

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 5864

Introduced by Representative Joseph Gilbert F. Violago



EXPLANATORY NOTE

This commendable bill had been filed in the past Congress and the present proponent is acknowledging the wisdom and hard work of his predecessors.

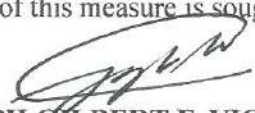
The Environmental Science for Social Change, Inc. (ESSC) dubs the Philippines to be “one of the most severely deforested countries in the tropics” and that “most deforestation has happened in the last 40 years”.¹ The total national forest cover of the Philippine is only at 7.014 million or just 23.38% of the country’s total land area of around 30 million hectares. The current forest coverage is below the 17.8 million hectares cover in 1934.² Deforestation is caused by illegal logging, urban construction, slash and burn farming, commercial purposes (oil and mining exploitation), and erosion, among others.

While there are different programs undertaken by government agencies to promote reforestation, the present proponent believes that more is needed to be done, and with the help of the youth, the Philippines’ Forest lands can return to its previous vitality.

According to the recent data released by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) in October 2020, almost 800,000 college students graduated in academic year 2018-2019 from state universities and colleges (SUCs), local colleges and universities (LCUs), other government schools (OGS, CSI, Special HEIs), and private higher education institutions.³

The State shall protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature (Art. II, Sec. 16, 1987 Constitution). Thus, this bill seeks to require graduating college students to plant at least two (2) trees as a pre-requisite for graduation, in order to help the reforestation efforts of the government.

In view of the foregoing, the urgent passage of this measure is sought.


JOSEPH GILBERT F. VIOLAGO

¹ <https://essc.org.ph/content/view/579/1/>

² <http://www.philchm.ph/deforestation/>

³ <https://ched.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/Higher-Education-Graduates-by-Sex-and-Institution-Type-AY-2018-19.pdf>

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AN ACT
REQUIRING ALL GRADUATING 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:

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

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It shall be the policy of the State to protect and advance the right of the people to healthful ecology. To this end, the State shall promote and pursue the reforestation programs and encourage the participation of the youth in tree planting activities.

SECTION 3. *Tree Planting as a Mandatory Requisite for Graduation.* – As an act of service to the public before joining the country’s workforce, all graduating students in college shall plant at least two (2) trees as a prerequisite for graduation.

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

SECTION 5. *Preference for Indigenous Species.* – The species of trees to be planted should be appropriate to the climate, location, and topography of the area, giving preference to planting of indigenous species of plants.

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

- a. Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR);
- b. Department of Agriculture (DA);
- c. Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG);

- d. Department of Science and Technology (DOST); and
- e. National Commission on Indigenous People (NCIP)

Their responsibilities shall include:

- 1. Establishment of nursery and seedling preparation;
- 2. Site identification and preparation;
- 3. Technical support and extension services; and
- 4. Monitoring and evaluation.

SECTION 7. *Provision of Seedlings.* – The Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Department of Agriculture (DA), in partnership with the LGUs throughout the Philippines shall maintain a seedling bank which will serve as a ready source of seedlings to be used pursuant to this Act.

SECTION 8. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The DepEd and CHED, in coordination with the DILG and DENR, and in consultation with other government agencies, shall pr.

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

SECTION 10. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared invalid, the remainder or any of this provision hereof not affected thereby shall remain in force and effect.

SECTION 11. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, executive orders, presidential issuances and other administrative rules and regulations or parts thereof which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

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

Approved,