



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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 4243



Introduced by **Representative KATRINA REIKO CHUA - TAI**
1st District, Zamboanga City

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The State stewards the sustainable use, development, management, renewal, and conservation of the country's forests, minerals, land, offshore areas, and other natural resources. It protects and enhances the quality of the environment. The State guarantees all segments of the population equitable access to use and develop these resources, both now and in the future. It establishes a resource management value system that considers social and environmental costs. These actions show our national resilience, sustainability, and long-term viability. They also protect and advance people's right to a balanced, healthy ecology.

As the world faces a global environmental crisis, forests are disappearing at an alarming rate. They cover about 30% of the world's land area. Deforestation, urbanization, and other human activities are the main causes. These losses threaten climate stability, ecosystem health, and the well-being of future generations.

The situation in the Philippines alarms us just as much.

According to the 2016 Philippine Forestry Statistics from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Philippines has a total land area of 30 million hectares. Of this, 14.2 million hectares (47.33%) are classified as alienable and disposable land, while 15.8 million hectares (52.67%) are classified as forest lands. An additional 750 thousand hectares (0.23%) are unclassified forestlands. Within the classified forest lands, 3.2 million hectares (20.25%) are established forest reserves, 10.1 million hectares (63.92%) are established timberland, 1.3 million hectares (8.23%) are national parks, 126,000 hectares (0.79%) are military and naval reservations, 166 thousand hectares (1.1%) are civil reservations, and 91 thousand hectares (0.58%) are fishponds. This breakdown clarifies the total areas and their respective classifications.

Forest cover in the Philippines has declined sharply in recent decades. Rapid urbanization and industrial expansion drive this decline. Illegal loggers, large-scale miners, and agricultural expansionists also contribute to deforestation. Forest fires and unsustainable energy use exacerbate the damage to our forests. We experience its impact through sudden flash floods, undetected earthquakes, and sudden soil erosion.

This crisis poses a grave threat to our nation's survival.

To address this threat, this measure aims to support and reinforce the National Greening Program (NGP) of the national government, led by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). More specifically, this measure requires each local government unit (LGU) to allocate at least one percent (1%) of its land classified as public domain. This land will be used to establish a Forest Park.

These Forest Parks will serve as green sanctuaries for living creatures and our growing communities. They will offer spaces for rest, reflection, and renewal. These parks will also serve as educational hubs and centers for environmental learning and livelihood advocacy. They stand as living testaments to our national commitment. They show sustainability and ecological protection.

This bill offers a more concrete, localized, and sustainable solution to environmental degradation. LGUs are in the best position to implement and maintain the bill's objectives. They are closest to our people. They best understand the needs and character of their lands.

Passing this bill will decide the environmental legacy we leave future generations. We must act now. Both progress and preservation depend on our swift action.

IN VIEW OF THE FOREGOING, immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



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AN ACT

STRENGTHENING EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 193 OR THE ‘NATIONAL GREENING PROGRAM AND THE FOREST PROTECTION PROGRAM’ BY MANDATING EVERY LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNIT IN THE COUNTRY TO ALLOCATE ONE PERCENT (1%) OF ITS TOTAL REGISTERED LAND AREA OF JURISDICTION TO ESTABLISH FOREST PARKS AND PROVIDING FOR THE CONSERVATION, MAINTENANCE AND PROTECTION THEREOF.

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

SECTION 1. Declaration of Policy. - It is the policy of the State to promote sustainable development, environmental protection, and ecological balance through reforestation, conservation, and the responsible use of natural resources. In pursuit of this, the State shall support and strengthen the implementation of the National Greening Program and other environmental initiatives at the local level.

SECTION 2. Establishment of Forest Parks. - Every local government unit (LGU) in the country shall allocate at least one percent (1%) of its land classified under the public domain, within its territorial jurisdiction, for the establishment, development, and maintenance of a Forest Park. This Forest Park shall serve as a protected green space for biodiversity conservation, environmental education, and community recreation.

SECTION 3. Alignment with National Greening and Forest Protection Program. - All cities and municipalities shall adopt and adhere to the implementing rules and regulations of Executive Order No. 193, s. 2015, otherwise known as the “Expanding the Coverage of the National Greening Program,” and shall implement their Forest Parks in accordance with the guidelines of the National Greening Program (NGP) and the Forest Protection Program of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

SECTION 4. *Promotion of Tree Planting Plan (TPP).* - Upon the establishment of a Forest Park, the local government unit (LGU), in collaboration with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Department of Agriculture (DA), shall formulate a Tree Planting Plan (TPP). The TPP shall prioritize the planting of indigenous tree species, taking into account the location, climate, topography, and other ecological conditions of the area.

SECTION 5. *Local Seed Bank.* - For the effective implementation of this Act, cities and municipalities shall establish and maintain a local seed bank from which residents may obtain seeds or saplings, and access information on proper planting techniques. The DENR, in coordination with the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) under the DA, shall:

- Regularly contribute appropriate tree species to the seed banks;
- Identify species suitable for local conditions; and
- Provide guidance on proper planting technologies, considering variations in topography, climate, soil type, and other relevant factors.

SECTION 6. *Sustainable Tourism.* - The Department of Tourism (DOT), in partnership with the DENR, shall implement programs and projects for the development and promotion of sustainable tourism within the Forest Parks established under this Act.

The Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) shall provide support to cities and municipalities within the National Capital Region (NCR) for infrastructure needs related to Forest Parks. The Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA) shall extend assistance to LGUs located in other regions of the country.

SECTION 6. *Incentive.* - Upon final assessment and certification by the Oversight Board, any LGU found to have successfully implemented the provisions of this Act shall be entitled to local infrastructure assistance from the national government equivalent to twice the amount it expended for compliance.

SECTION 7. *Funding.* - To ensure the effective implementation of this Act, the national government, through the National Greening Program (NGP) and the Forest Protection Program (FPP), shall provide appropriate financial subsidies to LGUs for the establishment, maintenance, conservation, and protection of their respective Forest Parks.

SECTION 8. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources, in coordination with the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) and the Department of Agriculture (DA), shall formulate and issue the necessary implementing rules and regulations to carry out the objectives of this Act.

SECTION 9. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws decrees, executive orders, proclamations, rules and regulations, and other issuances, or parts thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 9. *Separability Clause.* - Should any portion or provision of this act be declared unconstitutional or invalid by a competent court, the other provisions hereof shall continue to be in force.

SECTION 10. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) national newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,