

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 9394



Introduced by **HON. GUS S. TAMBUNTING**

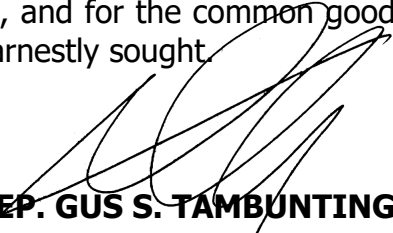
EXPLANATORY NOTE

The proposed legislation seeks to address critical aspects of food security and environmental sustainability in the Philippines. It emphasizes the need to democratize food production, safeguard natural ecosystems, and ensure food security during disasters or shortages. The policy underscores the importance of strategic approaches to food cultivation and conservation to benefit Filipino society.

Central to the proposal is the establishment of seed libraries and storage facilities, coordinated by the Department of Agriculture (DA) and Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). These seed libraries will store a diverse range of seeds, including critically endangered food products, promoting sustainable agriculture and ecosystem recovery. The legislation encourages collaboration with local communities and educational institutions to incorporate seed preservation and propagation into educational curricula.

Moreover, the legislation defines operational guidelines for seed libraries, emphasizing dedicated personnel, clear targets, and adequate budgets for smooth operations. It urges data collection and planning to meet local seed requirements, fostering successful germination and nursery care. The proposal also incentivizes contributions to seed libraries by offering tax exemptions, encouraging public participation in supporting sustainable food production and environmental preservation.

On behalf of the people of Parañaque City's Second District, and for the common good of the Filipino people, the approval of the said measure is earnestly sought.


REP. GUS S. TAMBUNTING
2nd District, Parañaque City

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AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SEED LIBRARIES THROUGHOUT
THE PHILIPPINES, APPROPRIATING THE NECESSARY FUNDS THEREFOR AND
FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

Section 1. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is hereby declared the national policy to ensure food security, democratize and make widespread the growing of food and protect the ability of Filipino society to revive food production systems and natural ecosystems in instances of disaster or shortages.

Sec. 2. Establishment of Seed Libraries where appropriate. –

- 1) The Department of Agriculture (DA) shall set up seed libraries and storage facilities in local government units (LGUs), to ensure the regular availability of seeds of grains and vegetables. It shall likewise coordinate with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) for the collection and preservation of seeds of critically endangered food products.
- 2) The DENR shall have its own seed library in the Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau (ERDB) and in all levels it deems appropriate in order to ensure wide availability of tree and native plants that are non-food for its greening and other ecosystem recovery programs. It shall revisit its seed production areas and prepare for many years when dipterocarp species shed its recalcitrant seeds to enable the department, with the help of civil society, to ensure sufficient propagation, especially of critically endangered trees.
- 3) The Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) shall ensure that within the laboratories of schools with approved

agriculture, forestry or similar courses, seed preservation and instruction for such shall be incorporated.

The DA, DENR and DepEd shall coordinate and organize seminars, workshops and other trainings for the professional benefit of custodians of seed libraries and issue rules and regulations, individually or jointly, in order to support capacity building for seed collection, storage and germination.

Sec. 3. *Role of the Department of Interior and Local Government.* - The Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) shall provide guidelines for local governments to establish seed libraries as appropriate for urban and rural gardening and food production as well as for ecosystem restoration and ensure the availability of seeds for the revival of natural ecosystems whenever they are devastated by natural or human-caused disasters.

Sec. 4. *Operations.* - The entities that establish seed libraries shall ensure that they are run by personnel who are either dedicated to the task or have clear and measurable targets in their work. They shall include such personnel as necessary expenses for operations in their regular budgets and targets. Such personnel shall gather data to determine the needs of the locality for seeds, the availability, the appropriate seeds it would need to make available, and the successful protocols for germination and nursery care.

Sec. 5. *Period of Implementation.* - Within 120 days, the DA, DENR and DepEd shall have plans for the establishment of seed libraries where appropriate and include the budgets for such in their plans and requests under the General Appropriations Act.

Sec. 6. *Functions of the Seed Libraries.* - The seed libraries shall have the following functions:

- 1) Collect local seeds in current use by the agriculture department in the LGU, have samples available for display and keep them viable;
- 2) Distribute any excess inventory to farmers who they validate as having capability to propagate the seeds, on the condition that a reasonable percentage of seeds produced upon harvest shall be turned over to the Seed Library;
- 3) Make a record of the mast fruiting and mast years of known tree stands in the locality and mobilize for their gathering and immediate distribution of recalcitrant ones and the distribution and/or storage of orthodox seeds;
- 4) Keep records of farmers report on the performance of the seeds sourced from the library;

- 5) Keep records of protocols for storage, germination and nursery establishment for the priority seeds as needed by the local community, determined through research and interview protocols; and
- 6) Engender the exchange of seeds among farmers and gardeners in the local community and forge connections that would assist them in successful propagation.

The public libraries and barangay reading centers shall determine if they have personnel, room, and space to run a seed library program in addition to their existing programming.

Sec. 7. Appropriations. - The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be included in the General Appropriations Act of the year following its enactment into law and for the next five (5) years; thereafter, the appropriate units shall undertake the maintenance of seed libraries.

Sec. 8. Tax Exemption. – All donations to all seed libraries, whether in seeds or equipment to store and keep seeds viable, shall be valued and may be used for tax deduction purposes in full as long as the seed library custodian and his or her immediate supervisor accepts the donation as needed for its operations and stocking.

Sec. 9. Submission of Reports. - Within ninety (90) days from the approval of this Act, and at the end of every calendar year thereafter, the Director of the National Library shall submit progress reports to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Senate of the Philippines regarding the implementation of this Act.

Sec. 10. Rules and Regulations. - Within sixty (60) days from the approval of this Act, DA, DENR and DepEd in coordination with the DILG, shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations.

Sec 11. Repealing Clause. – All laws and executive issuances inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

Sec. 12. Separability Clause. – If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity and effectiveness of its other provisions.

Sec. 13. Effective Date. – This Act shall take effect fifteen days after its publication in the Official Gazette or one newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,