

TWENTIETH CONGRESS)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Introduced by Representative Rufus B. Rodriguez and
Representative Maximo B. Rodriguez, Jr.*

House Bill No. **1493**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill was approved by the House of Representatives during the 19th Congress.

Southeast Asia holds more diverse flora and fauna than Europe, but it is in danger of losing its biodiversity. It has natural habitats of up to 40 percent of all species existing on the planet. A single small tropical-forest patch anywhere in this region, covering just a couple of hundred hectares, might support more bird and mammal species than there are in the whole of the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany combined.

However, the flora and fauna of the region are increasingly under threat. Annually, ASEAN loses one percent of its forest cover, a figure four times higher than the world average. There are more than 150 endangered species in the Philippines alone. Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia were among the world's top megadiverse countries. At the same time, the three Asean nations were also among 25 biodiversity hotspots or places at risk of species loss.

The region's continued biodiversity loss is due to extensive deforestation and habitat loss, widespread conversion of land for agriculture or urban and industrial development, and the continuing rapid population growth. Southeast Asia could have three-fourths less forest cover and 42 percent less biodiversity by 2010 at the current rate of logging, forest fires and problematic land use, among others. Today, more trees are being felled due to shifting agricultural practices, illegal lumber trade and large-scale mining. Further, global warming and climate change are environmental phenomena intertwined with the world's decreasing biodiversity. The loss of biodiversity is making climate change more complicated which poses threat on the planet's marine and plant life.

This bill seeks to address the problem of biodiversity loss by requiring every student to plant ten (10) trees every year. To date, there are 2.4 million tertiary students, six million in the secondary level, and 13 million in the primary level. Hence, in just a year, an additional 214,000,000.00 trees would be planted.

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


RUFUS B. RODRIGUEZ


MAXIMO B. RODRIGUEZ, JR.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Introduced by Representative Rufus B. Rodriguez and
Representative Maximo B. Rodriguez, Jr.*

House Bill No. **1493**

AN ACT

**REQUIRING ALL GRADUATING SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE STUDENTS TO
PLANT TWO (2) TREES EACH AS A CIVIC DUTY FOR ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION
AND PRESERVATION, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the “Graduation Legacy for Reforestation Act.”

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is the declared policy of the State to protect and advance the right of the Filipino people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature. Towards this end, the State shall promote and pursue reforestation programs and encourage tree planting as a means of involving the youth in public and civic affairs.

SEC. 3. Tree Planting as a Mandatory Requisite for Graduation. – As an act of public service before they join the country’s labor force, all graduating students in senior high school and college, except physically handicapped and students with special needs, shall plant two (2) trees each as a prerequisite for graduation.

SEC. 4. Tree Planting Sites. – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the concerned local government units (LGUs) shall determine the appropriate tree planting sites within the LGU territories, in coordination with schools, colleges and universities.

SEC. 5. Preference for Indigenous Species. – The species of trees to be planted should be appropriate to the location, climate and topography of the area, with preference for the planting of indigenous species.

SEC. 6. Partner Agencies and Stakeholders and Their Responsibilities. – The Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) shall implement the provisions of this Act, in partnership with the following agencies:

- (a) DENR;
- (b) Department of Agriculture (DA);
- (c) Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG);
- (e) Department of Science and Technology (DOST); and
- (f) National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP).

The responsibilities of these agencies shall include:

- (1) Establishment of nursery and seedling preparation;
- (2) Site identification and preparation;
- (3) Technical support and extension services; and
- (4) Monitoring and evaluation.

SEC. 7. Provision of Seedlings. – The Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) of the DENR and the DA, in partnership with LGUs throughout the Philippines, shall maintain a seedling bank that will serve as a ready source of seedlings to be used in the implementation of this Act.

SEC. 8. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – Within sixty (60) days after the effectivity of this Act, the DepEd and CHED shall, in coordination with the DENR and DILG, and in consultation with other agencies, promulgate and issue the necessary rules and regulations to implement this Act.

SEC. 9. Appropriations. – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriations of the departments and agencies concerned. Thereafter, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

The LGU concerned may set aside funds from any local revenue an amount deemed appropriate for the implementation of this Act.

SEC. 10. Separability Clause. – Should any portion or provision of this Act be declared unconstitutional, the remainder thereof not otherwise affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 11. Repealing Clause. – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, proclamations or administrative regulations that are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

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,