

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **5024**



Introduced by Representative Jan Rurik D. Padiernos, GP (Galing sa Puso) Party-List

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines, as an archipelagic and agricultural country, faces severe threats from soil degradation, water scarcity, and climate change. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has reported that around 33% of the world's soils are already degraded, with deforestation, poor agricultural practices, and unsustainable land use as major drivers. Locally, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has warned that an estimated 11 million hectares of Philippine land are vulnerable to erosion, severely threatening food security, watershed stability, and rural livelihoods.

At the same time, water availability remains a pressing concern. The National Water Resources Board (NWRB) has identified that water demand in the Philippines may outstrip supply by 2030 unless urgent measures are implemented. The effects of soil degradation and water scarcity are already being felt: lower crop yields, declining groundwater reserves, increased drought and flood risks, and greater poverty in farming communities. These challenges are expected to intensify with climate change.

Existing measures under the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act (RA 8435) and the Organic Agriculture Act (RA 10068) provide partial interventions, but none establish a coordinated national framework for soil and water conservation.

This bill seeks to fill that gap by creating a National Soil and Water Conservation Program (NSWCP) to be jointly managed by the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), in coordination with the National Water Resources Board (NWRB), the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), and local government units (LGUs). The Program will focus on three pillars: (1) soil conservation projects to reduce erosion and restore degraded land, (2) water conservation and harvesting measures to secure irrigation and protect aquifers, and (3) farmer incentives and research to accelerate the adoption of climate-resilient practices.

Through rainwater harvesting mandates, watershed rehabilitation, and applied research, this measure will help secure agricultural productivity, improve water availability, reduce disaster risks, and promote sustainable rural development.

In view of the foregoing, the passage of the bills is earnestly sought.



ATTY. JAN RURIK D. PADIERNOS
GP (Galing sa Puso) Party-List

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AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL PROGRAM FOR SOIL CONSERVATION AND
WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT THROUGH RAINWATER HARVESTING
AND CLIMATE-RESILIENT LAND PRACTICES

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the “***Soil and Water Conservation Act.***”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - The State shall conserve, protect, and sustainably manage soil and water resources as essential components of national food security, disaster resilience, and ecological stability, consistent with Article II, Section 16 and Article XII, Section 1 of the 1987 Constitution.

For this purpose, the State shall promote soil conservation programs, adopt climate-resilient land and water management practices, and ensure effective coordination among government agencies and local government units.

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

- (a) *Soil conservation* refers to practices that prevent erosion, restore degraded lands, and maintain soil fertility;
- (b) *Rainwater harvesting* refers to the collection, storage, and utilization of rainwater for domestic, agricultural, or industrial purposes;
- (c) *Climate-resilient land practices* refers to agricultural and land-use methods designed to withstand and adapt to climate variability, including agroforestry, terracing, and conservation farming.

SEC. 4. *National Soil and Water Conservation Program.* - There is hereby established a National Soil and Water Conservation Program (NSWCP) jointly managed by the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources

(DENR), in coordination with the National Water Resources Board (NWRB), the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), and LGUs.

The Program shall consist of the following pillars:

- (a) Soil Conservation Projects – including erosion control measures, contour farming, agroforestry, and the establishment of at least one demonstration farm per province;
- (b) Water Conservation and Harvesting – including community-based water storage systems, watershed rehabilitation, and pilot aquifer recharge projects; and
- (c) Farmer Incentives and Research – including support mechanisms to encourage the adoption of climate-resilient farming practices and innovative conservation technologies.

SEC. 5. *Rainwater Harvesting Mandate.* - All new public buildings, schools, government facilities, and large private developments shall be required to install rainwater harvesting systems, subject to design standards by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and NWRB.

SEC. 6. *Incentives.* - Farmers, LGUs, and private entities implementing certified soil and water conservation measures shall be entitled to:

- (a) Tax incentives equivalent to up to 10% of expenses incurred for soil and water conservation projects;
- (b) Access to concessional credit through LandBank and DBP for rainwater harvesting and climate-resilient farming; and
- (c) Priority access to government agricultural subsidies and insurance programs.

SEC. 7. *Research and Development.* –The DA, in coordination with the DENR, the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), state universities and colleges (SUCs), and private research institutions, shall undertake research, technology development, and pilot projects on soil rehabilitation, aquifer recharge, bio-engineering, and climate-resilient land and water management practices.

The results of such research shall be disseminated to farmers through the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI), local government units, and the demonstration farms established under this Act.

SEC. 8. *Appropriations.* - The amount of Two Billion Pesos (₱2,000,000,000.00) is hereby appropriated for the initial implementation of this Act, to be charged against the current appropriations of the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DA, DENR, NWRB, and DOST shall issue the necessary implementing rules and regulations (IRR).

SEC. 10. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remaining provisions shall not be affected.

SEC. 11. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed 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,