

TWENTIETH CONGRESS OF THE
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
First Regular Session

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HOUSE BILL No. 419



**Introduced by REPRESENTATIVES LANI MERCADO-REVILLA,
BRYAN B. REVILLA and RAMON JOLO B. REVILLA III**

**AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND
COMMUNITIES IN THE COUNTRY**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Climate change is an ongoing global phenomenon, and amidst urbanization and population explosion the challenge has become too great for the concerned agencies and public officials to face. The Philippines is no exception. As cities continue to expand to accommodate growing populations, the challenges of traffic congestion, environmental degradation, inadequate housing, poor waste management leading to flooding, and strained public services have become increasingly urgent. These issues threaten not only the quality of life of urban dwellers, but also the long-term economic and environmental sustainability of the nation.

This measure seeks to provide a clear public policy framework for the development of sustainable cities and communities in the Philippines, aligning with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11 of the United Nations, which aims to "make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable." It also aims to strengthen inter-agency coordination and provide capacity-building for local government units (LGUs) in order to effectively implement sustainability projects. This guarantees equitable access to basic services, housing, and livelihood opportunities for all residents, particularly the marginalized.

By passing this measure, the government affirms its commitment to building cities that are not only engines of economic growth but also livable, environmentally sound, and socially-inclusive. The development of sustainable cities and communities is not merely a policy choice — it is a necessary step towards securing the future of the Filipino people and the generations to come.

Building sustainable cities is a crucial and indispensable strategy for attaining balance between ecology and progress. These offer a viable path to a healthier and more resilient and equitable future for all. Sustainable cities offer an option to a progressive city where biodiversity is still preserved and the residents are enjoined to participate in sustainable practices like proper waste and water management, waste reduction from source, efficient resource utilization and collaborate in preserving our natural resources for the future generation.

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



REP. LANI MERCADO - REVILLA , MSLG, DM (hc)

Representative
2nd District of Cavite



REP. BRYAN B. REVILLA

Representative
AGIMAT Partylist



REP. RAMON JOLO REVILLA II I

Representative
1st District of Cavite

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

Section 1. *Short Title.* -This Act shall be known as the "Sustainable Cities and Communities Act".

Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - The State shall, pursuant to the constitutional mandate to undertake a continuing program of urban land reform and housing which will make available to underprivileged and homeless citizens decent and affordable housing, access to basic services, and adequate employment opportunities, and in consonance with the constitutional guarantees on social justice, general welfare, public health and ecological balance, recognize the right to the city of all which encompasses the collective access to sustainable resources, meaningful participation in urban planning and governance, and social inclusion.

It is likewise declared the policy of the State to promote inclusive, resilient, and sustainable urban development.

To these ends, the State shall ensure the inclusive use of urban space for housing and livelihood, improve access to basic services, develop integrated public transportation systems and green infrastructures, protect ecosystems, and manage risks to climate change and disasters.

Further, the State shall pursue programs to celebrate diversity and cultural heritage, foster creativity, innovation and participation in urban planning and policy-making, and maintain public order and safety through the prevention of crime, violence and

discrimination.

Sec. 3. Coverage. - All cities and municipalities, with a majority of barangays classified as urban by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), hereinafter referred to as urban areas, are hereby mandated to align their plans, programs and activities towards the full implementation of this Act.

Sec. 4. Guiding Framework for Sustainable Cities and Communities. - To fulfill its economic, political and social functions, a local government unit covered under this Act shall conform with and implement plans, programs and activities, guided by *Ambisyon 2040*, the Philippine Standards for Sustainable Cities and Communities, and the following guiding principles:

- a) Inclusive urban circular economy which creates decent jobs with fair wages; supports entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation; ensures safe and non-discriminatory working environments; and promotes resource-efficient industries and consumption;
- b) Spatial justice which promotes multiple use of land to prevent forced evictions, displacement, marginalization, and gentrification; and ensures that urban development provides vulnerable and marginalized sectors the access to safe, adequate, and affordable housing under different tenurial arrangements, giving priority to on-site resettlement, as well as universal healthcare, accessible education, adequate infrastructures, sustainable livelihoods, food security and nutrition; and safe and inclusive public spaces that foster social cohesion;
- c) Urban renewal which includes slum upgrading to improve housing, infrastructures and services; urban greening, including the promotion of urban agriculture for food security and communal wellness; and the development of inclusive, safe, accessible and enjoyable open spaces and parks;
- d) Urban mobility and connectivity which provides for inclusive, safe, accessible, affordable, efficient and sustainable public transportation through the development of adequate transportation infrastructures, utilities and intermodal transportation systems, including non-motorized modes of transportation to strengthen global and urban-rural linkages and management;
- e) Digital connectivity through the establishment and maintenance of information and communications technology (ICT) Infrastructure and fast, secure, stable, and affordable internet connectivity to strengthen global and urban-rural linkages;
- f) Urban safety which ensures freedom of all persons, regardless of gender, age, health status, income, nationality, ethnicity, and political, religious or sexual orientation from crimes and all forms of violence and discrimination in the workplace and public spaces;

- g) Ecological balance which requires the sustainable management of natural resources; protection and conservation of biodiversity, natural ecosystems and landscapes; proper waste management and sanitation; provision of green infrastructures; and the development and use of renewable energy sources in transportation, industry and households to reduce carbon footprint and improve water and air quality;
- h) Disaster resilience and climate change adaptation by capacitating urban areas to adapt to and manage threats and risks posed by climate change and disasters upon the citizenry, especially vulnerable groups, and to facilitate post-disaster rehabilitation and recovery;
- i) Cultural diversity which respects, protects, and promotes the diverse livelihoods, customs, memory, identities, expressions, and sociocultural norms of its inhabitants; the preservation of tangible cultural heritage, such as artistic creations, historical sites and monuments; and safeguards intangible cultural heritage, such as oral traditions, performing arts, indigenous knowledge and traditional skills, as well as instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated therewith;
- j) Participatory urban governance which involves political participation in the formulation, implementation, and monitoring of urban policies, and the budgeting of urban programs to promote transparency, effectiveness, and inclusiveness in the engagement of a diverse set of inhabitants and their organizations, especially of urban poor and marginalized groups, upholding communal spirit and supporting community-building; and
- k) Alignment of economic, social and environmental policies between and among national, regional, city and municipal government units, facilitating the achievement of the goals of each unit.

The Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD), in consultation with relevant government agencies, local government units, civil society organizations, the private sector and the academe, within one hundred eighty (180) days from the effectivity of this Act, shall harmonize existing national housing and urban development plans with this Act and formulate, in coordination with the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), and the PSA, a National Housing and Urban Development Sector Plan (NHUDSP) to operationalize the goals of this Act, taking into consideration the unique and evolving economic, social and institutional contexts of the country.

The NHUDSP shall provide short-, medium-, and long-term strategic plans to achieve the goals of this Act.

The NHUDSP shall also generate estimates and projections to determine present and future demand for infrastructures and services in urban areas, and shall identify

policy and program interventions to address challenges to sustainable urban development, and specific periodic targets and indicators and investment requirements thereof.

Sec. 5. *Targets and Indicators.* - In preparing the NHUDSP, the DHSUD, NEDA, DILG and the PSA shall be guided by the principles provided under Section 4 of this Act, as well as the targets and indicators set forth in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda of the United Nations:

- a) Urban population living in slums – measured in terms of proportion of urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing;
- b) Public transport access – measured in terms of proportion of population that has convenient access to public transport, by sex, age, income group, and persons with disability;
- c) Sustainable urbanization rates - measured in terms of ratio of land consumption rate to population growth rate;
- d) Urban planning and management - measured in terms of proportion of cities with a direct participation structure of civil society in urban planning and management that operate regularly and democratically;
- e) Protecting cultural heritage - measured in terms of total public and private expenditure per capita spent on the preservation, protection and conservation of all cultural and natural heritage;
- f) Deaths and injuries from disasters - measured in terms of number of deaths, missing persons and directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population;
- g) Economic losses from disasters - measured in terms of direct economic loss in relation to global gross domestic product, damage to critical infrastructure and number of disruptions to basic services, attributed to disasters;
- h) Solid waste management - measured in terms of proportion of urban solid waste regularly collected and with adequate final discharge out of total urban solid waste generated;
- i) Urban air quality - measured in terms of the annual mean levels of fine particulate matter;
- j) Open spaces in cities - measured in terms of average share of the built-up area of cities that is open for public use for all, by sex, age and persons with disability;

- k) Safe spaces in cities - measured in terms of proportion of persons who are victims of physical or sexual harassment, by sex, age, persons with disability, and place of occurrence, in the previous twelve (12) months;
- l) Urban and regional planning - measured in terms of proportion of population living in cities that implement urban and regional development plans integrating population projections and resource needs, by size of city;
- m) Integrated disaster risk management - measured in terms of adoption and implementation of national disaster risk reduction strategies;
- n) Local disaster risk management - measured in terms of adoption and implementation of local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk reduction strategies;
- o) Urban economy - measured in terms of percentage of the labor force in the education and Research and Development sectors, and unemployment rate and number of businesses;
- p) Innovation-gear education - measured in terms of the number of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics higher education degree programs being offered by an educational institution in the city;
- q) Use of renewable energy - measured in terms of percentage of consumed energy from renewable sources;
- r) Universal healthcare - measured in terms of number of in-patient hospital beds and physicians;
- s) Food security - measured in terms of percentage of city budget spent on initiatives on urban agriculture;
- t) Water and wastewater management - measured in terms of water consumption per capita, percentage of households with access to basic water supply, percentage of treated wastewater that is reused;
- u) Access to ICT services - measured in terms of proportion of population that has access to fast, secure, stable, and affordable internet services to cater and accommodate online or digital transactions or services necessary for the conduct of daily activities in the modern society; and
- v) Such other targets and indicators as determined by the DHSUD, NEDA, DILG, and PSA consistent with the principles that guide sustainable cities and communities as provided in Section 4 of this Act: *Provided, That* at any time, but not more than once every five years, such targets and indicators may be reviewed or revised as the need arises to conform to changes and

new developments brought about by the latest trends in institutionalizing sustainable cities and communities.

Sec. 6. *Urban Planning and Urban Development* - The DHSUD shall, in coordination with NEDA, DILG and Department of Public Works and Highways, provide technical assistance to local government units in the integration of the pertinent provisions of this Act, the National Urban Development and Housing Framework, and the NHUDSP in their Annual Development Plans, Annual Investment Plans, Physical Framework Plans, Development Master Plans, Comprehensive Land Use Plans, Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plans, and similar plans.

National agencies and local government units shall ensure the genuine and adequate participation in urban, regional, spatial, and environmental planning: *Provided*, That access to information, official records, public records and to documents and papers pertaining to official acts, transactions or decisions, and research data related to urban development to enable informed participation in the decision-making shall be made available pursuant to Section 7, Article III of the 1987 Constitution.

Sec. 7. *Incentives for Sustainable Cities*. - The DILG and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), shall incorporate the annual targets set by DHSUD, DILG and NEDA in the awarding of the Seal of Good Local Governance under Republic Act No. 11292, otherwise known as "The Seal of Good Local Governance Act of 2019."

Sec. 8. *Public Participation*. - National agencies and local government units shall ensure the genuine and adequate participation in urban, regional, spatial, and environmental planning through the following:

- a) Incentives for the private sector - the Department of Finance shall provide incentives to the participation of the private sector in the achievement of the goals identified under this Act, in accordance with Republic Act No. 10771, otherwise known as the "Philippine Green Jobs Act of 2016";
- b) Capacity building for communities - the DHSUD shall provide technical assistance to homeowners' associations, neighborhood associations, people's organizations, and other local organizations to empower them as partners in achieving the goals of this Act, and enable them to undertake community-level actions towards becoming sustainable communities; and
- c) Informed participation - information, education and communication materials shall be developed to make the NHUDSP accessible to all. Every Filipino shall have access to information, official records, public records and to documents and papers pertaining to official acts, transactions or decisions, and research data related to urban development to enable informed participation in the decision-making process.

Sec. 9. *Report to Congress.* - The DHSUD, NEDA and DILG shall submit an annual report on the performance of their respective duties provided for under this Act and the compliance of cities and urban municipalities to the provisions of this Act to the Congress of the Philippines, through the Committee on Housing and Urban Development of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Urban Planning, Housing and Resettlement of the Senate.

Sec. 10. *Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).* - Within six (6) months from the effectivity of this Act, the DHSUD, in consultation with the NEDA, DILG, PSA, League of Cities of the Philippines, League of Municipalities of the Philippines, civil society organizations, the private sector and the academe, shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

Sec. 11. *Separability Clause.* - If any part or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, other parts or provisions thereof which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

Sec. 12. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations or other issuances or parts thereof, inconsistent with this Act, are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

Sec. 13. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,