

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 3943



Introduced by: Hon. Iris Marie D. Montes

AN ACT
REQUIRING BENEFICIARIES OF SOCIAL AMELIORATION PROGRAMS OF
THE GOVERNMENT TO PLANT TWO (2) TREES EACH AS A CIVIC DUTY
FOR ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION, AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

"They who plant a tree plant hope."

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on Climate Change and Land declares that "planting trees will always result in capturing more atmospheric carbon dioxide and thus in annual mean cooling of the globe."

According to the Climate Change Commission, plants and trees take carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and turn it into sugars through photosynthesis. It asserts that planting additional trees could remove more carbon from the atmosphere and store it for a long time, as well as improve soil quality at a relatively low cost.¹

On this basis, this bill seeks to mandate beneficiaries of the government's social amelioration programs, except those who are physically handicapped, sick or with special needs, to plant two (2) trees each in exchange for the assistance they received from the government.

This proposal is anchored in promoting a whole-of-nation approach in protecting and preserving the environment and seeks to increase on the current state of the environment and the role of trees in mitigating climate impacts and disasters.

Moreover, this bill aims to bolster and sustain local greening initiatives and mainstream the importance of planting the right species of trees, especially in vulnerable areas across the country.

¹ <https://climate.gov.ph/news/303>

In view thereof, approval of this bill is earnestly sought.


IRIS MARIE D. MONTES
Kababaihan Kabalikatan para sa Kapakanan
at Kaunlaran ng Bayan (4K) Party-list

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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 “Balik Tulong para sa Kalikasan 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 Filipino citizens in public and civic affairs.

SEC. 3. *Tree Planting as a Mandatory Requisite for Beneficiaries of Social Amelioration Programs.* - As an act of public service, beneficiaries of Social Amelioration Programs of the government, except physically handicapped, sick, and the elderly, shall plant two (2) trees each as a prerequisite for availing the benefits for a particular program or assistance.

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 the appropriate government agency.

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 Social Welfare and Development 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);
- (d) Department of Labor and Employment;
- (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 DSWD 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,