



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH (19th) CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 2342



Introduced by REP. JOSEPH STEPHEN S. PADUANO

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The global climate situation is continuously aggravated by deforestation or the diminishing tree cover around the world. It is not different with the Philippines as our country has reportedly lost 37.7 kha (thousands of hectares) of natural forest last 2021 according to Global Forest Watch¹. This was due to various factors such as illegal logging, forest burning, and other natural or man-made causes.

On the other hand, there are initiatives by the government to combat this ecological crisis. In 2021, our government signed a declaration committing to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030 as stated under the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use². Also, there is the Enhanced National Greening Program of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) that prioritizes "rehabilitation of denuded forest lands" around the country, and the "maintenance and protection of existing forests".

However, there are also nongovernment efforts being done by different environmental groups and individuals, including the youth, and this proposed measure seeks to institutionalize the participation of young Filipinos to help in the fight for a better environment.

Yearly, there are millions of senior high school graduates every year. According to the Department of Education (DepEd) last November of 2021, they recorded 27,232,095 enrollees for the school year (SY) 2021-2022, wherein it is 4% higher than last year's number of enrolled students, which was at 26.2 million.

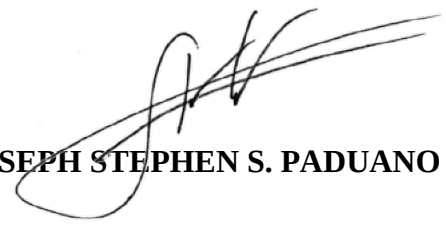
Given the numbers of enrolled students mentioned above, even if there are only 5% who will graduate from the 27 million among Senior High School students, this could mean around 270,000 new trees to be planted if each graduate will plant two trees after their graduation. Such prospect is being aspired by this proposed measure, wherein each year, thousands or even millions of trees could be planted by senior high school and college students who will graduate each year.

¹ Global Forest Watch, <https://bit.ly/3z2pLYn>

² "PH joins pledge to end global deforestation", The Manila Times, 2021, <https://www.manilatimes.net/2021/11/12/news/national/ph-joins-pledge-to-end-global-deforestation/1821908>

The bill entitled “*An Act Requiring All Graduating Senior High School and College Students to Plant Two (2) Trees Each as a Civic Duty for Environment Protection and Preservation, and Appropriating Funds Therefor*” or House Bill No. 6931, with this Representation included as principal author of the Third Reading Copy, with the main proponents of similar bills that was substituted by the aforementioned measure. It was approved on third and final reading by the members of the 18th Congress after it was deliberated and submitted to the Plenary by the Special Committee on Reforestation, and Committee on Appropriations. Afterwards it was transmitted to the Senate, however, due to various factors; it was not transpired into law.

Hence, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



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AN ACT
REQUIRING ALL GRADUATING SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE
STUDENTS TO PLANT TWO (2) TREES EACH AS A CIVIC DUTY FOR
ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION, AND APPROPRIATING
FUNDS THEREFOR

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

1 **SECTION 1. *Short Title.*** – This Act shall be known as the “Graduation Legacy for
2 Reforestation Act.”

3
4 **SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** – It is the declared policy of the State to protect and
5 advance the right of the Filipino people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the
6 rhythm and harmony of nature. Towards this end, the State shall promote and pursue
7 reforestation programs and encourage tree planting as a means of involving the youth in
8 public and civic affairs.

9
10 **SEC. 3. *Tree Planting as a Mandatory Requisite for Graduation.*** – As an act of
11 public service before they join the country’s labor force, all graduating students in senior high
12 school and college shall plant at least two (2) trees as a prerequisite for graduation.

13

14

1 **SEC. 4. *Tree Planting Sites.*** – The Department of Environment and Natural
2 Resources (DENR) and the concerned local government units (LGUs) shall determine the
3 appropriate tree planting sites within the local government’s respective areas, in coordination
4 with schools, colleges and universities.
5

6 **SEC. 5. *Preference for Indigenous Species.*** – The species of trees to be planted
7 should be appropriate to the location, climate and topography of the area, with preference for
8 the planting of indigenous species.
9

10 **SEC. 6. *Partner Agencies and Stakeholders.*** – The Department of Education (DepEd)
11 and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) shall implement the provisions of this Act,
12 in partnership with the following agencies:

- 13 (a) Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR);
 - 14 (b) Department of Agriculture (DA);
 - 15 (c) Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG);
 - 16 (d) Department of Science and Technology (DOST);
 - 17 (e) National Commission on Indigenous People (NCIP).
- 18

19 The responsibilities of these agencies shall include:

- 20 1. Establishment of nursery and seeding preparation;
 - 21 2. Site identification and preparation;
 - 22 3. Technical support and extension services;
 - 23 4. Monitoring and evaluation.
- 24

25 **SEC. 7. *Provisions of Seedlings.*** – The Community Environment and Natural
26 Resources Office (CENRO) of the DENR and the DA, in partnerships with LGUs throughout
27 the Philippines shall maintain a seedling bank that will serve as a ready source of seedlings to
28 be used in the implementation of this Act.
29

30 **SEC. 8 *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – The DepEd, and CHED, in
31 coordination with DENR and DILG, and in consultation with other agencies, shall promulgate
32 and issue the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) to implement this Act within sixty
33 (60) days after its effectivity.
34

1 **SEC. 9. Appropriations.** – The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this
2 Act shall be included in the budgets of the implementing departments and agencies in the
3 annual General Appropriations Act.
4

5 **SEC. 10 Separability Clause.** – Should any portion or provision of this Act be
6 declared unconstitutional, the remainder thereof not otherwise affected shall remain in full
7 force and effect.
8

9 **SEC. 11. Repealing Clause.** – All laws, presidential decrees or issuances, executive
10 orders, letters of instructions, rules or regulations inconsistent with the provisions of this Act
11 are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.
12

13 **SEC. 12. Effectivity.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication
14 in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.
15

16 *Approved,*