Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **10861**

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Introduced by: **REP. SALVADOR A. PLEYTO, SR.**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Urban farming is the practice of growing food in an urban environment, It has gained popularity worldwide as people recognize the benefits of producing their own food in the city. Various farming techniques are being utilized to maximize limited space such as rooftop gardening, hydroponics, aquaponics, aeroponics, and vertical gardens.

One of the main advantages of urban farming is the ability to have access to fresh and nutritious produce. By growing food close to where it is consumed, urban farmers can harvest crops at their peak freshness, ensuring a higher nutritional value compared to produce that has to travel long distances.

Urban farming also promotes sustainability and resilience in cities through community gardening. By reducing the distance food needs to travel, it helps to lower carbon emissions associated with transportation. Additionally, urban farming can contribute to local food security by providing a reliable source of fresh produce, especially in areas where access to healthy food is limited.

Since urban farming has long existed in cities and has provided a means for many urban residents to supplement their supply of food, it is fitting that urban agriculture in urban areas nationwide be institutionalized.

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

SALVADOR A. PLEYTO, SR.

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HOUSE BILL NO. 10861

Introduced by: **REP. SALVADOR A. PLEYTO, SR.**

AN ACT PROMOTING INTEGRATED URBAN AGRICULTURE IN URBAN AREAS NATIONWIDE TO ADDRESS FOOD SECURITY AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title* – This Act shall be known as the "Integrated Urban Agriculture Act of 2024".

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy* – The State shall promote and protect the fundamental right of every person to adequate food and freedom from hunger. Recognizing the challenges to food security and ecological balance in urban areas, the State shall optimize the use and productivity of urban land resources and spaces to support sufficient and sustainable food production. Towards this end, the State shall promote the development of modern, cost-effective, space-efficient, and environmentally-safe agriculture technologies in urban areas to continue achieving sustainable food production and food security, promoting agroecology, ensuring public and mental health, and thus, improving the quality of life of urban populations. In doing so, the State shall prioritize the conservation of the country's genetic biodiversity, and endemic and heirloom flora and fauna as a strategy for climate change, adaptation, mitigation, and resiliency.

Accordingly, the State shall ensure the integration of principles, strategies, and technologies on urban agriculture in urban planning and instill a love of farming among urban dwellers most especially the youth.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act:

a) Agroecology refers to a scientific discipline and set of practices that studies how different components of the agroecosystem interact and seeks sustainable farming systems that optimize and stabilize yields. It applies ecological concepts and

principles to manage interaction among plants, animals, humans, and the environment for food security and nutrition;

b) Community Gardens refer to any piece of land cultivated by a group of people using either individual or shared plots on public or private land with the consent of the owner, to produce edibles, such as herbs, vegetables, fruits, or ornamentals, as a form of sustainable land use system for economic and social development. Community gardens may be found in neighborhoods and schools, connected to institutions such as hospitals, or located on the ground or roofs of shared housing such as tenements and apartment complexes;

c) Food Forest Gardening refers to multi-layered crop farming or low maintenance and sustainable method of food production that is based on woodland ecosystems, incorporating fruit and nut trees, shrubs, herbs, vines, and perennial vegetables which yields are directly useful to humans. It also refers to a system of agroforestry that creates a diverse, productive, healthy, ecologically sound and sustainable system of land use;

d) Food Diversity refers to a situation wherein all people have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food, at all times, to maintain a healthy and active life;

e) Food System refers to a complex web of activities involving the production, processing, transport, and consumption of food. Issues concerning the food system include the governance and economics of food production, its sustainability, the degrees of which we waste food, how food production affects the natural environment, and the impact of food on individual and population health;

f) Good Agricultural Practices refer to the practices that address environmental, economic, and social sustainability for on-farm processes, and which result in safe and quality food and non-food agricultural products;

g) Idle Lands refer to non-agricultural lands in urban and urbanizable areas on which no improvements have been made by the owner, as certified by the city, municipal or provincial assessor. Idle government lands refer to lands owned by any government entity that has been idle and have not been used for the purpose for which they have been reserved for the past ten (10) years;

h) Indoor Farming refers to controlled environment agriculture which aims to optimize plant growth to house vertical farming techniques in greenhouses, warehouses, abandoned buildings, shipping containers, tunnels, skyscrapers, and modern buildings using soilless farming techniques such as hydroponics, aquaponics, and aeroponics;

i) Integrated urban agriculture refers to the development paradigm that encompasses principles, management technologies, and policies relating to the practice and application of agricultural and fisheries production of food and goods in urban areas;

j) Peri-urban areas refer to areas where urban and rural features and processes meet, interact, and intertwine, usually located between the city and the countryside. Peri-urban areas are semi-dense clusters with a density of at least three hundred (300)

inhabitants per square kilometer and a population of five thousand (5,000) or more but are neither contiguous with nor within two (2) kilometers of an urban area;

k) Protected agriculture refers to the use of technologies that enclose crops to harvest higher yield, safer, cleaner, and of better quality even out of season by modifying the natural environment and protecting crops against the elements which include high temperature, excessive rainfall, humidity, wind, birds, insects;

l) Social preparation refers to the series of activities designed to prepare underprivileged and homeless families to cope with the changes brought about by government development projects;

m) Soilless agriculture refers to the method of growing plants that do not rely on soil as a source of nutrients and water; common methods are hydroponics, aquaponics, and aeroponics;

n) Urban areas refer to the classification as may be made by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) which under PSA Resolution No. 01, Series of 2017-098, covers any of the following:

-If a barangay has a population size of five thousand (5,000) or more;

-If a barangay has at least one establishment with a minimum of one hundred (100) employees;

-If a barangay has five (5) or more establishments with a minimum of zero (0) employees, and five (5) or more facilities within the two (2) kilometer radius from the barangay hall;

o) Urban planning refers to the multi-disciplinary art and sciences of analyzing, specifying, clarifying, harmonizing, managing, and regulating the use and development of land and water resources, in relation to their environs, for the development of sustainable communities and ecosystems in urban and urbanizable areas;

p) Urbanizable areas refer to sites and lands, that consider the present characteristics and prevailing conditions, display marked and great potential of becoming urban areas within the period of five (5) years; and

q) Vertical farming refers to the methods or practices of increasing the number of plants grown in an area by growing crops in vertically stacked layers; such as generally done in greenhouses, warehouses, abandoned buildings, shipping containers, tunnels, skyscrapers, and modern buildings using soilless farming techniques such as hydroponics, aquaponics, and aeroponics.

SEC. 4. . *Coverage* – This Act shall cover idle or abandoned government or private lands, buildings, shipping containers, subdivisions, or villages, public housing, open spaces in all urban, peri-urban, and urbanizable areas in the country, and all available land resources and buildings in schools, state of private universities and colleges, military camps suitable for growing crops and raising poultry, livestock and aquaculture; *Provided,* That, the utilization

of idle lands for urban agriculture purposes shall not be used as grounds for the eviction of informal settler families occupying the lands; *Provided further,* That the raising of poultry and livestock shall be limited to urbanizable areas and all livestock shall be subject to health and safety standards and regulations issued by the Department of Health (DOH), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD) and other relevant government agencies

SEC. 5. . *Urban Farming* – LGUs shall identify and develop idle government and/or private lands, buildings, without prejudice to the rights of owners of private lands, buildings and open spaces, within their jurisdiction, for full or partial conversion solely to community gardens, food forest gardens, indoor farms and/or vertical farms to support food security and community nutrition; *Provided,* That, food forest gardens and urban farms adopting agro-ecological principles shall be the priority form of urban agriculture wherever applicable and feasible; *Provided further,* That, spaces allocated for urban agriculture and aquaculture shall not be prime lots. LGUs in coordination with the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA), shall capacitate neighborhood associations and people's organizations, and/or facilitate the organization and registration of community-based cooperatives, to undertake community gardening and establish community farmers' markets.

Nothing in this Act shall be considered to limit or extinguish the rights of owners to their private land/s and space/s without their consent or without their receipt of just compensation, in case of expropriation.

The DHSUD shall ensure that the design and development of subdivision, condominium, and public housing projects have provisions for adequate spaces for community gardens, food forest gardens, greenhouse agriculture, roof gardens, indoor farms, and/or vertical farms. Towards this end, the DHSUD, in coordination with the DA, shall capacitate homeowners' associations to undertake community gardening and/or vertical farming.

The DA shall provide the necessary technical assistance and support services, including the provision of seeds and seedlings and gardening tools, access to loans from government financial institutions, and training workshops to capacitate various stakeholders, and the design, establishment, promotion, and regulation of indoor and vertical farming machinery and facilities to ensure the full productivity of community gardens, school gardens, food forest gardens, greenhouse farms, roof gardens, and indoor and vertical farms. The DA shall ensure that the provisions of technical assistance are consistent with Philippine Good Agricultural Practices (PHILGAP) or a set of standards and regulations ensuring food quality and safety, facilitation of market access, establishment of community farmers' markets, and reduction in non-compliance with issuances regarding permitted pesticides and other contamination hazards, as provided under Republic Act No. 10611 or the Food Safety Act of 2013 and relevant laws.

The DA, in coordination with the Department of Science and Technology, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Department of Energy, and the Department of Public Works and Highways shall also undertake the establishment of rainwater harvesting facilities in compliance with RA 6716, renewable energy systems and solid waste management systems, including waste-to-energy facilities, to provide a sustainable supply of water, energy, and compost to community gardens, food forest gardens and urban farms.

SEC. 6. . *Urban Agriculture/Aquaculture in Urban Planning* - The DHSUD, in coordination with the DA, shall ensure the integration of concepts and principles of urban agriculture and its relationship to other processes in the food system in urban planning. Accordingly, the DHSUD and DA shall promote sustainable, smart, and organic food production systems that harness the benefits of new technologies and methods in soil, nutrient, water, and energy management, such as composting, rainwater harvesting, and utilization of renewable energy. The DHSUD shall also ensure the rational use of land resources in urban planning to promote sustainable per-urban interface, as well as for the spatial requirements of supply chain management and logistics to strengthen urban-rural foodshed linkages.

Toward these ends, the DHSUD shall promulgate guidelines for the harmonization of Comprehensive Land Use Plans and zoning ordinances of LGUs with urban agriculture policies, frameworks, strategies, and standards.

LGUs are hereby mandated to incorporate urban agricultural development in their respective Annual Development Plans, Annual Investment Plans, Physical Framework Plans, and Development Master Plans including the hiring of Agriculturists and Agricultural and Biosystems Engineers to carry out urban agriculture programs

LGUs, with the assistance of the DA, DILG, and the DICT, shall establish and maintain a digital information system to facilitate the efficient collection, management, and analysis of urban food system, agriculture, and nutrition data, as well as monitoring and evaluation of LGU performance vis-à-vis food system, agriculture and nutrition targets, to inform local planning, policy-making and programming, and to ensure open public access to data.

SEC. 7. *Urban Agriculture / Aquaculture Education*– The DepEd and CHED, with the technical assistance of the DA, shall integrate urban agriculture in the academic curriculum for elementary, secondary and tertiary level students of both public and private academic institutions offering courses in Agriculture, Practical Arts, Home Economics and/or other subjects related to agriculture. A course curriculum on gardening shall be developed and included in the regular curriculum of elementary and secondary education. Instructional materials shall likewise be developed utilizing advanced techniques of crop and food animal production, urban agriculture and farming, and cultivating awareness and appreciation of genetic biodiversity, heirloom and endemic flora and fauna, and agro-ecological principles.

The DepEd, with the assistance of the DA, shall strengthen the implementation of Gulayan sa Paaralan Program in elementary and secondary schools, establishing school gardens to ensure the continuous supply of vegetables for school feeding, in accordance with RA No. 11037, entitled "An Act Institutionalizing a National Feeding Program for Undernourished Children in Public Day Care, Kindergarten and Elementary Schools to Combat Hunger and Undernutrition among Filipino Children and Appropriating Funds Therefor".

For universities and colleges, urban agriculture shall form part of the required period of time spent by students in the National Service Training Program or the Citizens' Military Training. A plan for the utilization or maximization of space occupied by schools shall be formulated specifically for urban agriculture purposes.

SEC. 8. - *Urban Agriculture Campaign* – The DILG, the National Nutrition Council, and the LGUs are mandated to formulate policies on urban farming in consonance with the provisions of this Act and be at the forefront of community-based education and awareness campaigns. For this purpose, LGUs shall mobilize existing structures and local bodies such as the provincial, city and municipal agricultural offices, the provincial, city, municipal and barangay agriculture and fishery councils, the barangay, municipal, city and provincial federation of SK and the youth sector represented in any local special body under LGUs.

The DSWD shall integrate urban agriculture and community nutrition in the seminar-workshops and training programs to educate qualified household-beneficiaries of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps)

SEC. 9—*Research and Development*—The DA and the DOST, as well as relevant state universities, government research and development institutions, and the private sector, shall intensify research on methods and technologies to support urban agriculture, including the development and operation of sustainable demonstrations of urban community gardens, food forest gardens, greenhouses, indoor, roof, and vertical farms.

SEC. 10. - *Incentives* – Compliance by subdivision and condominium developers and/or owners with Section 5 of this Act may qualify them for incentives provided for under Republic Act No. 10771, entitled "An Act Promoting the Creation of Green Jobs, Granting Incentives and Appropriating Funds Therefor", subject to the rules and regulations promulgated by the Department of Finance and the DHSUD.

The commitment and performance of LGUs in implementing this Act shall be included in the criteria for awarding the Seal of Good Governance and the provision of incentives, provided for under Republic Act No 1192.

Loans extended by government and private banks to participating individuals, corporations, and partnerships shall be treated as compliance with RA 1192, entitled "An Act Providing for an Agriculture and Agrarian Reform Credit and Financing System through Banking Institutions.

SEC. 11. *Inter-Agency Coordination* – There is hereby established a National Convergence Program on Urban Agriculture. The Department of Agriculture is hereby designated as the Lead Implementing Agency and the Secretariat of the Convergence Program. The following agencies shall perform duties and responsibilities to develop and sustain concerted action to promote urban agriculture:

a) The DA shall provide technical assistance and support services to LGUs, community-based cooperatives, homeowners' associations, neighborhood associations and people's organizations to ensure the viability and cost-effectiveness of urban agriculture projects and through its Bureau of Agricultural and Fisheries Engineering (BAFE), shall provide the design, specifications, establishment strategies, promotion, regulation and technical assistance in the fabrication of production models of indoor farming, vertical farming and other urban agriculture machinery, equipment, and facilities;

b) The DHSUD shall encourage the integration of urban agriculture principles, policies, strategies, frameworks, and standards in the design and development of

subdivisions and condominium projects. The DHSUD shall ensure such integration in public housing projects and inn preparation or updating of development and investment plans, CLUPs and zoning ordinances of LGUs. The DHSUD shall also promulgate the necessary rules and monitor compliance therewith. The DHSUD shall provide assistance to homeowners' associations to strengthen their capacity to undertake urban agriculture/aquaculture projects in their neighborhoods and communities.

c) The DILG shall monitor the compliance of LGUs with the provisions of this Act in order to determine their qualification for incentives provided for under RA 11292;

d) The DepEd shall integrate the principles and practice of urban agriculture using advanced crop production techniques like soilless agriculture, indoor farming/vertical farming to include methods of irrigation and automated systems into primary and secondary education curricula, including the establishment of school gardens under the *Gulayan at Paghahayupan sa Paaralan* Program. DepEd shall ensure adequate capacity-building programs such as training, hands-on training, or immersion programs of teachers and the development of appropriate instructional materials such as educational videos and manuals for this purpose;

e) DOST shall conduct research on modern, cost-effective methods and technologies to support urban agricultural production, as well as post-harvest handling or surplus produce from urban agriculture projects;

f) DTI shall provide technical assistance in processing and packaging of surplus produce from urban agriculture. aquaculture projects and ensure access of LGUs, cooperatives, homeowners' associations, and people's organizations to markets;

g) DOF shall administer the grant of incentives under Section 9 of this Act to qualified persons based on their compliance with Section 5 of this Act;

h) DBM shall ensure adequate funding for the functions and programs provided for by under this Act;

i) The CHED shall develop and implement a curriculum on capacity building programs such as training-workshop, hands-on training or immersion programs and related standards and instructional materials in support of urban agriculture;

j) The DPWH in compliance with RA 6716 is mandated to undertake construction of water wells, rainwater collectors, development of springs and rehabilitation of existing water wells in all barangays in the Philippines, taking into consideration the population, hydrologic conditions, cost of project development and operations, financial and economic factors and institutional arrangements.

k) National Nutrition Council and the Food and Nutrition Research Institute shall assist the DepEd in identifying the crops to be cultivated in schools farms and in preparing nutritious food, pursuant to standardized menus to ensure child nutrition provided for under Republic Act No. 11037, and in developing the modules on nutrition.

l) The Cooperative Development Authority shall provide guidance and assistance to LGUs in the development of cooperatives within their jurisdiction;

m) The Presidential Commission for the Urban Poor shall undertake social preparation activities to encourage participation and empower poor and underprivileged communities from the preparation and planning to implementation and evaluation of urban development projects; and.

n) The Philippine Information Agency shall undertake a nationwide information campaign, utilizing all forms of media, to raise awareness and encourage participation of the public in the implementation of this Act.

SEC. 12. - *Periodic Report to Congress* – The DA and partner agencies in the National Convergence Program on Urban Agriculture/Aquaculture shall submit annual performance reports to Congress.

SEC. 13. – *Appropriations* – The funds necessary to carry out the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the respective budget of concerned agencies for the current year. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.-

SEC. 14. – *Implementing Rules and Regulations* – Within six (6) months from the effectivity of this Act, the agencies under the National Convergence program on Urban Agriculture/Aquaculture shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 15. - *Repealing Clause.*- All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, ordinances, rules and regulations, and other issuances or part thereof which are inconsistent with this Act, are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 16. - *Separability Clause* – If for any reason any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SEC. 17. *Effectivity* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,