

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 2500



Introduced by **REPRESENTATIVE DANTE S. GARCIA**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In 2012, RA No. 10176 or the Arbor Day Act was enacted into law mandating the local government units (LGUs) to designate a day in the year to observe Arbor Day and to allocate for a budget for annual tree planting activity.

The law mandates the LGUs from the provinces, cities, municipalities and component barangays to pass a resolution or ordinance designating a day of the year for the observance of Arbor Day or tree planting/growing, by creating an Arbor Day Celebration Committee. Further, it also requires the LGUs to report to the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) the day of such Arbor Day observance. However, it is not clearly known if all provinces, cities/municipalities and component barangays have passed such resolutions, ordinances for the *observance* Arbor Day and if the LGUs have been allocating funds for its implementation since its passage. Congress should be informed of the compliance of LGUs on such an important legislation.

The law and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) specifically mandates Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI), Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) to supply the LGUs with planting materials, requires the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the Department Education (DepEd), the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) as well as the Liga ng mga Barangay to establish nurseries and produce planting materials for distribution to LGUs or for their own use. Other agencies have also been assigned various tasks in the implementation of the Arbor Day Law, however, it is not properly monitored if these agencies have been performing the tasks that they have been assigned.

In 1999, the National Convergence Initiative (NCI) was adopted to formulate a framework for sustainable rural development and poverty reduction, signed by the DA, DAR and DENR through Joint Memorandum Circular JMC No. 01 Series of 1999. The implementation of Arbor Day Law could be an effective vehicle for pursuing the objectives of the National Convergence Initiative which are: 1. To facilitate the implementation of different agencies to *ensure that resources are maximized* by achieving synergy and institutional efficiency; 2) To **build** partnership between and among the local communities, LGUs and government agencies to ensure that all development interventions are based on actual needs and aspirations of the community; 3) To expand opportunities for agro-enterprise and agribusiness development for its constituency; and 4) *achieve spatial integration within different ecosystem* to ensure environmental integrity and sustainability¹

It is earnestly sought that this Act be approved to attain the intent and purpose of RA 10176, which is to rehabilitate denuded forests, to provide the ecological needs and environmental services, to combat the adverse effects of climate change as well as provide resources for livelihood projects for rural communities, to strengthen the response of the LGUs in implementing the Arbor Day law of 2012 and to improve the efficiency of the DILG in supervising and implementing the law.



DANTE S. GARCIA
2ND District, La Union

¹ NCI Operations Manual

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Introduced by REPRESENTATIVE DANTE S. GARCIA

AN ACT
PROVIDING MECHANISMS THAT SHALL ENSURE THE EFFECTIVE
IMPLEMENTATION OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10176, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE
“ARBOR DAY ACT OF 2012”

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

SECTION 1. Section 2 of Republic Act No. 10176 is amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is hereby declared 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. Towards this end, the vital role and importance of trees in ecological stability is recognized. Hence, there is a need for a collaborated effort between the State and its citizenry to combat the loss of our natural resources and rejuvenate our environment by **REHABILITATING DEGRADED FOREST LAND AREAS, IMPROVING SOIL FERTILITY AND LAND PRODUCTIVITY, AND REDUCING SOIL EROSION ESPECIALLY IN THE RURAL AND UPLAND AREAS,**

undertaking nationwide tree planting activities and providing effective measures for their maintenance and sustainability.

“It is hereby mandated that all provinces, cities and municipalities with their component barangays shall be required to revive, by appropriate proclamation of their respective local chief executives, an Arbor Day at an appropriate fixed date every calendar year as shall be deemed suitable according to the proper time and season for planting trees in the respective provinces and their respective component municipalities or cities concerned. Although adoption of uniform dates for every province and its component municipalities and cities shall be encouraged, varying dates for Arbor Day celebrations may be permitted in order to afford flexibility in planning and in implementing tree planting programs to adjust to the proper time and period of the year most suited to the trees selected to be planted, and as local budgetary allotments shall allow.”

SEC. 2. Section 9 of the same Act is amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 9. *Areas Covered by Tree Planting.* – THE DENR SHALL IDENTIFY SUITABLE AREAS IN EACH LGU TO BE PLANTED TO VARIOUS SPECIES OF TREES AND PLANTS, INCLUDING BAMBOO. THE DENR SHALL ALSO ENSURE THAT NATIONAL GREENING PROGRAM SITES WITHIN THE MUNICIPALITY AND CITY SHALL CONTINUE TO PROPAGATE AND PLANT VARIOUS SPECIES TO ENHANCE EXISTING VEGETATION.

“The local Arbor Day Celebrations Committee shall [specify] **SELECT** the area within the LGU to be planted or reforested **FROM AMONG THE AREAS IDENTIFIED BY THE DENR AS SUITABLE FOR THESE PURPOSES.**

“If the area to be planted or reforested is a protected area or a protection forest, the Committee shall encourage the use of endemic or indigenous species during the observance of the Arbor Day designated by the LGU.

“The tree planting activities shall be done in any of the following areas:

“(a) Public school grounds, gardens or other available areas within the school premises;

“(b) Idle or vacant public lands;

“(c) Public parks in urban and rural areas; and

“(d) Private schools, parks and lands with the consent of the owner thereof.”

SEC. 3. A new Section 11-A is inserted after Section 11 of the same Act to read as follows:

“SEC. 11-A. *ANNUAL REPORTS.* – THE DILG SHALL MONITOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS ACT AND SUBMIT AN ANNUAL REPORT TO THE CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE CREATED UNDER SECTION 11-B HEREIN ON THE COMPLIANCE OF LGUs WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THIS ACT.

“THE DENR SHALL ALSO SUBMIT AN ANNUAL REPORT TO THE CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE ON THE AREAS IT HAS IDENTIFIED IN EACH LGU THAT ARE SUITABLE TO TREE PLANTING AND REFORESTATION.”

SEC. 4. A new Section 11-B is inserted after Section 11-A of the same Act to read as follows:

“SEC. 11-B. *CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE.* – A CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE IS HEREBY CREATED TO MONITOR AND OVERSEE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS ACT.

IT SHALL BE CO-CHAIRLED BY THE CHAIRPERSONS OF THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND THE SENATE, AND SHALL HAVE AS MEMBERS THE CHAIRPERSONS OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON REFORESTATION AND COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AND THE CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES AND CLIMATE CHANGE OF THE SENATE.

THE CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE SHALL PRESCRIBE AND ADOPT GUIDELINES WHICH SHALL GOVERN ITS WORK. IT SHALL EXERCISE ALL THE POWERS NECESSARY AND INCIDENTAL TO ATTAIN THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH IT IS CREATED. IT SHALL REVIEW THE ANNUAL REPORTS OF THE DILG AND DENR ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS ACT.”

SEC. 5. *Effectivity*. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,