause.** If any part or provision of this Act is held unconstitutional or invalid, other parts or provisions hereof which are not affected shall continue to remain in full force and effect.

**SEC. 15. Repealing Clause.** All laws, executive orders, issuances, rules and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby amended, repealed or modified accordingly.

**SEC. 16. Effectivity.** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in a newspaper of general circulation.

*Approved,*