



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

20th CONGRESS
1st Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4022



Introduced by **REPRESENTATIVE JENNIFER A. LAGBAS**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article II, Section 16 of the 1987 Constitution provides that “the State shall protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature.” Further, Article II, Section 13 recognizes that “the State shall recognize the vital role of the youth in nation-building and shall promote and protect their physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being.”

Climate change continues to pose an urgent and existential threat to the Philippines, being one of the most disaster-vulnerable countries in the world. Extreme weather events, rising temperatures, and biodiversity loss have taken a toll on the lives, livelihoods, and resources of countless Filipinos. These challenges necessitate concrete, community-based, and intergenerational responses that directly involve the youth.

Tree planting is a practical and sustainable approach to address the effects of climate change. It improves air quality, enhances water conservation, prevents soil erosion, restores biodiversity, and mitigates greenhouse gas emissions. Beyond its ecological benefits, tree planting instills in the youth a sense of civic duty, environmental stewardship, and collective responsibility for the welfare of future generations.

This proposed measure requires all graduating senior high school and college students to plant at least two (2) trees as a prerequisite for graduation. The bill also establishes clear mechanisms for monitoring and reporting, emphasizes the use of indigenous species suitable for specific locations, and provides incentives to top-performing educational institutions. By institutionalizing this tree-planting requirement, the State not only addresses environmental concerns but also cultivates a generation of Filipinos who are environmentally conscious and committed to nation-building.

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



HON. JENNIFER A. LAGBAS
Representative
First District, Misamis Oriental



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AN ACT
REQUIRING ALL GRADUATING SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE STUDENTS TO
PLANT AT LEAST TWO (2) TREES AS A CIVIC DUTY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION, PROVIDING MECHANISMS FOR
ITS IMPLEMENTATION, 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 "Youth Tree Planting for Climate Action Act".

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is hereby declared the 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. The State recognizes the vital role of the youth in nation-building and shall promote their involvement in civic and public affairs, particularly in environmental protection and climate change mitigation.

Towards this end, the State shall encourage and support the participation of graduating students in tree planting and allied activities as a means of instilling patriotism, environmental awareness, and social responsibility. Planting trees and nurturing ecosystems shall not only contribute to ecological stability and biodiversity conservation but shall also foster intergenerational responsibility by cultivating environmental stewards for the present and future generations.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* - For purposes of this Act:

- (a) *Allied Activities* - shall refer to activities which support or complement tree planting, providing a holistic learning approach and experience for graduating students. It includes activities such as, but not limited to, producing seeds, clearing planting sites, digging holes, weeding, potting of seedlings, composting for the production of fertilizer, watering, maintaining of nursery, putting up fences to protect the seedlings from grazing, trampling, and other potential damage caused by animals, and such other activities as may be related to or in preparation for growing a tree and increasing its chance of survival;

- (b) *Graduating Students in High School* - shall refer to students enrolled in senior high school at Grade 12 level;
- (c) *Graduating Students in College* - shall refer to students enrolled in the last year of their undergraduate course;
- (d) *Indigenous Species* - shall refer to species or subspecies of wildlife naturally occurring or has naturally established population in the country; and
- (e) *Planting Sites* - shall refer to areas that possess the characteristics appropriate and necessary in planting and cultivating the growth of healthy trees, which is evaluated based on soil quality, climate conditions, topography, biodiversity, accessibility, and other safety and environmental hazards.
- (f) *Professional forester* - shall refer to a registered and licensed natural person who holds a valid certificate of registration and a valid professional identification card issued by the Professional Regulatory Board for Foresters and the PRC defined under Republic Act No. 10690, otherwise known as "The Forestry Profession Act."

SEC. 4. Coverage. - This Act shall apply to all public and private Senior High Schools (SHS) and Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) in the Philippines.

SEC. 5. Location. - The trees to be planted under this Act shall be located in planting sites which are determined to be suitable by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Local Government Units (LGUs), in close coordination with the concerned educational institutions, preferably within the municipality, city, or province where the educational institution is located. *Provided*, however, That, in the absence of a suitable planting site within the municipality, city, or province where the educational institution is located, tree planting activities may be conducted in suitable planting sites in a nearby municipality, city, or province, as may be applicable.

Provided, further, That tree planting activities under this Act shall be consistent with existing forest land use and tenure agreements, including, but not limited to, Sustainable Forest Land Management Agreements and Community-Based Forest Management programs, to ensure proper coordination with tenure holders and communities responsible for long-term maintenance.

SEC. 6. Tree planting as a prerequisite for graduation. - All graduating students in senior high school and college in the Philippines shall plant at least two (2) trees each as a prerequisite for their graduation: *Provided*, That, persons with disability (PWD) shall be exempted from the requirement only if their impairment is of a nature that renders them fully and effectively incapacitated from participating in the tree planting activities. *Provided*, however, That, the responsibility of the exempted PWD student for planting at least two (2) trees each shall be assumed either by the educational institution's respective teaching or non-teaching staff and/or any other volunteer graduating student.

Provided, further, that students may not participate in any activity related to their graduation, including but not limited to the filing of an Application to Graduate (ATG), graduation rites, and/or the release of academic documents or records, unless they have complied with the tree planting requirement under this Act and have been issued a Certificate of Compliance by their educational institution, duly verified by the DENR or its local offices.

SEC. 7. Priority Species. - The species of trees to be planted should be appropriate to the location, climate, and topography of the area, prioritizing Indigenous Species. All priority Indigenous Species shall be determined by the DENR.

SEC. 8. Partner Agencies and Stakeholders. - The DENR, in partnership with the Department of Education (DepEd), the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), the Department of Agriculture (DA),

the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), and Local Government Units (LGUs), shall ensure the effective and efficient implementation of the provisions of this Act.

For this purpose, the joint responsibilities of the aforementioned government agencies and stakeholders are as follows:

- (a) Information dissemination in connection with the tree planting activities, including allied activities;
- (b) Coordination among different agencies and stakeholders;
- (c) Identification and assessment of planting sites, ensuring that all necessary standards and requirements are met; and
- (d) Monitoring and evaluation

SEC. 9. *Specific Roles and Functions of Agencies and Educational Institutions.* - To ensure the effective and efficient implementation of this Act, the following shall be the specific functions of the following agencies:

- (a) The DENR shall:
 - (i) Identify priority species and planting sites suitable for the tree planting activities which would be performed within protected areas (PAs), forestlands, and other lands of the public domain, and develop a list from which the DepEd and CHED shall elect;
 - (ii) Conduct survey and mapping of areas where mass or collective tree planting activities can be performed;
 - (iii) Provide the native tree and bamboo seedlings required for the planting sites;
 - (iv) Maintain a seedling bank or nursery, which will serve as a ready source of seedlings to be provided to educational institutions;
 - (v) Provide other technical assistance as may be requested by the DepEd, CHED, and other educational institutions;
 - (vi) Maintain a registry of professional foresters who may be engaged by educational institutions for the supervision and management of tree planting sites; and
 - (vii) Align the tree planting activities mandated under this Act with existing DENR flagship programs and ensure that all student-led tree planting activities are registered in the official DENR monitoring portal for transparency, data consolidation, and carbon sequestration accounting.
- (b) The DepEd shall:
 - (i) Conduct information dissemination and campaigns in its field offices and senior high schools regarding tree planting requirements for graduating students;
 - (ii) Include the tree planting activities, as well as allied activities, in the school calendar;
 - (iii) Direct the concerned educational institutions to mobilize the graduating students to comply with the tree planting requirement for graduation;
 - (iv) Maintain a list of students who have completed the required tree planting activities;
 - (v) Monitor and regulate the operation of tree planting activities, including allied activities;
 - (vi) Prepare and submit reports of the actual number of trees planted per graduating batch of students to DENR;
 - (vii) Ensure that all participating educational institutions engage the services of a professional forester to supervise and manage tree planting sites in coordination with the DENR and LGUs;
 - (viii) Coordinate with the DENR, DA, DILG, and other relevant government agencies to provide hazard, risk, and safety training to supervising teachers and coordinators; and
 - (ix) Perform other duties and functions necessary to accomplish the mandate of this Act.

- (c) The CHED shall:
- (i) Conduct information dissemination and campaigns in its regional offices and Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) regarding tree planting requirements for graduating students;
 - (ii) Direct the concerned HEIs to mobilize the graduating students to comply with the tree planting requirement for graduation;
 - (iii) Maintain a list of students who have completed the required tree planting activity;
 - (iv) Prepare and submit reports of the actual number of trees planted per graduating batch of students to DENR;
 - (v) Ensure that all participating educational institutions engage the services of a professional forester to supervise and manage tree planting sites in coordination with the DENR and LGUs;
 - (vi) Coordinate with the DENR, DA, DILG, and other relevant government agencies to provide hazard, risk, and safety training to supervising teachers and coordinators; and
 - (vii) Perform other duties and functions necessary to accomplish the mandate of this Act.
- (d) The DA shall:
- (i) Facilitate the production and distribution of agricultural fruit trees and tree-based high-value crops; and
 - (ii) Perform other duties and functions necessary to accomplish the mandate of this Act.
- (e) The DILG, through LGUs, shall:
- (i) Identify and recommend to the DENR the planting sites within the LGU's jurisdiction in accordance with their existing plan, which shall include, but shall not be limited to green spaces, roadsides, public school grounds, gardens or other available areas within the school premises, idle or vacant public lands, and public parks in urban and rural areas, as may be relevant;
 - (ii) Provide the necessary logistics in coordination with partner agencies and educational institutions; and
 - (iii) Perform other duties and functions necessary to accomplish the mandate of this Act.
- (f) Educational Institutions shall:
- (i) Plan and schedule the conduct of tree planting activities, including allied activities, every academic year;
 - (ii) Mobilize the graduating students to comply with the tree planting requirement for graduation;
 - (iii) Coordinate with appropriate partner agencies for the provision of seedlings, scheduled conduct of tree planting activities, including allied activities, and other necessary preparations;
 - (iv) Prepare and submit reports of the actual number of graduation students who successfully complied with the tree planting requirement to DepEd or CHED, as applicable;
 - (v) Ensure the safety and welfare of the graduating students during the tree planting activities, including allied activities;
 - (vi) Perform other roles and functions in connection with the implementation of this Act as ordered by the DepEd or CHED, if applicable; and
 - (vii) Issue a Certificate of Compliance duly signed by a designated school official, which shall be verified by the DENR or its local offices.

SEC. 10. Maintenance and Survival of Planted Trees. – The trees planted under this Act shall be properly maintained to ensure their growth and survival. For this purpose:

- (a) Educational institutions, in coordination with the DENR, LGUs, and other partner agencies, shall ensure that the planted trees are regularly monitored, watered, protected, and maintained for a minimum of three (3) years;
- (b) All tree planting sites established under this Act shall be supervised and managed by a professional forester. Educational institutions shall engage the services of a professional forester, in coordination with the DENR and LGUs, to ensure proper site management, maintenance, silvicultural practices, and long-term survival of the plantations;
- (c) The DENR, in partnership with LGUs and other stakeholders, shall establish survival standards and conduct periodic monitoring and evaluation of the trees planted.
- (d) A survival rate of at least eighty percent (80%) shall be required. Should the survival rate fall below this standard, replanting activities shall be conducted to meet the minimum requirement.
- (e) The costs of maintenance, supervision by professional foresters, and replanting shall be incorporated into the annual budgets of the implementing agencies concerned, without prejudice to partnerships with private and civil society organizations.

SEC. 11. *Role of Private Sectors.* - Private sectors may allow their private land for tree planting activities, including allied activities, in coordination with the educational institutions: *Provided, That*, the private sector shall allocate all resources pertinent to the implementation of this Act.

Tree planting and allied activities may also be conducted within DENR-identified Potential Investment Areas (PIAs) for sustainable forest management, subject to agreements with concerned tenure holders, LGUs, and private sector partners, to maximize ecological and economic benefits consistent with agroforestry, biodiversity conservation, and climate change mitigation.

SEC. 12. *Role of Civil Society and Community Organizations.* - Civil society organizations, non-government organizations (NGOs), people's organizations, and community-based groups may participate as partners in tree planting and allied activities, in coordination with educational institutions and partner agencies.

SEC. 13. *Recognition, Certification, and Incentives.* - Recognitions, certifications, and incentives shall be given to top-performing educational institutions, under criteria prepared by the DENR, in partnership with other agencies, to promote environmental awareness, encourage active participation, and ensure the effective and efficient implementation of this Act.

SEC. 14. *Mandatory Review and Reporting; Monitoring and Evaluation.* - The DepEd and CHED shall conduct a mandatory review and provide recommendations on the implementation of the tree planting activities, including allied activities, every five (5) years and report on the progress of such activities to the DENR from time to time as may be necessary. The DENR shall be the principal agency tasked to monitor and evaluate the growth of the planted trees.

Annual reports on the number of trees planted, their locations, and survival rates shall be made publicly available through the official websites of the DENR, DepEd, and CHED.

SEC. 15. *Transitory Provision.* - The requirements under this Act shall apply beginning Academic Year 2026–2027.

SEC. 16. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within ninety (90) days after its effectivity, the DENR, DILG, DepEd, CHED, and DA, in consultation with other agencies, shall promulgate and issue the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) necessary to implement the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 17. *Appropriations.* - The funds necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be included in the budgets of the completing departments or agencies in the annual General Appropriations Act (GAA).

SEC. 18. *Separability Clause.* - Any portion of or provision of this Act that may be declared unconstitutional or invalid shall not have the effect of nullifying the other portions or provisions hereof as long as such remaining portion or provision can still subsist and be given effect in their entirety.

SEC. 19. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, orders, rules, and regulations, or other issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 20. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or any two (2) newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines.

Approved,