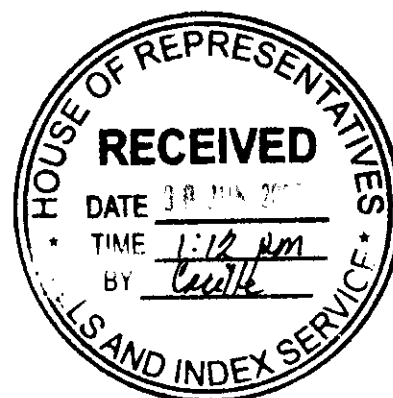


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 320



Introduced by: Hon. Iris Marie D. Montes

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A WOMEN ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCACY AND
SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Women have unique knowledge and responsibilities in the sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity, and they are agents of transformational change.¹

The UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), a global center of excellence on biodiversity, recognizes the impact brought about by environmental degradation and disasters such as flooding, biodiversity loss, and climate change on women who rely on healthy ecosystems to feed their families.

The Climate Risk Index (CRI), which ranks countries by the human and economic toll of extreme weather, places the Philippines among countries affected by recurring extreme events.

It ranked the Philippines in the 10th place of countries most affected by extreme weather events in 1993–2022 along with Dominica, China, and Honduras as well as Myanmar, Italy, and India. It described the Philippines as being “Regularly hit by typhoons, the most destructive being Typhoon Haiyan in 2013, which caused USD 13 billion in damage and 7,000 fatalities. The country endured 372 extreme events, resulting in USD 34 billion in losses.”²

In this light, this bill endeavors to nurture women’s interest in environmental sustainability, promote awareness on the importance of sustainable natural resource management, and harness the enormous potential of women to mobilize Filipinos in protecting, conserving, and managing the environment and natural resources for the present and future generations.

It draws inspiration from Mariang Makiling, a fascinating figure from Philippine mythology who has become the country’s symbol of environmental protection and preservation.

Following the legend that portrays her as a benevolent spirit and protector of the plants, animals, and people living around the communities on the foothills of Laguna’s Mount Makiling, this measure seeks to establish a Women Environmental Advocacy and Sustainability Program that will provide Filipino women a platform to participate in environmental conservation and sustainable development.

¹ Women and the Environment: 25 Years On, UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (<https://www.unep-wcmc.org/en/news/women-and-the-environment--25-years-on>)

² Climate Risk Index 2025: Who suffers most from extreme weather events? (<https://www.germanwatch.org/sites/default/files/2025-02/Climate%20Risk%20Index%202025%20Summary%20EN.pdf>)

It aims to put life to the perceived aspirations of Mariang Makilang – a fairy, a goddess, a fantastic creature, half-nymph, half sylph -- as described by Damiana Eugenio, a renowned Filipino folklorist and author, amid the pressing need of the times for a sustained and dynamic environmental action.

Hence, approval of this bill is earnestly sought.


IRIS MARIE D. MONTES
Kababaihan, Kabalikatan para sa Kapakanan
at Kaunlaran ng Bayan (4K) Party-list

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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 "Mariang Makiling Tagapangalaga ng Inang Kalikasan Act".

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - The State recognizes the role of women in nation-building and their potential to contribute to environmental protection, conservation, and sustainable development. Towards this end, the State shall harness the potential of Filipino women in championing environmental issues and empower them through various modes of participation in environmental advocacy and sustainable practices.

SEC. 3. *Women Environmental Advocacy and Sustainability Program.* - There is hereby established a Women Environmental Advocacy and Sustainability Program, hereinafter referred to as the Program, under the supervision of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in collaboration with the Philippine Commission on Women.

SEC. 4. *Program Components* - The Program shall consist of the following components:

(a) *Education and Training.* - Develop and implement comprehensive environmental education and training programs, which shall include workshops, seminars, webinars, and conferences on environmental advocacy and sustainable practices;

(b) *Environmental Organizations.* - Establishment and strengthening of environmental organizations in communities nationwide, promoting hands-on implementation and monitoring of environmental and sustainable projects;

(c) *Women Environmental Ambassadorship.* - Creation of Women Environmental Ambassadors who shall undergo specialized training and be responsible for spearheading environmental campaigns in their schools, communities, or regions;

(d) *Community Outreach Programs.* - Organization of community outreach programs such as clean-up drives, tree planting, recycling initiatives, and other environment-related projects, allowing Filipino women to be actively involved in their localities' efforts towards sustainability; and

(e) *Annual National Women Environmental Summit.* - Conducting an annual summit where women participants from different regions will convene, participate

in capacity building workshops, collaborate on joint projects, and raise environmental concerns for policy action.

SEC. 5. *Incentive and Recognition Program.* - The DENR, in coordination with the PCW and concerned agencies and civil society organizations, shall establish the Gawad Mariang Makiling Award, an incentive and recognition system to encourage women participation and acknowledge exceptional efforts, projects, or initiatives in environmental activism and sustainable practices.

SEC. 6. *Funding.* - The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year's allocations of the DENR. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continuous implementation of the Program shall be included in the agency's annual budget under the General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - The DENR, in consultation with the PCW and concerned agencies, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act within ninety (90) days from its effectivity.

SEC. 8. *Separability Clause.* - Any portion or provisions of this Act that may be declared unconstitutional or invalid and shall not have the effect of nullifying other portions or provisions hereof as long as such remaining portions or provisions can still subsist and be given effect in their entirety.

SEC. 9. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, memoranda, circulars, and other issuances, or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with the Act, are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 10. *Effectivity Clause.* - This Act shall be take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,