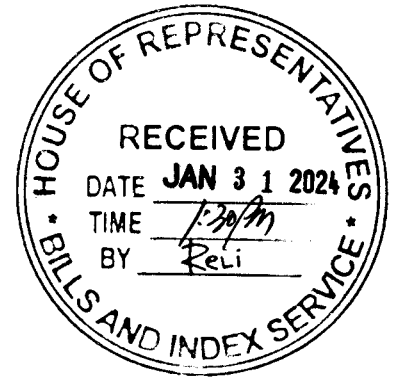


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 9855



Introduced by REP. EMILIO BERNARDINO L. YULO

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Philippine agriculture is continuously being challenged by natural disasters of various forms. According to the Global Assessment of the Status of Human-Induced Soil Degradation (GLASOD), around 70% of the Philippine land area has been degraded, with soil erosion being the most prevalent form of land degradation. With climate change, this will put further strain on rural production and livelihood systems that are already under stress from existing resource scarcity and economic issues.

This bill seeks to address the critical issue of soil degradation and its impact on agricultural productivity and environmental sustainability in the Philippines. This legislation will update and expand Republic Act No. 3082 or An Act to Provide for a Five-Year Soil Survey and Conservation Program, which was passed in 1961. The aforementioned law established a comprehensive and multifaceted strategy to prevent soil erosion and degradation; nonetheless, five years was insufficient to cover such a broad target in the agricultural sector and sustain it. If implemented effectively, this law can result to effective farming methods, soil fertility and productivity, as well as contribute to the conservation of natural resources.

The measure reflects the Philippine government's commitment to addressing the urgent issue of soil degradation and promoting sustainable agriculture. Healthy and fertile soil is essential for ensuring food security, maintaining ecosystem balance, and supporting the country's long-term economic growth. The proposed legislation will empower farmers, landowners, and other stakeholders to make educated decisions and take proactive steps to preserve and improve soil health by promoting scientific soil testing and conservation methods. Through the combined efforts of stakeholders, including farmers, policymakers, scientists, and civil society, the Philippines can advance toward a more resilient and

sustainable agricultural sector for future generations.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate approval of this bill is earnestly sought.



REP. EMILIO BERNARDINO L. YULO

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HOUSE BILL NO. 9855

Introduced by REP. EMILIO BERNARDINO L. YULO

**AN ACT PROVIDING FOR AN ANNUAL SOIL SURVEY AND CONSERVATION PROGRAM,
AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* This act shall be known as the "Soil Survey and Conservation Act".

SEC. 2. *Declaration of State 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 (*Art. 2, Sec.16 1987 Constitution*). The State shall promote soil conservation programs to prevent erosion and land degradation, provide rational utilization of soil resources, increase agricultural productivity, and mitigate the impacts of flood and drought.

SEC. 3. *Objectives.* The program shall accomplish the following objectives:

- (a) To undertake nationwide soil survey, and by scientific analysis, gather data in the types of soil in all municipalities, including their barrios and sitios, in the various agricultural regions of the country with a view to making such information available with maps in any municipality as a guide for determining suitable crops to be grown, the amount and kind of fertilizer, lime and other soil amendments to apply if needed, and the required soil management practices to be adopted for optimum yield of crops;
- (b) To further augment and accelerate the soil and water conservation program of

the Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM), along the major activities of erosion control operations and other necessary conservation practices to insure sustained production;

(c) To coordinate the various efforts and activities of the local government units (LGUs) in soil conservation programs for the purpose of achieving an integrated approach in the utilization of soil resources and strengthen the funding support.

(d) To strengthen public awareness, especially those in the agricultural sector, through information education and communication campaign on the soil conservation programs of the government.

SEC. 4. *Soil Survey and Conservation.* The Bureau of Soils and Water Management, in coordination with the LGUs and other relevant government agencies, shall conduct a nationwide soil survey annually. The soil survey shall encompass the identification, classification, mapping, and evaluation of soil types and characteristics across the country. It shall also develop and implement a comprehensive soil conservation program which may include but not limited to measures and strategies to prevent soil erosion, promote soil fertility, and mitigate the impact of soil degradation.

SEC. 5. *Target Areas.* The extent of operation under the provisions of this Act shall include agricultural lands under cultivation and all other agricultural lands intended to be under cultivation throughout the Philippines, as identified by the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the concerned LGU.

SEC. 6. *Operations.* The implementation aspects of this program shall fall under the following specific activities, to wit:

(a) *Soil Survey.* — This activity shall include studies of the various types of soil in the different target areas throughout the country, through field and laboratory analyses of the soils found in each municipality, including the barrios and sitios therein. Drainage, both

external and internal, and other features, such as relief of the land and climate, shall be taken into consideration. After the survey of each province, a soil map shall be prepared, published, and made available for each municipality therein together with a detailed description of the soil types, crops suited to each, the kind and amount of fertilizer and other soil amendments that should be applied for each crop and such other information as will insure optimum production.

- (b) *Conservation and erosion control.* — From the information obtained in the soil survey, erosion control measures shall be formulated. These measures shall include among others, contour tillage, terracing, strip cropping, cover cropping and construction of farm ponds. Any measure or measures recommended for adoption for any particular farm or region shall be the result of a thorough study of all factors and must include an ocular examination of the area. The result of such study shall be published and made available to farmers in the different municipalities of the province for the information and guidance of farmers and landowners.

In areas where soil erosion has reached a point that immediate action has become necessary, the Director of BSWM shall make available a team or teams composed of personnel from the BSWM or the Secretary of Department of Agriculture shall authorize the Director of BSWM to secure the assistance of other government agencies which he may deem necessary in carrying out the objectives of this Act.

- (c) *Fertilizer Application.* — The BSWM shall provide technical assistance to farmers in the proper use of fertilizers and to other parties desiring such services, based on chemical analysis of soil.
- (d) *Irrigation.* — The BSWM shall provide irrigation schemes that shall be carefully planned and executed. Emphasis shall be placed on high value crop areas. This may include rainwater harvesting facilities, pump irrigation systems, and other irrigation facilities.

SEC. 5. *Research and Development.* The BSWM, in partnership with research organizations, shall allocate resources for soil-related research and development activities. These efforts shall focus on the development of innovative methods, and practices for sustainable soil management and soil conservation.

SEC. 6. *Farmers Education.* There shall be training and capacity-building programs to farmers and landowners on soil conservation practices to strengthen the dissemination of information, technical assistance, and the promotion of best practices in soil management.

SEC. 7. *Supervision.* There shall be created, under the supervision and control of the Director of BWSM, teams to implement the soil survey program envisioned in this Act, for each region. The composition of each team shall be determined by the Director of BWSM, the personnel to be composed of persons who can best accomplish the objective of the soil survey program indicated herein and to include laboratory technicians competent to analyze soil samples.

The Director of BWSM may, in his discretion, create a special section in the main office of the Bureau to coordinate the work in the field.

SEC. 8. *Reporting and Evaluation.* Each LGU, together with the BWSM assigned personnel shall prepare annual reports on the progress of the soil survey and conservation program in their areas. These reports shall be submitted to the Department of Agriculture and made accessible to the public.

SEC. 8. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* The Bureau of Soils and Water Management, in coordination with the Local Government Units concerned, shall issue the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act within a period of ninety (90) days after its effectivity.

SEC. 9. *Appropriations.* The amount necessary to effectively carry out the provisions of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the concerned government agencies. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 10. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees, rules and regulations or parts thereof which are in conflict or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SEC. 11. *Separability Clause.* In the event that any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the validity of the other provisions shall not be affected by such declaration.

SEC. 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