

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **2398**



Introduced by **HON. MIGUEL LUIS R. VILLAFUERTE, HON. VINCENZO RENATO LUIGI R. VILLAFUERTE, HON. TSUYOSHI ANTHONY G. HORIBATA, AND HON. TERRY L. RIDON**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The geography and topography of the Philippines make it one of the most conducive places for bamboo growth and cultivation. The country is home to over 60 native and endemic species of bamboo, 21 of which are endemic.¹ The country also exported bamboo worth approximately P117 million (\$2.08 million) in 2023.²

In Filipino culture and industries, bamboo is deeply ingrained. While bamboo is a popular material for local handicraft items and ornaments, it also has numerous functional and traditional uses. Bamboo is a major product in construction, offering a cheap and reliable substitute to common timber. It is found in most lakes and other bodies of water as primary material for fish corrals. The agriculture industry also benefits from bamboo not only as a food source, but also as banana props. Traditionally, it is even used in cooking, in music, and even in martial arts. Even Filipino mythology and literature feature bamboo. All of these are testaments to the popularity and abundance of bamboo in the country. Despite these, bamboo remained underutilized and understudied.

It is unfortunate that we do not have a national agency in charge of maximizing the potential of bamboo to contribute to our economy. In line with this, the bill proposes the creation of a Philippine Bamboo Industry Development Council tasked with providing overall policy and program direction, and coordinating the activities of government bodies to ensure the success of a Bamboo Industry Roadmap (BIR). The BIR shall include programs and projects for the scientific propagation, development and management, processing, utilization, business development, and commercialization of Philippine bamboo and bamboo products.

The Philippines is currently the sixth largest bamboo exporting-country globally, but are largely low-value, unprocessed bamboo poles.³ As of 2021, investments in the domestic bamboo industry totaled P89 million (approximately \$1.6 million), with P143 million (approximately \$2.56 million) in domestic sales, supporting nearly 11,000 jobs and over 5,000 MSMEs nationwide.

Through this bill, government shall formulate guidelines for large-scale bamboo reforestation projects, compelling educational campaigns, and adequate technology transfer

¹ Open Journal of Ecology (May 2024), *Harnessing the Market Potential of the Bamboo Industry in Central Luzon, Philippines*. <https://www.foi.gov.ph/requests/aglzfmVmb2ktcGhyHQsSB0NvbniRlbnQiEERFTltMjU5NDY0MzA3NDg0DA>

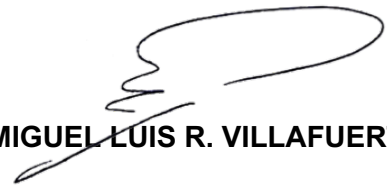
² World Bank (WITS) Trade Data (2023). *Seats of Bamboo and Similar Materials (HS Code 940150)*. <https://wits.worldbank.org/trade/comtrade/en/country/PHL/year/2023/tradeflow/Exports/partner/ALL/product/940150>

³ Manila Bulletin (December 29, 2024). *Enormous Export Potential Seen for PH Sturdy Bamboos*. <https://mb.com.ph/2024/12/29/enormous-export-potential-seen-for-ph-sturdy-bamboos>

mechanisms. It shall also explore the provision of support services and incentives to bamboo farmers and exporters, among others. The government shall also undertake research to diversify the uses of bamboo, thus strengthening its marketability.

A similar bill was approved by the House of Representatives and transmitted to the Senate during the 19th Congress.

In light of the foregoing, it is humbly requested that this bill be passed to give this poor man's timber the priority and attention it has long deserved.



HON. MIGUEL LUIS R. VILLAFUERTE



HON. VINCENZO RENATO LUIGI R. VILLAFUERTE



HON. TSUYOSHI ANTHONY G. HORIBATA



HON. TERRY L. RIDON

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**AN ACT PROMOTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BAMBOO INDUSTRY BY
STRENGTHENING THE PHILIPPINE BAMBOO INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL,
CREATING THE BAMBOO INDUSTRY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER,
PROVIDING INCENTIVES FOR BAMBOO PLANTATION DEVELOPMENT, AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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 “Philippine Bamboo Industry Development Act.”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to promote and support industries that generate employment, especially in the rural areas, reduce poverty, foster a sustainable environment, and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

It shall also be the policy of the State to foster a self-reliant and independent economy that supports indigenous, scientific, and technological capabilities and skills. To this end, the State shall recognize the strategic importance of bamboo as a sturdy, versatile, and replenishable material that can be a sustainable source of livelihood and catalyst for agricultural productivity.

The State shall likewise ensure the integrated and continuous development of the Philippine bamboo industry through policies and programs that encourage the planting of bamboo, accelerate the development of bamboo-based products and designs, and promote Philippine bamboo products in international markets. It shall establish a program for the sustainable utilization, propagation, and promotion of bamboo as furniture, food, construction, and design material, and other uses.

SECTION 3. *The Philippine Bamboo Industry Development Program.* – The Philippine Bamboo Industry Development Council, hereinafter referred to as the Council, shall formulate the Philippine Bamboo Industry Development Program, hereinafter referred to as the Program, which shall include plans of actions and projects for the scientific propagation, development and management, processing, utilization, business development, and commercialization of Philippine bamboo and bamboo products, through the cooperation of all stakeholders of the industry that include producers of raw materials, processors, marketing and promotion service providers, and concerned national agencies and local government units (LGUs).

SECTION 4. Objectives of the Philippine Bamboo Industry Development Program. – The Program shall aim to make the Philippine bamboo industry competitive in the local and global markets and provide opportunities for local employment and the establishment of bamboo-based community enterprises. The Program shall:

- (a) Ensure sufficient quality raw materials through nurseries and plantations;
- (b) Ensure continuous R&D for relevant technologies;
- (c) Provide accurate industry data via PBIDC;
- (d) Promote investment through incentives and facility establishment;
- (e) Provide skilled labor via capacity building;
- (f) Ensure ongoing training in plantation and processing;
- (g) Provide local machines of competitive quality and price;
- (h) Ensure local and global markets; and
- (i) Ensure sustainable implementation resources.

SECTION 5. Role of the Philippine Bamboo Industry Development Council. – The Philippine Bamboo Industry Development Council, created under Executive Order No. 879, s. 2010, hereinafter referred to as the Council, shall provide overall policy and program direction of various agencies and instrumentalities to ensure the implementation of the Program.

The Council shall be administratively attached to the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and shall be composed of the following:

- (a) Secretary of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) as Chairperson;
- (b) Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR);
- (c) Secretary of the Department of Agriculture (DA);
- (d) Secretary of the Department of Education (DepEd);
- (e) Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST);
- (f) Secretary of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE);
- (g) Executive Director of the Bamboo Industry Research and Development Center (BIRDC);
- (h) Chairperson of the National Commission of Indigenous Peoples (NCIP);
- (i) National President of the League of Municipalities of the Philippines (LMP);
- (j) Executive Director of the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP);
- (k) Two (2) Representatives from Non-Government Organizations (NGOs);
- (l) One Representative from a reputable industry association; and;

- (m) One Representative each from the Bamboo Farmers, the Bamboo Manufacturers, and the Bamboo Processors' Associations.

The Council shall promulgate such rules and regulations as may be necessary for the attainment of the objectives of this Act.

SECTION 6. *Bamboo Industry Research and Development Center.* – The Bamboo Industry Research and Development Center, hereinafter referred to as the Center, is hereby created to serve as the secretariat of the Council. It shall be headed by an Executive Director and shall consist of divisions as may be necessary to ensure the effective implementation of the goals and objectives of the Center, including the following functions: research and development; trade promotion and education; networking and linkages; internal administration and finance; and such other divisions as may be necessary.

The organizational structure, staffing pattern, and compensation schedule of the Center shall be prepared in accordance with existing laws, rules, and regulations. Other member agencies of the Council shall provide additional administrative and technical staff support to the Center upon the determination by the Council of the necessity for such augmentation.

The Center shall perform the following powers and functions:

- (a) Promote and encourage the establishment and management of bamboo nurseries, plantations, and processing facilities that would accelerate the production and commercialization of bamboo and various bamboo products;
- (b) Promote the commercialization and market access of appropriate, innovative, and viable bamboo industry development technologies and products;
- (c) Monitor and evaluate the performance of bamboo industry development programs and projects;
- (d) Coordinate and partner with other government agencies in the implementation of bamboo industry development programs and projects;
- (e) Coordinate and partner with the private sector, people's organizations and non-governmental organizations, and the academe in providing assistance on matters pertaining to bamboo industry development;
- (f) Accept grants, donations, and contributions from local and international donors and such similar sources of funds for the implementation of the provision of this Act, subject to the usual budget, accounting, and auditing rules and regulations;
- (g) Conduct capability-building initiatives for farmers, processors, designers, and other stakeholders in the bamboo industry;
- (h) Conduct research and development in partnership with appropriate government agencies to advance sustainable bamboo industry development practices;
- (i) Supervise the implementation of the plans and programs of the Council;
- (j) Manage and administer the projects identified by the Council;
- (k) Conduct, in cooperation or partnership with appropriate government agencies, a

periodic review of the Philippine Bamboo Industry Development Roadmap; and

- (l) Submit periodic reports to the Council on the progress and accomplishment of programs and projects.

SECTION 7. *The Executive Director of the Center.* – The Executive Director shall be appointed by the Chairperson of the Center with approval of the Council. The Executive Director shall be a citizen and resident of the Philippines and must possess executive and management experience of at least three (3) years, and considerable knowledge about the bamboo industry.

In addition, the Executive Director shall have the following powers and functions:

- (a) Oversee the day-to-day operations of the Center;
- (b) Provide technical and administrative support to the Council;
- (c) Assist the Council in the performance of its tasks; and
- (d) Perform such other functions, duties, and responsibilities as may be necessary to implement this Act.

SECTION 8. *Support to the Program by Local Government Units.* – Local government units (LGUs) shall participate in the implementation of the Program. All provinces, cities, and municipalities shall establish a Bamboo Industry Development Council and shall endeavor to capacitate agricultural workers and encourage entrepreneurs in harvesting and post-harvesting operations.

Provincial governments shall formulate and implement their respective bamboo industry development programs within two (2) years from the enactment of this law.

SECTION 9. *Incentives for Bamboo in Plantation Development.* – Investors in bamboo plantation development shall enjoy the following incentives:

- (a) Exemption from the payment of rent for the use of government lands for commercial bamboo plantation for the first five (5) years of operation, reckoned from the date of the first harvest of the plantation;
- (b) In the case of private plantations, exemption from the requirement to secure a cutting permit for the harvesting of bamboo and a transport permit for as long as the plantation is registered with the Community Environment and Natural Resources Officer (CENRO) of the DENR: *Provided, That* the plantation owner shall inform the CENRO about the date of harvest, and the estimated volume of the harvest. Inventory of the plantation prior to harvest shall not be required. All CENROs shall approve and enter into a registry the names of private bamboo plantation investors;
- (c) Exemption from the payment of forest charges and other fees for taxes that local government units may impose;
- (d) Access to development loans from public financial institutions for plantation developers;
- (e) Insurance coverage of plantations and plantation development equipment by the Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation;

- (f) Tax free importation of plantation development equipment, including tree nursery facilities, pursuant to Republic Act No.10863, otherwise known as the Customs Modernization and Tariff Act (CMTA);
- (g) To claim expenses incurred for plantation operations as deductible expenses for income tax purposes, subject to the provisions of the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997, as amended: *Provided*, That the deduction shall only apply to the taxable period when the expenses were incurred;
- (h) To claim as ordinary and necessary expenses or as capital expenditure expenses incurred in the development and operation of a bamboo plantation prior to the initial commercial harvest;
- (i) Prioritized access for plantation developers to credit assistance from government-owned, controlled or supported financial institutions;
- (j) Acceptance of plantation as collateral for loans in government-owned-or-controlled banks;
- (k) In the case of a tenured developer; entitlement to fair compensation upon the premature termination of the agreement at no fault of the holder: *Provided*, That all depreciable permanent and semi-permanent improvements such as roads, buildings, and nurseries including the planted and standing trees and other forest crops introduced and retained in the area, shall be properly evaluated: *Provided, further*, That the amount of compensation shall be mutually agreed upon by both Department and the tenure-holder; *Provided, finally*, That in case of disagreement between them, the matter shall be submitted to arbitration by a mutually acceptable and impartial third party adjudicator;
- (l) No volume restriction in the exportation of bamboo culms from plantation;
- (m) Tax free importation of processing equipment by processors engaged in bamboo industry, pursuant to the Customs Modernization and Tariff Act (CMTA); and
- (n) Inclusion in the annual investment program of the National Economic Development Authority of industrial bamboo plantations in forest lands and priority access to funds from external and internal sources.

SECTION 10. *Repealing Clause.* – The funds necessary to carry out the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year’s budget of the DTI. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 11. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within sixty (60) days after the effectivity of this Act, DTI and the Council shall, in coordination with the DENR, and DOST promulgate the rules and regulations to implement this Act.

SECTION 12. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act or part hereof is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected by such declaration shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 13. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, executive and administrative orders, rules and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SECTION 14. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,