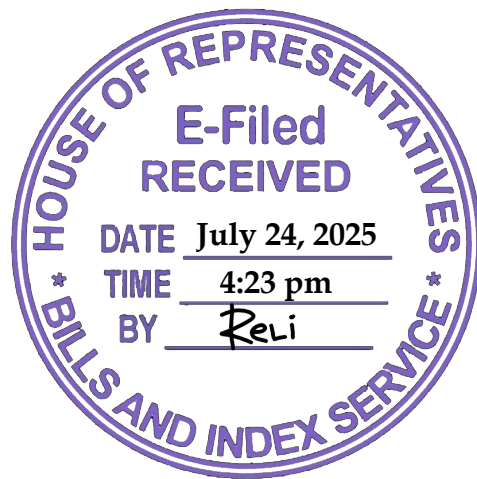




Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth (20th) Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 2296



Introduced by **Representative MA. VICTORIA CO-PILAR**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

A balanced and healthful ecology is a constitutional right of every Filipino. This right carries with it an equivalent obligation for each of us to ensure its continuity for the enjoyment of the next generation. In fact, the Supreme Court introduced the concept of intergenerational responsibility as early as the 1990s when it ruled in the landmark case of *Oposa v. Factoran*, recognizing the obligation of the children to ensure a balanced and healthful ecology for the future generation.

Unfortunately, we are now experiencing climate change. The rising global temperatures is just one of its many adverse effects that impact ecological balance and ultimately humans. In the country alone, several places experienced heatwave as recorded by the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA). A heat index of at least 50 degrees Celsius is considered as extreme heat level, while at least 45 degrees Celsius is classified as a danger level heat index.

Children, especially students, are one of the vulnerable sectors mostly affected by heatwaves. They have to endure the scorching heat of sun while going to school, while inside the school premises, and until they go home. Public schools often remedied this situation by a short-term solution of suspending face-to-face classes and adopting an online mode of teaching.

With this measure, we intend to involve the students to contribute in a long-term solution to cool down school temperature. Trees can effectively cool down the surrounding temperature through shading and transpiration. Thus, as preliminary requirement for graduation, whether in elementary, high school, or college, a graduating student must plant at least five trees within the public-school grounds, gardens or other available areas within the school premises; or in an idle or vacant public lands; or in public parks in urban and rural areas; or in an ancestral domain; or in other suitable lands.

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

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AN ACT
MANDATING ALL GRADUATING ELEMENTARY, HIGH SCHOOL, AND COLLEGE
STUDENTS TO PLANT TREES AS A PREREQUISITE FOR GRADUATION AND FOR OTHER
RELATED PURPOSES

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 “Graduation Legacy for the Environment Act”.

Sec 2. Declaration of Policy – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature. The State shall promote collaboration with the citizens to combat the loss of our natural resources and rejuvenate our environment by undertaking nationwide tree planting activities and providing effective measures for their maintenance and sustainability.

Sec 3. Mandatory Tree Planting – A graduating elementary, high school, and college student from public educational institution shall be required to plant at least five (5) trees as a mandatory prerequisite for graduation.
Private educational institutions are highly encouraged to adopt a similar program.

Sec 4. Location – The tree planting under this Act shall be in any of the following locations:
a) Public school grounds, gardens or other available areas within the school premises;
b) Idle or vacant public lands;
c) Public parks in urban and rural areas;
d) Ancestral domain; and
e) Other suitable lands.

Sec 5. Appropriation – The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

Sec 6. Implementing Rules and Regulations – Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Education and Commission on Higher Education, in consultation with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and other relevant agencies, shall jointly promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to effectively implement the provisions of this Act.

Sect 7. Separability Clause – If any provision or part hereof, is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

Sec 8. Repealing Clause – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with the provision of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

Sec 9. Effectivity Clause – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,