

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 3179



Introduced by REP. EMILIO BERNARDINO L. YULO

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Philippine agriculture continues to face significant challenges brought about by natural disasters and environmental degradation. According to the Global Assessment of the Status of Human-Induced Soil Degradation (GLASOD), approximately 70% of the country's land area has already been degraded, with soil erosion identified as the most widespread form of degradation. As climate change intensifies, these issues will place additional pressure on rural production systems and livelihoods that are already strained by resource scarcity and economic vulnerabilities.

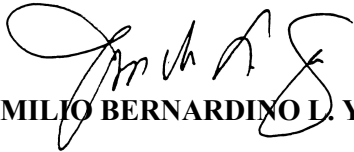
This bill seeks to address the pressing issue of soil degradation and its far-reaching impact on agricultural productivity, food security, and environmental sustainability. It proposes to update and expand the scope of Republic Act No. 3082, entitled "An Act to Provide for a Five-Year Soil Survey and Conservation Program," which was enacted in 1961. While the original law laid the groundwork for soil conservation efforts, its limited five-year timeframe and outdated provisions have proven insufficient to tackle the scale and complexity of current challenges in the agricultural sector.

The proposed measure aims to institutionalize a long-term, science-based national soil conservation strategy to promote sustainable farming practices, enhance soil fertility, and contribute to the conservation of vital natural resources. It reinforces the government's commitment to promoting sustainable agriculture as a cornerstone of food security and inclusive economic development.

By advancing the adoption of modern soil testing, mapping, and conservation technologies, this legislation will empower farmers, landowners, and other stakeholders to make informed decisions on land use and resource management. It also seeks to foster stronger collaboration among key sectors, government agencies, farmers' cooperatives, researchers, civil society organizations, and local communities, to build a more resilient and productive agricultural landscape.

This bill underscores the importance of preserving the nation's soil resources for present and future generations. It affirms the role of healthy, fertile soil not only in maintaining ecosystem integrity but also in driving sustainable rural development and long-term economic growth.

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


REP. EMILIO BERNARDINO I. YULO

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**AN ACT PROVIDING FOR AN ANNUAL SOIL SURVEY AND
CONSERVATION PROGRAM, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* This act shall be known as the "Soil Survey and
Conservation Act".

SEC. 2. *Declaration of State 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 (Art. 2, Sec. 16 1987 Constitution). The
State shall promote soil conservation programs to prevent erosion and land degradation,
provide rational utilization of soil resources, increase agricultural productivity, and
mitigate the impacts of flood and drought.

SEC. 3. *Objectives.* The program shall accomplish the following objectives:

- (a) To undertake nationwide soil survey, and by scientific analysis, gather data in the
types of soil in all municipalities, including their barrios and sitios, in the various
agricultural regions of the country with a view to making such information available
with maps in any municipality as a guide for determining suitable crops to be grown,
the amount and kind of fertilizer, lime and other soil amendments to apply if needed,
and the required soil management practices to be adopted for optimum yield of crops;

- (b) To further augment and accelerate the soil and water conservation program of the Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM), along the major activities of erosion control operations and other necessary conservation practices to insure sustained production;
- (c) To coordinate the various efforts and activities of the local government units (LGUs) in soil conservation programs for the purpose of achieving an integrated approach in the utilization of soil resources and strengthen the funding support.
- (d) To strengthen public awareness, especially those in the agricultural sector, through information education and communication campaign on the soil conservation programs of the government.

SEC. 4. *Soil Survey and Conservation.* The Bureau of Soils and Water Management, in coordination with the LGUs and other relevant government agencies, shall conduct a nationwide soil survey annually. The soil survey shall encompass the identification, classification, mapping, and evaluation of soil types and characteristics across the country. It shall also develop and implement a comprehensive soil conservation program which may include but not limited to measures and strategies to prevent soil erosion, promote soil fertility, and mitigate the impact of soil degradation.

SEC. 5. *Target Areas.* The extent of operation under the provisions of this Act shall include agricultural lands under cultivation and all other agricultural lands intended to be under cultivation throughout the Philippines, as identified by the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the concerned LGU.

SEC. 6. *Operations.* The implementation aspects of this program shall fall under the following specific activities, to wit:

- (a) *Soil Survey.* — This activity shall include studies of the various types of soil in the different target areas throughout the country, through field and laboratory analyses of the soils found in each municipality, including the barrios and sitios therein. Drainage, both external and internal, and other features, such as relief of the

land and climate, shall be taken into consideration. After the survey of each province, a soil map shall be prepared, published, and made available for each municipality therein together with a detailed description of the soil types, crops suited to each, the kind and amount of fertilizer and other soil amendments that should be applied for each crop and such other information as will insure optimum production.

(b) *Conservation and erosion control.* — From the information obtained in the soil survey, erosion control measures shall be formulated. These measures shall include among others, contour tillage, terracing, strip cropping, cover cropping and construction of farm ponds. Any measure or measures recommended for adoption for any particular farm or region shall be the result of a thorough study of all factors and must include an ocular examination of the area. The result of such study shall be published and made available to farmers in the different municipalities of the province for the information and guidance of farmers and landowners.

In areas where soil erosion has reached a point that immediate action has become necessary, the Director of BSWM shall make available a team or teams composed of personnel from the BSWM or the Secretary of Department of Agriculture shall authorize the Director of BSWM to secure the assistance of other government agencies which he may deem necessary in carrying out the objectives of this Act.

(c) *Fertilizer Application.* — The BSWM shall provide technical assistance to farmers in the proper use of fertilizers and to other parties desiring such services, based on chemical analysis of soil.

(d) *Irrigation.* — The BSWM shall provide irrigation schemes that shall be carefully planned and executed. Emphasis shall be placed on high value crop areas. This may include rainwater harvesting facilities, pump irrigation systems, and other irrigation facilities.

SEC. 7. *Research and Development.* The BSWM, in partnership with research organizations, shall allocate resources for soil-related research and development activities. These efforts shall focus on the development of innovative methods, and practices for sustainable soil management and soil conservation.

SEC. 8. *Farmers Education.* There shall be training and capacity-building programs to farmers and landowners on soil conservation practices to strengthen the dissemination of information, technical assistance, and the promotion of best practices in soil management.

SEC. 9. *Supervision.* There shall be created, under the supervision and control of the Director of BSWM, teams to implement the soil survey program envisioned in this Act, for each region. The composition of each team shall be determined by the Director of BSWM, the personnel to be composed of persons who can best accomplish the objective of the soil survey program indicated herein and to include laboratory technicians competent to analyze soil samples.

The Director of BSWM may, in his discretion, create a special section in the main office of the Bureau to coordinate the work in the field.

SEC 10. *Reporting and Evaluation.* Each LGU, together with the BSWM assigned personnel shall prepare annual reports on the progress of the soil survey and conservation program in their areas. These reports shall be submitted to the Department of Agriculture and made accessible to the public.

SEC. 11. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* The Bureau of Soils and Water Management, in coordination with the Local Government Units concerned, shall issue the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act within a period of ninety (90) days after its effectivity.

SEC. 12. *Appropriations.* The amount necessary to effectively carry out the provisions of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the concerned government agencies. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 13. *Separability Clause.* If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions, which are not affected thereby, shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SEC. 14. *Repealing Clause.* Any law, decree, ordinance or administrative circular not consistent with any provision of this Act is hereby amended, repealed, or modified accordingly.

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

Approved,