

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS  
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4937



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Introduced by **Representative AGATHA PAULA "AGAY" A. CRUZ**

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### EXPLANATORY NOTE

"Food loss and waste is an ethical outrage. In a world with enough food to feed all people, everywhere, 690 million people continue to go hungry and 3 billion cannot afford a healthy diet."

—UN Secretary General António Guterres,  
*UN Climate Change Conference Address* (2019)

In the Philippines, the gap between hunger and waste is cruel: roughly 7.5 million households struggle to put food on the table,<sup>1</sup> yet nearly 3 million tonnes of food are discarded annually, or about 26 kilograms per person.<sup>2</sup> Rice, vegetables, and meat top the list, with rice—our staple food—tragically the most wasted.<sup>3</sup>

This paradox is not merely inefficient. It is both immoral and unsustainable. Decomposing food emits methane, a greenhouse gas far deadlier than carbon dioxide. Globally, food waste contributes up to 10% of greenhouse gas emissions, deepening the climate crises that fuels hunger.

This legislative measure responds to this moral and environmental failure. It recognizes food as both a basic human necessity and a shared responsibility. Food stewardship is no longer optional; it is civic duty. Every grain of rice, every piece of vegetable, every loaf of bread saved from the landfill becomes nourishment for a child, sustenance for a family, and relief for our environment.

To implement this, this bill creates the Inter-Agency Council on Food Waste Reduction (IAC-FWR); creates a clear framework for food waste reduction, recovery, and redistribution; incentivizes private sector innovation; and empowers local governments to ensure that surplus food reaches those who need it most.

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<sup>1</sup> Social Weather Stations (March 2025)

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Environment Programme, *Food Waste Index Report 2024. Think Eat Save: Tracking Progress to Halve Global Food Waste*, UNEP, 2024, available at <https://wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/45230>.

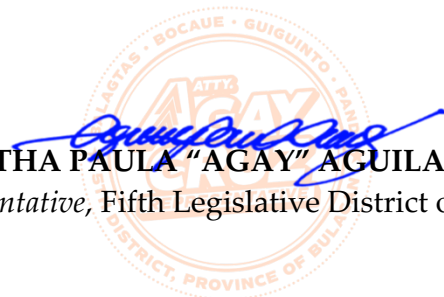
<sup>3</sup> Imelda Angeles-Agdeppa, et.al., *Does plate waste matter?: A two-stage cluster survey to assess the household plate waste in the Philippines*, DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY – FOOD AND NUTRITION RESEARCH INSTITUTE, 2018, available at <https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-1472343/v1>

A codified hierarchy of interventions places prevention first, then recovery and redistribution, safe processing into animal feed, composting, and finally, last-resort disposal. This mirrors global best practices while adapting solutions to the Filipino context, integrating sustainability, nutrition, disaster resilience, and social equity.

This bill transforms “zero food waste” from an aspiration into an enforceable reality. By combining moral responsibility with regulatory rigor, technological innovation, and social equity, it ensures that surplus food becomes an asset, not a liability. The fight against hunger is waged not only with compassion and good intentions, but with strategy, transparency, and measurable results.

In short, this Act turns food waste from a national liability into a shared opportunity: surplus becomes sustenance, inefficiency becomes strategy, and aspiration becomes action. Because in the Philippines, to let food rot while people go hungry is not just wasteful, it is indefensible.

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



**AGATHA PAULA "AGAY" AGUILAR CRUZ**  
*Representative, Fifth Legislative District of Bulacan*

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS  
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HOUSE BILL NO. **4937**

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Introduced by **Representative AGATHA PAULA “AGAY” A. CRUZ**

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**AN ACT**  
**INSTITUTIONALIZING FOOD STEWARDSHIP, ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL**  
**FRAMEWORK FOR FOOD WASTE REDUCTION, RECOVERY, AND**  
**REDISTRIBUTION, PROVIDING INCENTIVES AND SUPPORT MECHANISMS,**  
**AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

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

1       **Section 1. Short Title.** – This Act shall be known as the “Food Stewardship and  
2 Recovery Act of 2025.” For purposes of advocacy and public communication, it may also  
3 be referred to as the “Zero Food Waste Act.”  
4

5       **Section 2. Declaration of Policy.** – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to  
6 protect and promote the right to health, right to adequate food, freedom from hunger, and  
7 right to a balanced and healthful ecology, consistent with the constitutional mandate to  
8 advance social justice and promote the general welfare.  
9

10       The State recognizes that food is not only a basic human necessity, but also a moral  
11 and social responsibility. Accordingly, it shall promote the responsible production,  
12 distribution, and consumption of food as shared duty of government, producers, and  
13 consumers.  
14

15       In view of persistent food insecurity, systemic inefficiencies in the food supply  
16 chain, and the adverse climate and environmental consequences of food waste, the State  
17 shall adopt a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to address hunger and  
18 malnutrition, reduce food loss and waste, and safeguard the environment.  
19

20       To this end, the State shall:

- 21       (a) Institutionalize a culture of food stewardship and responsible consumption  
22           across all sectors of society to minimize avoidable food loss, recover surplus  
23           food, and ensure its safe redistribution to communities in need;

- 1 (b) Pursue the aspirational goal of “zero food waste” as a guiding principle for  
2 national and local policies, programs, and innovations, consistent with national  
3 goals on nutrition, disaster resilience, climate change mitigation and  
4 adaptation, social protection, and sustainable development;  
5 (c) Establish a national framework for food waste prevention, recovery, and  
6 redistribution and promote transparency, accountability, and innovation in  
7 food recovery systems; and  
8 (d) Strengthen multi-sectoral partnerships and coordinated action in reducing  
9 food waste and ensuring that no Filipino goes hungry while edible food is  
10 needlessly discarded.  
11

12 This policy shall be implemented in harmony with existing laws, including  
13 Republic Act (R.A.) No. 9003 or the “Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000,”  
14 R.A. No. 10611 or the “Food Safety Act of 2013,” R.A. No. 11037 or the “Masustansyang  
15 Pagkain para sa Batang Pilipino Act,” and R.A. No. 11337 or the “Innovative Startup Act,”  
16 among others, to ensure coherence, synergy, and sustainability in achieving the national  
17 goal of zero food waste.  
18

19 **Section 3. *Definition of Terms.*** – As used in this Act:  
20

- 21 (a) *Covered Establishments* refers to food retailers, manufacturers, distributors,  
22 processors, wholesalers, supermarkets, restaurants, hotels, institutional  
23 kitchens, food service providers, and similar businesses, as may be determined  
24 in implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of this Act.  
25  
26 (b) *Edible Food* refers to any food product that complies with safety, hygiene, and  
27 labeling requirements and is suitable for human consumption, regardless of  
28 aesthetic or packaging concerns.  
29  
30 (c) *Food Loss* refers to the decrease in quantity or quality of food intended for  
31 human consumption that occurs from harvest up to, but not including, the  
32 retail level due to inefficiencies in storage, transport, handling, or processing.  
33  
34 (d) *Food Recovery* refers to the process of collecting, redistributing, or repurposing  
35 surplus food for human consumption or other beneficial uses.  
36  
37 (e) *Food Recovery Organizations* refer to accredited non-profit organizations,  
38 cooperatives, community groups, religious or charitable institutions, food  
39 banks, or similar entities engaged in the rescue, handling, redistribution, or  
40 processing of edible surplus food.  
41  
42 (f) *Food Stewardship* refers to the responsible management of food resources  
43 throughout the value chain, from production to consumption, with the  
44 objective of minimizing waste and maximizing social benefit.

(g) *Food Waste* refers to food intended for human consumption that is discarded, lost, or uneaten, whether or not it remains fit for consumption, occurring at the retail, food service, and consumer levels.

(h) *FoodSteward PH* refers to Philippine Food Stewardship and Recovery Partnership Hub established under this Act.

(i) *Surplus Food* refers to food products that are safe and fit for human consumption but remain unsold or unconsumed due to overproduction, mislabeling, aesthetic standards, nearing “best before” dates, or other non-health-related reasons.

**Section 4. *Inter-Agency Council on Food Waste Reduction.*** – There is hereby created an Inter-Agency Council on Food Waste Reduction (IAC-FWR) chaired by the Department of Health (DOH), with the National Nutrition Council (NNC), Department of Economy, Planning, and Development (DEPDev), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), as Co-Chairs, and composed of the following members:

- (a) Department of Agriculture (DA);
- (b) Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR);
- (c) Department of Trade and Industry (DTI);
- (d) Department of Science and Technology (DOST);
- (e) Department of Education (DepEd);
- (f) Commission on Higher Education (CHED);
- (g) Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA);
- (h) Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT);
- (i) Department of Finance (DOF);
- (j) Department of Budget and Management (DBM);
- (k) Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG);
- (l) Food and Drug Administration (FDA); and
- (m) Two (2) representatives from accredited civil society and private sector organizations, appointed by the President.

The IAC-FWR shall be the lead policy and coordinating body for the implementation of this Act. It shall:

- (a) Formulate national policies, strategies, and action plans for food waste and recovery;
- (b) Oversee implementation of the National Food Waste Reduction and Recovery Framework (NFWRRF);
- (c) Supervise and maintain FoodSteward Ph;
- (d) Monitor compliance of covered establishments and LGUs;
- (e) Submit an annual report to Congress;

- (f) Recommend budget allocations and financing mechanisms to the Department of Budget and Management (DBM); and
- (g) Harmonize the implementation of this Act with existing laws, including R.A. No. 9003 and R.A. No. 10611.

**Section 6. *National Food Waste Reduction and Recovery Framework (NFWRRF).***

– The IAC-FWR shall adopt a (NFWRRF) which shall:

- (a) Establish targets and indicators for reducing food waste across the value chain;
- (b) Provide strategies for prevention, recovery, redistribution, and sustainable disposal;
- (c) Align with the Philippine Development Plan, the Philippine Action Plan for Sustainable Consumption and Production, and other national priorities;
- (d) Be integrated into local government plans and policies; and
- (e) Be reviewed and updated every five (5) years.

In line with the NFWRRF and the principle of responsible food stewardship, the following legally binding hierarchy of interventions, ranked from the most to the least preferred, shall guide food waste management:

- (a) *Prevention and Reduction at source.* Avoiding the generation of food waste at its source shall be the top priority. This includes:
  - (1) Forecasting demand accurately to minimize overproduction and over-purchasing;
  - (2) Implementing inventory management systems (e.g., first-in-first-out, batch tracking);
  - (3) Improving harvesting, storage, processing, and packaging techniques to minimize loss and spoilage;
  - (4) Encouraging portion control and proper menu planning in food service and hospitality settings; and
  - (5) Promoting awareness of food waste and wasteful consumption habits through consumer education and producer training;
- (b) *Recovery, Donation, and Redistribution.* Safe and edible surplus food that is no longer saleable but remains fit for human consumption shall be:
  - (1) Segregated, labeled, and stored appropriately for donation;
  - (2) Collected or delivered to accredited food recovery organizations, community pantries, soup kitchens, LGU-run food banks, or other social feeding mechanisms;
  - (3) Accompanied by proper documentation (e.g., donation receipts, traceability logs) in accordance with the IRR; and
  - (4) Donated in compliance with food safety standards, including temperature control, packaging integrity, and expiration guidelines as determined by the FDA and DOH;

- 1
- 2 (c) *Processing into animal feed.* Surplus food and food by-products not suitable for
- 3 human consumption but deemed safe for animal nutrition shall be:
- 4 (1) Evaluated and cleared for use as livestock or aquaculture feed in
- 5 accordance with existing guidelines of the DA;
- 6 (2) Segregated from contaminated, hazardous, or prohibited items (e.g., swill
- 7 from ports or airports); and
- 8 (3) Processed, stored, and transported in accordance with biosafety protocols
- 9 to prevent disease transmission and environmental harm;
- 10
- 11 (d) *Composting and Energy Recovery.* Food waste that is no longer fit for
- 12 consumption by humans or animals shall be diverted from landfill by:
- 13 (1) Processing through composting, vermiculture, or biogas digesters, whether
- 14 at household, institutional, or municipal scale;
- 15 (2) Partnering with LGUs or private sector composting facilities to ensure
- 16 collection and reuse of organic waste; and
- 17 (3) Following proper segregation of biodegradable waste from recyclables,
- 18 plastics, and hazardous materials to prevent contamination of composting
- 19 systems;
- 20
- 21 (e) *Safe, final disposal.* Landfilling or incineration shall be used strictly as a last
- 22 resort and only when:
- 23 (1) The food waste is no longer safe or feasible to reuse, recycle, or recover; and
- 24 (2) All prior recovery options under this Section have been demonstrably
- 25 exhausted or proven infeasible by the LGU or responsible agency;
- 26

27 This hierarchy shall be implemented consistent with the standards under R.A. No.

28 9003, R.A. No. 10611, R.A. No. 8749, or the “Philippine Clean Air Act of 1999,” and other

29 relevant environmental regulations.

30

31 The IAC-FWR shall issue guidelines for operationalizing this hierarchy, including

32 reporting protocols, compliance timelines, and performance-based incentives.

33

34 **Section 7. *Obligations of Covered Establishments.* –**

35

- 36 (a) All covered establishments, as defined in this Act, including but not limited to
- 37 food retailers with a selling area of at least two hundred (200) square meters,
- 38 supermarkets, groceries, food manufacturers, distributors, restaurants, hotels,
- 39 catering services, and institutional kitchens shall be required to:
- 40
- 41 (1) Implement continuous segregation and inventory of surplus food suitable
- 42 for human consumption, based on first-expiry-first-out (FEFO) or
- 43 equivalent food recovery practices;
- 44 (2) Enter into at least one (1) Food Recovery Agreement with an accredited

1 food recovery organization, LGU-designated food bank, or community  
2 redistribution partner, within twelve (12) months from the effectivity of this  
3 Act;

4 (3) Ensure full compliance with applicable safety, packaging, labeling, and  
5 traceability protocols, including cold chain handling, food-grade  
6 containers, and voluntary date labeling adjustments where permitted by  
7 DTI and FDA guidelines;

8 (4) Designate a Food Waste Compliance Officer or unit to oversee recovery  
9 efforts and donation processes, coordinate with partner organizations,  
10 maintain documentation, and ensure submission of annual food waste  
11 reports to the IAC-FWR under Section 12 of this Act; and

12 (5) Display a public notice of food donation participation within their premises  
13 and on their official website or social media platforms, as part of public  
14 transparency and encouragement of similar practices by consumers and  
15 industry peers.

16  
17 (b) No covered establishment may dispose of, render inedible, or destroy edible  
18 surplus food unless:

19  
20 (1) It is determined to pose a significant and immediate health or safety risk to  
21 humans or animals, as certified by the FDA or designated local food safety  
22 officer;

23 (2) It has deteriorated beyond reasonable recovery, despite best-effort  
24 compliance with handling and storage protocols; and

25 (3) The disposal is covered by a duly recorded and justified exemption issued  
26 under the IRR, subject to periodic review by the IAC-FWR.

27  
28 (c) Covered establishments that fail to comply with any of the mandatory  
29 obligations under this Section, including failure to maintain donation  
30 partnerships, repeated non-segregation of surplus food, or destruction of  
31 edible food without justification, shall be subject to administrative sanctions as  
32 provided under this Act, without prejudice to the imposition of additional  
33 penalties under other applicable laws.

34  
35 **Section 8. *Protections for Donors.*** – Any person, natural or juridical, who donates  
36 surplus food in good faith pursuant to this Act shall not be held liable for civil or criminal  
37 action arising from the nature, age, packaging, or condition of the donated food, except in  
38 cases of gross negligence, willful misconduct, or bad faith.

39  
40 **Section 9. *Tax incentives for Donors.*** – Donations of surplus food made in good  
41 faith to duly accredited food recovery organizations and recorded in accordance with this  
42 Act shall be:

43  
44 (a) Exempt from donor's tax and other local business fees;

- (b) Deductible as allowable expense or charitable contribution under the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997, as amended, subject to rules and regulations to be issued by the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR).

**Section 10. *Incentives for Participating Food Establishments.*** – Covered establishments that consistently comply with, and demonstrate innovative practices in food recovery and waste reduction may be eligible for:

- (a) Public recognition and certification under a national “Seal of Responsible Food Stewardship (SRFS)” program to be administered by the IAC-FWR;
- (b) Preferential access to government grants, green financing programs, and other non-fiscal support related to food recovery, waste management, or climate action; and
- (c) Credits or recognition under applicable Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) or Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) reporting requirements.

The IAC-FWR, in coordination with DTI and DILG, shall establish a Seal of Food Stewardship Compliance to recognize covered establishments, LGUs, and organizations that demonstrate exemplary food recovery practices. The Seal shall serve as a mark of distinction for compliance and innovation, and may be linked to incentives under this Section. Innovations piloted through FoodSteward PH or recognized by the IAC-FWR under Section 11 of this Act may be prioritized for Seal certification and grant eligibility.

**Section 11. *Research, Innovation, and Private Sector Engagement.*** –

- (a) The IAC-FWR shall support research, pilot programs, and dissemination of innovations, and integrate outputs into FoodSteward PH.
- (b) Private enterprises, technology providers, and research institutions shall be encouraged to:
  - (1) Develop, pilot, and deploy digital, logistical, and technological innovations that support food surplus recovery, redistribution, and waste tracking;
  - (2) Collaborate with LGUs;
  - (3) Utilize FoodSteward PH for matching and reporting;
  - (4) Participate in research consortia and partnerships.
- (c) Innovative practices recognized under this Section may qualify enterprises for incentives under Section 10, including priority Seal certification and grant eligibility.

**Section 12. *Monitoring, Targets, and Reporting.*** –

- (a) The IAC-FWR, lead for monitoring and reporting, under this Act shall:

- (1) Develop, operationalize, and manage the National Food Waste and Recovery Monitoring System (NFW-RMS), which shall track in real time or periodic intervals the quantity and nature of food waste generation, recovery, redistribution, and disposal across various sectors;
  - (2) Set and update national, sectoral, and regional targets for food waste prevention and recovery, using disaggregated benchmarks across sectors, and taking into account poverty incidence, hunger hotspots, urban-rural dynamics, and existing waste infrastructure capacity;
  - (3) Publish an Annual Food Waste and Recovery Scorecard, identifying:
    - i. Top-performing LGUs, sectors, and establishments;
    - ii. Areas with the highest volumes of waste and the lowest levels of recovery;
    - iii. Trends in food loss across the supply chain;
    - iv. Progress toward the national food waste reduction targets;
  - (4) Establish standards and formats for Food Waste Reduction Statements, which shall form part of the mandatory annual reporting requirements of medium and large food-related enterprises under existing CSR or ESG frameworks, and which may include:
    - i. Volume of food waste prevented or diverted;
    - ii. Details of donation partnerships and recovery mechanisms;
    - iii. Innovations adopted in business practices or community engagement;
    - iv. Challenges encountered and lessons learned.
  - (5) Consolidate LGU reports and monitor compliance across all implementing units, including data submitted via the FoodSteward PH under Section 16 of this Act.
- (b) All covered establishments shall prepare and submit an Annual Food Waste Management Report to:
- (1) Their respective LGUs;
  - (2) The IAC-FWR via the Monitoring System and Portal; and
  - (3) The appropriate regulatory body, depending on the sector.
- The format, frequency, and minimum content of such reports shall be prescribed by the IRR, and may include quantity, in metric tons, of edible and inedible food waste, methods of disposal or recovery, and compliance with donation obligations.
- (c) The IAC-FWR may engage academic institutions, civil society partners, and accredited third-party auditors to support:
- (1) Independent compliance validation and data quality assurance;
  - (2) Technical assistance for low-capacity LGUs or establishments; and

1 (3) Development of behaviorally informed metrics and sectoral toolkits.  
2

3 **Section 13. Role of Local Government Units (LGUs).** – LGUs shall be the primary  
4 implementers of this Act at the local level, in coordination with the IAC-FWR and  
5 concerned national agencies.  
6

7 (a) *Core Responsibilities.* LGUs, in coordination with the DILG, shall:

- 8 (1) Establish, operate, or accredit community-based food recovery  
9 infrastructure, including food banks, food pantries, food recovery hubs, or  
10 mobile redistribution networks at the barangay, municipal, city, or  
11 provincial level;
- 12 (2) Maintain an up-to-date registry of certified food recovery organizations,  
13 food donors, and logistics providers within their jurisdiction, and transmit  
14 such data to the FoodSteward PH under the supervision of the IAC-FWR  
15 and relevant agencies;
- 16 (3) Integrate food waste recovery strategies into local governance instruments,  
17 including but not limited to the Local Development Plan (LDP), Local  
18 Climate Change Action Plan (LCCAP), Local Nutrition Action Plan  
19 (LNAP), Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP), and Local Disaster Risk  
20 Reduction and Management (DRRM) Plan;
- 21 (4) Designate a Local Food Recovery Focal Person or unit within the City or  
22 Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO/MENRO)  
23 or Social Welfare Office to oversee coordination, reporting, and  
24 implementation;
- 25 (5) Support education, training, and public awareness programs on food waste  
26 prevention, recovery, and food stewardship within their communities, in  
27 coordination with the concerned agencies under Section 13 of this Act.  
28

29 (b) *Partnerships.* LGUs may enter into public-private or civil society partnerships  
30 with food establishments, cooperatives, civic and church organizations,  
31 logistics companies, or community kitchens to:

- 32 (1) Facilitate the collection, temporary storage, cold-chain transport, or  
33 redistribution of surplus food to households and communities in need;
- 34 (2) Establish shared-use equipment and logistics resources, such as community  
35 cold storage, mobile vans, food-grade bins, accessible to multiple partners  
36 to support localized food recovery operations;
- 37 (3) Develop innovative models for barangay-level food redistribution  
38 networks, such as community kitchens, food shelf systems, or rotating  
39 neighborhood fridges; and
- 40 (4) Pilot the use of technology-based matching or tracking platforms, interlink  
41 this with FoodSteward PH.  
42

43 (c) *Disposal of Edible Food Waste.* LGUs shall promote the safe and sustainable  
44 disposal of inedible food waste by:

- (1) Incorporating composting, biogas recovery, animal feed conversion, or other circular waste recovery mechanisms into their Ecological Solid Waste Management Plan (ESWMP), pursuant to R.A. No. 9003;
- (2) Partnering with accredited waste recovery and recycling enterprises to ensure proper diversion of inedible food waste from landfills or illegal dumping;
- (3) Conducting barangay-level education and segregation campaigns on food waste prevention, leftover reuse, and household composting; and
- (4) Incentivizing barangays or households that demonstrate verifiable food waste reduction or composting success, through local recognition, grants, or participation in national recognition programs.

(d) *National Oversight and Guidance.* The DILG, in coordination with the DSWD and the NNC, shall issue harmonized guidelines and performance targets to guide LGU compliance and innovation under this Act. Such guidelines should establish a performance-based evaluation system that links LGU compliance with eligibility for food recovery grants, nutrition funding, or General Appropriations Act (GAA)-based incentives and shall integrate food waste recovery indicators in the Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG) or equivalent local governance assessment tools.

(e) *Equity in Implementation.* First to third income class LGUs shall prioritize the establishment of food recovery infrastructure using their own resources. Fourth to sixth income class LGUs shall be assisted through earmarked allocations under existing local government support programs of the DBM. Such allocations shall be specifically designated for food recovery infrastructure, logistics systems, or capacity-building initiatives pursuant to this Act, upon endorsement by DEPDev and the IAC-FWR.

**Section 14. Education, Training, and Public Awareness.** – The IAC-FWR shall oversee and harmonize the education, training, and awareness programs under this Section to ensure consistency with the objectives of this Act.

(a) DepEd, in coordination with DA, DTI, and CHED, shall:

- (1) Integrate food waste prevention, recovery strategies, circular food systems, and food stewardship into the basic education curriculum, particularly in subjects such as Home Economics, Science, Values Education, and *Araling Panlipunan*, which shall include modules on nutrition, responsible consumption, and food stewardship as a shared duty of producers, consumers, and communities;
- (2) Incorporate climate-smart and zero-waste food system principles in senior high school technical-vocational tracks related to hospitality, food service, entrepreneurship, and agriculture; and

- (3) Promote school-based composting, gardening, and feeding programs utilizing recovered food ingredients and biodegradable scraps, subject to food safety protocols.

(b) CHED, in consultation with TESDA, shall:

- (1) Encourage state universities and colleges (SUCs), private higher education institutions (HEIs), and training institutions to incorporate food loss prevention, surplus planning, and recovery logistics into the curricula for agriculture, food science, business administration, nutrition, hospitality, environmental management, and logistics; and
- (2) Promote research and innovation on food waste prevention technologies, surplus utilization, cold-chain systems, and food recovery logistics among academic institutions and research centers.

(c) TESDA shall:

- (1) Integrate food waste prevention protocols into competency-based training and certification programs for restaurant operators, food processors, caterers, hotel staff, and agribusiness workers;
- (2) Ensure that skills development programs for the food and agriculture sector includes modules on surplus management, waste minimization, logistics optimization, nutrition, responsible consumption, and food stewardship as a shared duty of producers, consumers, and communities.

(d) DTI, in partnership with business associations, chambers of commerce, and other relevant institutions, shall:

- (1) Promote food waste-conscious business models, including circular kitchen planning, farm-to-rescue supply chains, portion optimization, and integration of cosmetically imperfect produce;
- (2) Provide capacity-building and mentoring for MSMEs in the food sector to incorporate food waste reduction into product development, menu design, procurement, logistics, and facility management;
- (3) Issue harmonized and consumer-friendly food labeling guidelines, including clear distinctions between “Best Before” and “Use By” dates;
- (4) Require food manufacturers and retailers to adopt visible and standardized datemarking formats to reduce consumer confusion and prevent premature disposal of edible food; and
- (5) Develop and disseminate public information campaigns on food literacy, safe leftover handling, and proper food storage practices.

(e) DTI, in coordination with LGUs and TESDA, shall:

- (1) Provide technical assistance to MSMEs to comply with food donation and

- 1 reporting obligations under this Act;
- 2 (2) Develop and disseminate MSME-friendly compliance tools, including
- 3 standard templates for Food Recovery Agreements, simplified traceability
- 4 and reporting forms, and model protocols for segregation, storage, and
- 5 donation;
- 6 (3) Facilitate cost sharing schemes or logistical pooling with LGUs,
- 7 cooperatives, or development partners, including through FoodSteward
- 8 PH, to support the participation of micro and small food retailers, eateries,
- 9 or *carinderias* in food recovery and donation efforts.
- 10
- 11 (f) DA, in coordination with the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples
- 12 (NCIP), DepEd, CHED, and DENR, shall:
- 13 (1) Promote awareness of safe, locally available, and traditionally edible food
- 14 sources, including but not limited to wild vegetables, mushrooms,
- 15 seaweeds, root crops, fruits, and medicinal plants;
- 16 (2) Encourage responsible foraging and use of indigenous food sources,
- 17 especially in schools, communities, and government feeding programs,
- 18 without compromising biodiversity or food safety; and
- 19 (3) Support the development of community-based food atlases or guides, in
- 20 partnership with academic institutions, local knowledge holders, and
- 21 Indigenous Peoples' communities, to document and validate edible wild
- 22 food sources that are culturally significant and nutritionally valuable.
- 23

24 **Section 15. *Emergency Linkages and Public Feeding Integration.* –**

25

- 26 (a) The DSWD, in partnership with the National Disaster Risk Reduction and
- 27 Management Council (NDRRMC) and LGUs, shall:
- 28
- 29 (1) Establish protocols to integrate safe surplus food into emergency food relief
- 30 programs, such as for disaster victims, evacuees, and vulnerable
- 31 households;
- 32 (2) Designate accredited redistribution channels to absorb post-harvest or
- 33 retail-level surplus for immediate feeding operations during emergency
- 34 response;
- 35 (3) Maintain strategic buffer food stocks at LGU- or NGO-run food banks to
- 36 support seasonal surges in hunger.
- 37
- 38 (b) DepEd and DSWD shall explore integrating surplus food into school-based
- 39 feeding programs, provided food safety and nutritional quality standards are
- 40 met.
- 41
- 42 (c) The DOH shall ensure that all food used in public distribution adheres to
- 43 minimum hygiene and nutritional standards and shall coordinate with FDA
- 44 and LGUs in issuing safety advisories and preventive measures.

1  
2 Surplus food may be mobilized for relief operations, feeding programs, and  
3 emergencies, consistent with R.A. No. 10121, otherwise known as the “Philippine Disaster  
4 Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010”, and R.A. No. 10611.  
5

6 **Section 16. FoodSteward PH.** – The IAC-FWR shall develop and maintain a  
7 centralized digital platform to be known as the Philippine Food Stewardship and  
8 Recovery Partnership Hub (FoodSteward PH), which shall serve as the official system for  
9 coordinating, monitoring, and showcasing food waste reduction and recovery efforts  
10 across the country.  
11

12 FoodSteward PH shall include, at a minimum, the following features, without  
13 prejudice to further enhancements, integrations, or harmonization to be provided under  
14 the IRR of this Act:  
15

- 16 (a) *Donation Matching System* to link food donors, such as retailers, restaurants, and  
17 manufacturers, with accredited food banks, LGUs, and CSO partners based on  
18 location, volume, type of food, and urgency;
- 19 (b) *Reporting Dashboard* to upload required reports, including quantity of surplus  
20 food donated, recovered, composted, or discarded;
- 21 (c) *CSO and Innovation Map*, an open-access section, to highlight civil society  
22 initiatives, community food redistribution systems, food rescue programs, and  
23 startup solutions addressing food waste, with geotagged locations and contact  
24 details;
- 25 (d) *Logistics and Cold Chain Support Directory* to list available accredited logistics  
26 providers, cold storage hubs, and shared-use transport options that can  
27 support food recovery operations;
- 28 (e) *Learning Hub* to host toolkits, guides, training modules, and IEC materials on  
29 food waste prevention, handling, and donation safety;
- 30 (f) *Recognition and Incentives Portal* to showcase top-performing LGUs,  
31 establishments, and community programs based on Scorecard results and  
32 eligibility for incentives or certification;
- 33 (g) *Open Data and Transparency Dashboard*, a publicly accessible component of the  
34 Portal, to publish summary data on food waste generation, recovery, donation  
35 volumes, and compliance by covered establishments and LGUs. This  
36 dashboard shall be searchable and downloadable, and shall serve as a  
37 transparency tool for citizens, researchers, and civil society organizations in  
38 monitoring progress and holding actors accountable. Data to be posted shall  
39 include, but not be limited to, annual food waste and recovery reports.  
40 Scorecard rankings, and donation metrics, subject to data privacy and food  
41 safety standards.  
42

43 FoodSteward PH shall be designed with user-friendly mobile and offline-  
44 compatible features, and may allow API integration with LGU systems and third-party

1 applications, provided data privacy and food safety regulations are observed.

2  
3 The DICT shall ensure that the platform complies with accessibility, cybersecurity,  
4 and interoperability standards, and shall provide technical support to LGUs and CSOs for  
5 its adoption and use.

6  
7 All covered establishments, accredited food recovery organizations, and LGUs  
8 shall be required to register on FoodSteward PH and submit regular updates as provided  
9 in the IRR.

10  
11 **Section 17. *Non-Discrimination.*** – All food recovery, redistribution, donation,  
12 public feeding, and related programs implemented under this Act shall be conducted in  
13 a manner that ensures equitable access to food and services, without discrimination on  
14 the basis of age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, civil status,  
15 disability, ethnicity, religion, political belief, language, health condition, geographic  
16 location, socioeconomic status, or any other status protected under the Constitution,  
17 existing laws, and international commitments. All persons shall be treated with dignity  
18 and respect, and no one shall be excluded from the benefits of this Act due to stigma,  
19 marginalization, or social vulnerability.

20  
21 The IAC-FWR, in coordination with the Commission on Human Rights (CHR),  
22 shall ensure that food recovery programs, community feeding operations, and the  
23 National Food Waste and Recovery Portal are inclusive, culturally sensitive, and  
24 accessible to all, including children, senior citizens, persons with disabilities, indigenous  
25 peoples, and disaster-affected or geographically isolated communities. The IAC-FWR  
26 shall adopt appropriate grievance mechanisms and issue guidelines to safeguard against  
27 discriminatory practices in the implementation of this Act.

28  
29 **Section 18. *Non-Politicization.*** – All activities under this Act, including the  
30 collection, redistribution, donation, and public feeding of surplus food, shall be conducted  
31 in a strictly non-partisan and apolitical manner. No food item, service, or benefit provided  
32 under this Act shall bear the name, image, logo, initials, or any representation of a public  
33 official, elected or appointed, or any candidate, political party, coalition, or political  
34 organization.

35  
36 Public officials and employees are prohibited from using food recovery programs,  
37 food banks, community pantries, or public feeding initiatives established under this Act  
38 as a platform for personal or political promotion. The IAC-FWR shall issue guidelines to  
39 ensure the impartial implementation of this Section and may recommend administrative  
40 or disciplinary action for any violation, without prejudice to sanctions under other  
41 applicable election or civil service laws.

42  
43 **Section 19. *Penal Provisions.*** –  
44

- 1 (a) Any person who knowingly and maliciously contaminates, poisons, or renders  
2 edible surplus food unsafe or injurious to health, with the intent to harm  
3 potential recipients or to obstruct food recovery, shall suffer the penalty of  
4 *reclusion temporal*, as provided under the Revised Penal Code, without  
5 prejudice to prosecution under the Food Safety Act, the Anti-Terrorism Act, or  
6 other applicable laws;  
7
- 8 (b) Any person who shall knowingly and willfully destroy, spoil, or dispose of  
9 edible food in violation of this Act, for the purpose of preventing its lawful  
10 donation or redirection, shall be punished with the penalty of *prision*  
11 *correccional*, in accordance with Article 27 of the Revised Penal Code;  
12
- 13 (c) Any person who shall willfully obstruct, delay, or prevent the recovery or  
14 redistribution of edible surplus food or the composting of inedible food waste,  
15 in violation of this Act or its Implementing Rules, shall likewise be punished  
16 with *prision correccional*;  
17
- 18 (d) If the offender is a juridical person, the penalty shall be imposed upon the  
19 officer, director, manager, or employee responsible for the act, without  
20 prejudice to the imposition of corporate administrative penalties under existing  
21 laws and regulations.  
22
- 23 (e) In addition to criminal liability, covered establishments that repeatedly fail to  
24 comply with the donation and recovery obligations under this Act, without  
25 valid justification, shall be subject to the following administrative penalties,  
26 after due notice and hearing:  
27
- 28 (1) First offense - Written warning and mandatory compliance orientation;  
29 (2) Second offense - Fine of not more than One Hundred Thousand Pesos  
30 (P100,000);  
31 (3) Third and subsequent offenses - Fine of not more than Five Hundred  
32 Thousand Pesos (P500,000) and/or suspension of business permits, as may  
33 be imposed by the appropriate regulatory agency or LGU.  
34
- 35 (f) Local Government Units found to have deliberately failed to comply with their  
36 mandates under this Act, including obstruction of donation efforts, non-  
37 accreditation of recovery organizations, or unjustified delays in  
38 implementation, shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action under  
39 existing DILG and Civil Service Commission rules, including ineligibility for  
40 performance-based grants or recognitions under the GAA or SGLG.  
41
- 42 (g) Accredited food recovery organizations that willfully misrepresent donation  
43 data, misuse recovered food, or operate without safety compliance shall face  
44 revocation of accreditation, blacklisting, or fines, as determined in the IRR.

1  
2       **Section 20. Congressional Oversight and Sunset Review.** – The IAC-FWR shall  
3 submit a comprehensive report to Congress every three (3) years from the effectivity of  
4 this Act, including updates on food waste levels, compliance rates, innovations, and  
5 implementation gaps. Unless reauthorized by Congress, the provisions of this Act shall  
6 be subject to a sunset review by the third year to assess relevance, cost-effectiveness, and  
7 alignment with national priorities and international commitments.  
8

9       **Section 21. Appropriations.** – The amount necessary to implement the provisions  
10 of this Act shall be charged against the appropriations of concerned agencies and LGU  
11 support funds under the annual General Appropriations Act (GAA). Priority shall be  
12 given to earmarked allocations for fourth to sixth income class LGUs pursuant to Section  
13 12 of this Act.  
14

15       **Section 22. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – Within one hundred twenty  
16 (120) days from the effectivity of this Act, the IAC-FWR shall promulgate the rules and  
17 regulations to implement its provisions. The IRR shall be developed through public  
18 consultation, and shall include timelines, technical standards, and compliance  
19 mechanisms consistent with the provisions of this Act.  
20

21       The IAC-FWR may issue supplemental guidelines to refine implementation tools,  
22 update data indicators, or adapt to emerging challenges related to food waste and  
23 recovery.  
24

25       **Section 23. Transitory Clause.** – Within one (1) year from the effectivity of this Act  
26 and its IRR, covered establishments shall comply with the minimum donation, reporting,  
27 and portal registration requirements. LGUs shall likewise initiate local implementation  
28 plans within the same period. The IAC-FWR shall publish an annual implementation  
29 roadmap and may phase in certain provisions based on sectoral readiness.  
30

31       **Section 24. Separability Clause.** – If any part or provision of this Act is held  
32 unconstitutional or invalid, the remainder thereof not otherwise affected shall remain in  
33 full force and effect.  
34

35       **Section 25. Repealing Clause.** – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules, and  
36 regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby  
37 repealed or modified accordingly.  
38

39       **Section 26. Effectivity.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following the  
40 completion of its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.  
41

42       *Approved,*