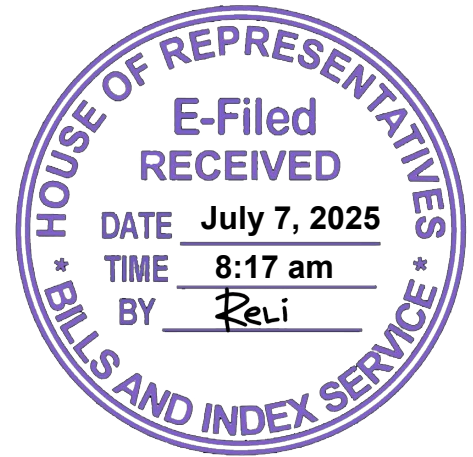




Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 1337



Introduced by Rep. Robert Nazal

AN ACT PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE AND COMMUNITY-DRIVEN URBAN AGRICULTURE AND FARMING, INTEGRATING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE'S URBAN AND PERI-URBAN AGRICULTURE PROGRAM, CREATING A NATIONAL URBAN AGRICULTURE PROGRAM, ESTABLISHING AN URBAN AGRICULTURE PROMOTION FUND, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines has become a predominantly urban nation. According to the 2020 Census of Population and Housing, 58.93 million Filipinos — 54 percent of the 109.03 million total population — now live in urban barangays, an increase of 7.20 million people since 2015. Rapid urbanisation, shrinking peri-urban production space, and the widening physical distance between farms and consumers have strained the country's ability to supply city dwellers with fresh, affordable, and nutritious food.

Price movements underscore this vulnerability. Headline inflation accelerated to 2.9 percent in December 2024 and remained at that level in January 2025, reversing earlier gains in price stability. Urban households feel the pinch more acutely because food accounts for a larger share of their budgets, making them exceptionally sensitive to supply shocks.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) has responded through its National Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture Program (NUPAP), which mobilises idle lots, rooftops, and community spaces for vegetable gardening, small-scale livestock, and aquaculture. NUPAP's recent technology-transfer initiatives—ranging from hydroponics to other soilless systems—show rising public demand for space-efficient, climate-smart production. Yet the programme remains largely project-based, uneven across regions, and dependent on annual appropriations that preclude long-term planning.

Meanwhile, supply gaps persist. The Philippine Vegetable Industry Roadmap 2021-2025 warns that deficits in high-value crops will widen unless productivity in or near urban markets improves, while the DA's food-security targets for 2025 explicitly call for modernised production systems and stronger farm-to-consumer linkages.

Several "urban agriculture" bills were filed in the 19th Congress, but deliberations faltered over financing, digital-innovation, and land-access provisions. The attached Urban Agriculture and Farming Promotion Act of 2025 closes those gaps. It elevates NUPAP into a statutory National Urban Agriculture Program governed by a ten-year roadmap; mandates every city and municipality to identify Urban Agriculture Zones within one year and to earmark at least three percent of their Local Development Fund for urban-agriculture projects; limits initial usufruct or lease terms on public lands to five years, renewable, ensuring equitable site rotation; establishes a National Seed-Exchange and Plant-Nursery Network to secure high-quality, climate-resilient planting materials; and mainstreams advanced technologies — AI-driven decision-support tools, IoT-enabled micro-irrigation, remote-sensing diagnostics, and blockchain traceability—to boost yields, curb losses, and strengthen consumer confidence. These reforms will be financed through an Urban Agriculture Promotion Fund, partly sourced from the net disposable income of PAGCOR and BCDA, and subjected to results-based monitoring and evaluation.

By consolidating existing initiatives, harmonising definitions, and providing predictable financing and technology pathways, the measure offers a coherent framework for Philippine cities to become net contributors—rather than passive consumers—of safe and nutritious food. It stands to create green jobs, cut the carbon footprint of long-distance haulage, raise household incomes through community gardens and vertical farms, and reinforce disaster resilience by decentralising food sources.

In an era of chronic price volatility and climate-induced supply disruptions—and in fidelity to the constitutional mandate to safeguard health, food security, and a balanced ecology—the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



ROBERT NAZAL
Representative

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the “Urban Agriculture and Farming Promotion Act of 2025.”

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is the policy of the State to attain food security, strengthen climate resilience, improve public health and nutrition, generate employment, and ensure environmental sustainability by encouraging the cultivation, processing, and distribution of food and related agricultural products within urban and peri-urban areas. To avoid redundancy and maximize resources, all initiatives shall be consolidated and scaled up through the Department of Agriculture's Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture Program (UPAP), which shall serve as the foundation of the National Urban Agriculture Program created under this Act.

SEC. 3. Objectives. – This Act aims to:

1. institutionalize a National Urban Agriculture Program (NUAP);
2. expand secure access to suitable land, water, and other inputs;
3. establish soil, water-use, and food-safety standards for urban settings;
4. strengthen research, development, and technology adoption, including controlled-environment agriculture;
5. build human capital through education, training, and extension services;
6. encourage private-sector, cooperative, and community participation;
7. provide fiscal and non-fiscal incentives for urban growers;

8. create an Urban Agriculture Promotion Fund to finance programs and projects;
9. establish a National Seed-Exchange and Plant-Nursery Network; and,
10. mainstream advanced technologies—including artificial intelligence (AI), Internet-of-Things (IoT) sensors, remote sensing, and blockchain-based traceability—to enhance productivity, resource efficiency, and market access.

SEC. 4. Definition of Terms. – As used in this Act:

1. *Urban Agriculture* or *Urban Farming* refers to the cultivation, processing, and distribution of food crops, livestock, fisheries, and related value-adding enterprises within or on the fringe of cities and other densely populated areas, including backyards, rooftops, vacant lots, parks, schools, buildings, vertical structures, container sites, and peri-urban fringes.
2. *Community Garden* means a parcel of land or space collectively cultivated by residents, cooperatives, civil-society organizations, or educational institutions for food, livelihood, educational, or environmental purposes.
3. *Controlled-Environment Agriculture* (CEA) refers to any technology-based agricultural system—such as greenhouses, hydroponics, aquaponics, aeroponics, vertical farms, and container farms—designed to optimize growing conditions.
4. *Seed-Exchange and Plant-Nursery Network* refers to a system of public and private facilities mandated under this Act to produce, store, and distribute quality seeds and planting materials suited to urban conditions.
5. *Artificial-Intelligence (AI)–Driven Agricultural Technology* refers to software or hardware employing machine-learning or similar techniques to optimize production, resource management, or supply-chain operations in urban agriculture.
6. *City or Municipal Agriculture Office* (C/MAO) refers to the local government office mandated to implement agriculture programs within its jurisdiction.
7. *Urban Farmer* refers to any natural or juridical person engaged in urban agriculture or farming.

SEC. 5. National Urban Agriculture Program. – There is hereby created a National Urban Agriculture Program (NUAP) to be implemented by the Department of Agriculture (DA) in coordination with the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Science and Technology (DOST), Department of Health (DOH), Department of Education (DepEd), Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), National Housing Authority (NHA), and other concerned agencies.

Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DA shall submit to the Inter-Agency Urban Agriculture Council an inventory of all ongoing UPAP projects and align them with the NUAP. The NUAP shall adopt a ten-year Urban Agriculture Roadmap, reviewed every three (3) years.

SEC. 6. Urban Agriculture Zones and Land Use. – Within one (1) year from the effectivity of this Act, every city and municipality shall designate in its Comprehensive Land-Use Plan and Zoning Ordinance Urban Agriculture Zones (UAZs) consisting of public and private lands, rooftops, and other spaces suitable for urban agriculture or farming, subject to environmental and easement requirements.

SEC. 7. Land-Access Mechanisms. – Local government units (LGUs), government-owned or-controlled corporations, state universities and colleges, and national agencies may enter into usufruct, lease, joint-venture, or similar agreements with qualified urban farmers, cooperatives, or community organizations for an initial term not exceeding five (5) years, renewable for successive five-year periods upon satisfactory performance and continuing site suitability.

SEC. 8. Water Resources and Sustainable Practices. – LGUs shall promote rain-water harvesting, gray-water recycling, micro-irrigation, and other water-efficient technologies. Large-scale projects shall submit a Water-Use and Waste-Water Management Plan consistent with Republic Act No. 9275 and its implementing rules.

SEC. 9. Soil Quality, Site Safety, and Environmental Safeguards. – The DA, in collaboration with the DENR and DOH, shall prescribe soil testing, site contamination assessments, and, where necessary, remediation protocols before cultivation. Sites with hazardous contamination shall be remediated and certified safe by competent authorities prior to food production.

SEC. 10. Food Safety and Post-Harvest Standards. – All produce intended for human consumption shall comply with Republic Act No. 10611 (Food Safety Act of 2013), relevant Philippine National Standards, and applicable municipal ordinances. C/MAOs shall issue Food-Safety Compliance Certificates and conduct regular inspections.

SEC. 11. Research, Development, Technology Transfer, and Digital Innovation. – The DA-Bureau of Agricultural Research, DOST, state universities and colleges, and accredited private-sector research institutions shall:

1. prioritize R&D on AI-enabled crop- and nutrient-management systems, IoT-based micro-irrigation, predictive analytics for pest and disease surveillance, renewable-energy integration, remote-sensing crop-health diagnostics, and climate-smart CEA designs;
2. develop open-access digital platforms and mobile applications providing real-time advisories to urban growers; and
3. pilot blockchain or similar distributed-ledger systems for supply-chain traceability of urban-grown produce.

Research outputs and decision-support tools shall be disseminated through the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI), TESDA, LGUs, and other digital-extension channels.

SEC. 12. Capacity Building, Education, and Extension. – DepEd shall integrate urban agriculture and agripreneurship concepts into the K-12 curriculum and encourage every school to maintain a learning garden. TESDA shall develop competency-based training regulations and certifications for urban-agriculture technicians. The DA, through ATI and its regional field offices, shall deliver extension services, including AI-generated localized advisories translated into Filipino and major regional languages.

SEC. 13. National Seed-Exchange and Plant-Nursery Network. – The DA, in partnership with LGUs, state universities, and accredited private entities, shall establish at least one (1) seed-exchange hub and one (1) plant nursery in every highly urbanized city or province within three (3) years from the effectivity of this Act. These facilities shall maintain stocks of indigenous and climate-resilient varieties, support community seed-saving, and operate seed-loan or barter schemes under quality standards issued by the DA.

SEC. 14. Incentives and Support Services. – Duly registered urban farmers, cooperatives, and social enterprises may avail of:

1. an income-tax holiday for the first five (5) years of commercial operation, subject to guidelines by the Board of Investments in consultation with the DA and DTI;

2. duty- and value-added-tax-free importation of specialized equipment not locally available, upon endorsement of the DA;
3. priority access to concessional credit windows of government financial institutions;
4. crop-insurance coverage under the Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation;
5. participation in DA and DTI market-linkage programs, including electronic commerce platforms;
6. preferential access to DA- or DOST-financed AI and CEA equipment-financing programs with interest subsidies of up to two (2) percentage points; and
7. priority enrollment in government-hosted digital marketplaces and e-Kadiwa platforms.

SEC. 15. Urban Agriculture Promotion Fund. – An Urban Agriculture Promotion Fund, hereafter the Fund, is hereby established and shall be administered by the DA. The Fund shall finance seed-exchange and nursery operations, AI and IoT adoption grants, CEA capital subsidies, soil-remediation projects, research grants, and outreach, monitoring, and evaluation activities.

The Fund shall be sourced from annual appropriations, fees collected under this Act, grants and donations, and one-quarter of one percent (0.25 percent) of the net disposable income of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation and the Bases Conversion and Development Authority, without prejudice to existing allocations for education and health.

SEC. 16. Public-Private Partnerships and Community Participation. – LGUs and national agencies may enter into build-operate-transfer, build-lease-transfer, joint-venture, or other public-private partnership arrangements to develop urban-agriculture infrastructure, including AI-equipped vertical-farm complexes, provided that technology transfer to LGUs or cooperatives is demonstrated in the project proposal. Community organizations and cooperatives shall be consulted in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of all urban-agriculture projects.

SEC. 17. Role of Local Government Units. – LGUs shall:

1. designate a City or Municipal Urban Agriculture and Farming Focal Person within the C/MAO;
2. adopt enabling ordinances on zoning, incentives, and operational regulations consistent with this Act;
3. allocate at least three percent (3 percent) of their annual Development Fund to urban-agriculture programs;
4. maintain a digital registry of Urban Farmers, Community Gardens, seed-exchange hubs, and nurseries interoperable with national DA databases for AI-enabled analytics and planning; and

5. conduct periodic audits of urban-agriculture projects and submit annual reports to the Inter-Agency Urban Agriculture Council.

SEC. 18. Lead Agency and Inter-Agency Urban Agriculture Council. – The DA shall be the lead agency in implementing this Act. An Inter-Agency Urban Agriculture Council (IAUAC) is hereby created, chaired by the Secretary of Agriculture and co-chaired by the Secretary of the Interior and Local Government, with the heads of DENR, DOST, DOH, DepEd, CHED, TESDA, DTI, DPWH, NEDA, NHA, and three (3) representatives from the private sector and civil society as members. The Council shall promulgate national guidelines, coordinate agency efforts, and submit an annual progress report to Congress.

SEC. 19. Appropriations. – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the concerned agencies. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for its continued implementation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 20. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DA, in consultation with the DILG, DENR, DOH, DepEd, CHED, TESDA, DTI, LGU leagues, farmers' groups, and other stakeholders, shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations for the effective enforcement of this Act.

SEC. 21. Monitoring and Evaluation. – The DA, through the IAUAC, shall establish a results-based monitoring and evaluation framework with key performance indicators on production volume, household food security, employment generation, environmental impact, technology adoption, and return on investment. A comprehensive mid-term review shall be submitted to Congress within five (5) years from the effectivity of this Act.

SEC. 22. Penalties. – Any person who deliberately (a) falsifies soil- or water-quality test results, (b) markets food products labeled as “urban-grown” without compliance certificates, or (c) causes pollution or public-health hazards in the course of urban-agriculture operations shall, upon conviction, be punished by imprisonment of up to six (6) years and a fine of up to one million pesos (₱1,000,000.00), without prejudice to higher penalties under existing laws. Licenses or permits issued under this Act may also be suspended or revoked.

SEC. 23. Separability Clause. – If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 24. Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, executive orders, administrative issuances, rules, and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 25. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.