



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS

First Regular Session

House Bill No. 5426

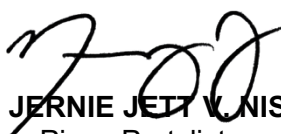


Introduced by Representative Jernie Jett V. Nisay

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The proposed “Young Farmers and Fisherfolk Challenge Act” aims to empower the youth to actively participate in agriculture and fisheries, promoting food security, rural development, and sustainable agribusiness. Recognizing the vital role of young farmers and fisherfolk, the bill establishes a comprehensive program that provides access to education, knowledge, financial services, green jobs, new markets, and participation in policy-making, thereby ensuring their rights are recognized, protected, and promoted.

Through the provisions under this bill, this seeks to make agriculture and fisheries a viable career path for the youth, foster innovation and productivity in the sector, and contribute to sustainable rural development, economic inclusivity, and empowerment of the next generation of agricultural leaders.¹


REP. JERNIE JETT V. NISAY
Pusong Pinoy Partylist

¹ Food and Agriculture Organization. (2022). *Youth engagement in agriculture: Best practices for sustainable development*. FAO. <https://www.fao.org>



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS

First Regular Session

House Bill No. 5426

Introduced by Representative Jernie Jett V. Nisay

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING THE YOUNG FARMERS AND FISHERFOLK CHALLENGE
PROGRAM, CREATING FOR THE PURPOSE THE YOUNG FARMERS AND
FISHERFOLK CHALLENGE COUNCIL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR

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 “*Young Farmers and Fisherfolk Challenge Act*”.

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to ensure that the rights of young farmers and fisherfolk are recognized, protected and promoted. Pursuant to this, the State shall involve the youth in nation building and rural development, providing for this purpose access to knowledge, information and education, land, new sources of financial services and capital, green jobs, new and niche markets, and participation in policy dialogue.

SEC. 3. *Young Farmers and Fisherfolk Challenge Program.* – There is hereby established a Young Farmers and Fisherfolk Challenge Program, hereinafter referred to as the Program, that shall support and empower the young farmers and fisherfolk to be active partners in food security and agricultural development and modernization. The Program shall encourage the youth to pursue a career or engage in activities related to agriculture, ensure young farmers and fisherfolk participation in

1 policy formulation and program implementation, and provide institutional support for
2 agri-business and agri-entrepreneurship initiatives to fully realize the role of the youth
3 as agents and partners for development.

4
5 **SEC. 4. *Beneficiaries of the Program.*** – The Program is intended to support
6 young farmers and fisherfolk between fifteen (15) to thirty-five (35) years of age, who
7 are engaged in farming and fisheries activities, and are included in the Registry System
8 for Basic Sectors in Agriculture. The Department of Agriculture (DA) shall update its
9 existing database to reflect these indicators.

10
11 **SEC. 5. *Creation of a Special Lane for the Processing of Licenses and***
12 ***Permits.*** – The Department of Trade and Industry, Food and Drug Administration, and
13 the Intellectual Property Office are hereby mandated to establish a special lane to
14 facilitate the registration and application of the projects/business enterprise of the
15 Young Farmers and Fisherfolk Challenge Program beneficiaries/awardees, to include
16 the following: license to operate, certificate of product registration, business name, and
17 intellectual property rights.

18
19 **SEC. 6. *Creation of a Young Farmers and Fisherfolk Challenge Council.*** –
20 There is hereby created the Young Farmers and Fisherfolk Challenge Council,
21 hereinafter referred to as the Council, to provide the overall policy and direction of
22 concerned agencies to ensure the effective implementation of the Program.

23
24 The Council shall be administratively attached to the DA and shall be composed
25 of the following:

- 26 (a) Secretary of the DA, as Chairperson;
27 (b) Secretary of the Department of Trade and Industry, as Vice-Chairperson;
28 (c) Secretary of the Department of Education (DepEd), as member;
29 (d) Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), as
30 member;
31 (e) Secretary of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), as member;
32 (f) Secretary of the Department of the Interior and Local Government, as
33 member;

- 1 (g) Commissioner of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), as
2 member;
- 3 (h) Director-General of the Technical Education and Skills Development
4 Authority (TESDA), as member;
- 5 (i) Representative of a national organization of young farmers' cooperative
6 or association, as member;
- 7 (j) Representative of a national organization of fisherfolks' cooperative or
8 association, as member;
- 9 (k) Representative of a women farmers' organization or cooperative, as
10 member;
- 11 (l) Representative of a national organization for agritourism, as member; and
12 (m) Representative of a national organization for food, restaurant, and
13 business sectors, as member.
- 14

15 *Provided, however,* That the member of the Council under subsections (i), (j) and
16 (k) shall be between fifteen (15) to forty (40) years of age.

17

18 The government sector representatives in the Council may appoint an official
19 alternate with a rank of an Undersecretary or its equivalent. The official alternate shall
20 possess the same powers as the heads of the above-named government agencies and
21 whose acts shall be considered as acts of the heads of office being represented.

22

23 Representatives from the private sector shall be appointed by the DA Secretary
24 from among the officers and members of their existing national organizations and
25 associations. They shall serve for a period of two (2) years. When a vacancy arises due
26 to the resignation, removal for cause, death or incapacity of a member, a replacement
27 shall be appointed who shall serve for the remainder of the representative's term of
28 office.

29

30 Government sector representatives shall not be entitled to compensation in the
31 discharge of their functions in the Council but shall be entitled to reimbursement of any
32 reasonable expenses incurred in the performance of their functions. Private sector
33 representatives shall be entitled to honoraria or allowances for the expenses incurred
34 in the discharge of their functions as members of the Council.

The Philippine Council for Agriculture and Fisheries shall serve as its Secretariat.

SEC. 7. Powers and Functions of the Council. – The Council shall have the following powers and functions:

- (a) Formulate the Program, in consultation with research institutions such as the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture, Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development, University of the Philippines - Los Baños and other relevant state universities and colleges (SUCs);
- (b) Identify and streamline access to relevant capacity-building and livelihood programs across the different departments and agencies of government, including on-the-job trainings, job fairs, employment in farm tourism and agro-industrial zones, and other employment-bridging initiatives;
- (c) Identify and streamline access to possible sources of credit across the different departments, agencies, and instrumentalities, including access to start-up capital;
- (d) Monitor initiatives in emerging best practices in agriculture such as smart farming, farm tourism in compliance with Republic Act No. 10816 or the “Farm Tourism Development Act of 2016,” agroponics, aquaponics, hydroponics, and organic and boutique vegetables;
- (e) Improve and facilitate access to marketing services such as product packaging, promotions including branding and advertising, networking events, provision of subsidies to enable participation in trade fairs and exhibits, and linkage with media;
- (f) Coordinate with local government units (LGUs) in providing subsidized rental rates for public retail areas and public markets to farmers and fisherfolk;
- (g) Serve as a conduit between stakeholders and national and international leaders including Congress and the private sector in formulating policies directly addressing the concerns of young farmers and fisherfolk;
- (h) Propose subjects related to agriculture and agribusiness such as gardening, backyard farming, urban farming, reforestation, agricultural appreciation, agricultural entrepreneurship, smart farming, farm tourism,

1 and coastal management in all pertinent levels of the DepEd's K-12 with
2 the end goal of increasing enrollment in courses related to agriculture in
3 the technical-vocational track in Senior High School, CHED, the National
4 Service Training Program and TESDA;

5 (i) Ensure scholarships and subsidized tuition fees for young farmers and
6 fisherfolk in SUCs;

7 (j) Provide on-the-job training programs for young farmers and fisherfolk in
8 areas such as "green jobs", reforestation, coastal management, fisheries,
9 and other rural-based jobs, through Department of Labor and
10 Employment's (DOLE) Special Program for Employment of Students and
11 other livelihood and training programs;

12 (k) Explore and facilitate the extension of short-term leases for public land to
13 young farmers and fisherfolk, providing free or subsidized land for
14 cultivation and for aquaculture, and developing other packages such as,
15 lease-to-buy schemes that would allow young farmers and fisherfolk to
16 use available or unutilized agricultural land or fisheries management
17 areas for the purposes of said Program;

18 (l) Expedite the leasing, distribution, and award of agrarian reform land to
19 qualified beneficiaries;

20 (m) Facilitate the use of excess land holdings of SUCs and private education
21 institutions for agricultural training and developmental processes;

22 (n) Foster the formation of new ideas and technologies by assisting
23 agricultural enterprises of qualified young farmers and fisherfolk
24 entrepreneurs, pursuant to Republic Act No. 11337, otherwise known as
25 the "Innovative Startup Act";

26 (o) Initiate social partnerships and rural development initiatives in partnership
27 with the private sector;

28 (p) Optimize existing loan guarantee funds administered by various
29 government entities to increase the credit worthiness of young farmers
30 and fisherfolk experiencing difficulty in obtaining loans from banks due to
31 lack of acceptable collaterals, credit knowledge and credit track record;
32 and

33 (q) Accept donations, contributions, grants, bequests or gifts, in cash or in
34 kind, from various sources, domestic or foreign, for purposes relevant to

1 the functions of the Council. Said donations shall be deemed
2 automatically appropriated for purposes specified by the donor or in the
3 absence thereof, for the programs and projects as may be approved by
4 the Council subject to the usual accounting and auditing rules and
5 regulations: *Provided*, That cash donations shall not be used to fund the
6 personal services requirements of the Council.
7

8 **SEC. 8. *Tax Exemption on Donations.*** – All grants, bequests, endowments,
9 donations, contributions made to and used actually, directly and exclusively by the
10 Council shall be exempt from donor's tax and the same shall be considered as allowable
11 deduction from gross income for purposes of computing the taxable income of the
12 donor, in accordance with the provisions of the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997,
13 as amended.
14

15 **SEC. 9. *Waiver of Government Fees and Charges.*** – Subject to the exceptions
16 provided in Section 8 of Republic Act No. 11261, otherwise known as the "First Time
17 Jobseekers Assistance Act", all government agencies and instrumentalities, including
18 government-owned and-controlled corporations, LGUs, and government hospitals shall
19 not collect fees or charges from young farmers and fisherfolks who are first-time job
20 seekers: *Provided*, That such fee or charge is in connection with the application for and
21 the granting of licenses, proofs of identification, clearances, certificates, or other
22 documents usually required in the course of employment locally or abroad: *Provided*,
23 *further*, That the benefit provided shall only be availed of once.
24

25 **SEC. 10. *Annual Report.*** – The Council shall submit to the President and to
26 both Houses of Congress, not later than the 30th of March of every year following the
27 effectivity of this Act, a report giving a detailed account on the effective implementation
28 of this Act, and recommended legislation where applicable and necessary.
29

30 **SEC. 11. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – Within ninety (90) days from
31 the effectivity of this Act, the DA and DAR shall, in coordination with the DOST, DOLE,
32 Department of Environment and Natural Resources, DepEd, CHED, Land Bank of the
33 Philippines, and National Youth Commission, issue the necessary rules and regulations
34 for the implementation of this Act.

1
2 **SEC. 12. Appropriations.** – The amount necessary for the implementation of
3 this Act shall be included in the budgets of the departments and agencies concerned in
4 the annual General Appropriations Act.
5

6 **SEC. 13. Separability Clause.** – If any provision of this Act is declared invalid
7 or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected by such declaration shall remain in
8 full force and effect.
9

10 **SEC. 14. Repealing Clause.** – All laws, executive orders, administrative orders,
11 and rules and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or amended
12 accordingly.
13

14 **SEC. 15. Effectivity.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
15 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.
16

17 Approved,