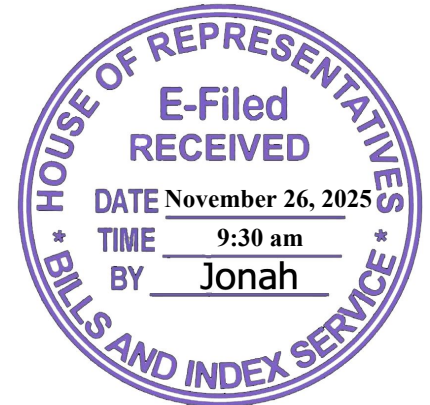




Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives

20th CONGRESS

First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 6388

Introduced by Hon. Charisse Anne C. Hernandez

Lone District of Calamba, Laguna

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines is one of the world's megadiverse countries, home to a vast but increasingly threatened collection of heirloom, indigenous, and traditional crop varieties. These include *tinawon* rice of the Cordilleras, native white and yellow corn, heritage cacao strains, *adlai*, heirloom bananas, endemic root crops, and traditional vegetables cultivated by indigenous and rural communities for centuries.

However, rapid agricultural modernization, climate change, commercialization of uniform hybrids, and declining traditional farming practices have placed these native varieties at risk of extinction. Their loss would not only diminish biodiversity but also erase cultural heritage and undermine food resilience.

Previous conservation efforts stalled because preservation alone is not enough: farmers must have economic incentives to continue cultivating rare varieties. This bill provides a full-spectrum national approach:

- *Preservation & conservation infrastructure* (Seed banks, mapping, regeneration, research)
- *Economic incentives* (subsidies, tax exemptions, price stabilization, government procurement)
- *Community empowerment* (support for cooperatives, youth, and indigenous knowledge holders)

This landmark bill positions the Philippines as a global leader in agricultural biodiversity while uplifting farmers and securing the nation's food heritage for future generations.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Charisse' followed by a stylized flourish.

CHARISSE/ANNE C. HERNANDEZ
Representative
Lone District of Calamba



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HOUSE BILL NO. 6388

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**AN ACT CONSERVING, PRESERVING, AND PROMOTING HEIRLOOM, HERITAGE,
AND INDIGENOUS PHILIPPINE CROPS, ESTABLISHING THE NATIONAL
HEIRLOOM SEED BANK AND COMMUNITY SEED LIBRARIES, PROVIDING
ECONOMIC INCENTIVES AND VALUE-ADDING SUPPORT FOR FARMERS, AND
FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

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 “**Heirloom & Indigenous Crops Preservation and Farmers’ Incentives Act.**”

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. It is the policy of the State to:

- a. Protect, conserve, and restore heirloom, heritage, and indigenous Philippine crops as elements of national heritage, food sovereignty, and biodiversity;
- b. Make heritage crop farming economically viable by providing subsidies, tax incentives, stable markets, and government procurement;
- c. Promote research, propagation, and climate resilience of endangered plant varieties;
- d. Uphold and safeguard the traditional ecological knowledge and cultural rights of indigenous peoples pursuant to the Indigenous Peoples’ Rights Act (IPRA); and

e. Strengthen the role of farmers, youth, cooperatives, and communities in preserving agricultural biodiversity.

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

a. **Heirloom/Heritage Crops** – Traditional or indigenous plant varieties passed down for generations, possessing cultural, ecological, or genetic significance.

b. **National Heirloom Seed Bank (NHSB)** – Centralized national facility for long-term seed conservation.

c. **Community Seed Libraries** – Local repositories for seed sharing, regeneration, and community propagation.

d. **Price Stabilization** – Measures to maintain minimum farmgate prices and protect farmers from market exploitation.

e. **Eligible Entities** – Farmers, cooperatives, IP communities, youth enterprises, and organizations cultivating certified heritage crops.

SEC. 4. Establishment of the National Heirloom Seed Bank. A National Heirloom Seed Bank (NHSB) is hereby established under the joint management of the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Department of Science and Technology (DOST).

The NHSB shall:

- a. Serve as the central repository for heirloom, endangered, and indigenous crop seeds;
- b. Maintain secure, climate-controlled long-term storage;
- c. Conduct seed viability testing and annual germination programs;
- d. Collaborate with SUCs, research institutions, and ICCs/IPs for seed collection and preservation.

SEC. 5. Regional Community Seed Libraries. The DA, in coordination with local government units (LGUs), shall establish Regional Community Seed Libraries in all agricultural regions.

Each Seed Library shall:

- a. Catalog and store region-specific heirloom and indigenous crop varieties;
- b. Provide seeds to farmers, schools, and communities;
- c. Conduct seasonal regeneration planting to maintain seed viability;
- d. Encourage seed exchanges and community seed stewardship programs.

SEC. 6. Nationwide Mapping & Cataloging of Heirloom Crops. Within three (3) years from the enactment of this Act, the DA, DOST, the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), and SUCs shall conduct a national inventory and mapping of endangered and heirloom crop varieties, particularly:

- a. *Tinawon* and other native rice varieties

- b. Heritage corn varieties (white, yellow, purple, glutinous)
- c. Native cacao strains
- d. *Adlai*
- e. Heirloom bananas and plantains
- f. Indigenous root crops (e.g., *ubi*, *lahi*, *kamote*, *tugi*)
- g. Traditional vegetables used by rural and upland communities

The collected data shall form part of a National Heirloom Crop Registry. SUCs, NCIP, and DA regional offices shall assist in field validation and classification.

SEC. 7. Seed Rescue, Propagation & Research Programs. The DA, through the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) and in collaboration with DOST and SUCs, shall implement comprehensive Seed Rescue and Propagation Programs, including:

- a. Collection of endangered crop varieties from farms and remote areas;
- b. Propagation through field regeneration farms;
- c. DNA fingerprinting and scientific documentation;
- d. Research on climate resilience, disease resistance, and improved cultivation practices;
- e. Pre-breeding programs that maintain the genetic purity and identity of heirloom varieties.

SEC. 8. Protection of Indigenous Farming Knowledge. The State shall recognize and protect the traditional ecological knowledge, farming practices, and cultural heritage of indigenous cultural communities (ICCs/IPs).

Any research, collection, or propagation involving ICC/IP communities shall require:

- a. Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC);
- b. Equitable benefit-sharing agreements;
- c. Proper acknowledgment of indigenous stewardship and cultural rights.

SEC. 9. Farmers' Heritage Crop Incentives Program (FHCIP). A unified national incentive system is hereby created under the DA to administer:

- a. Subsidies
- b. Government procurement
- c. Tax incentives

- d. Youth grants
- b. Value-adding and agri-enterprise support
- c. Price stabilization interventions

SEC. 10. Production Subsidies. Qualified farmers and cooperatives shall receive:

- a. Cash-based production subsidies (per hectare or per kilo);
- b. Input subsidies for seeds, fertilizer, and biological control;
- c. Access to extension services and training programs.

Priority shall be given to smallholders, IP farmers, and upland communities.

SEC. 11. Guaranteed Government Procurement. Government agencies shall allocate procurement quotas for heritage crops, including:

- a. DepEd – school-based feeding programs
- b. DSWD – food aid and community-based nutrition programs
- c. DOH – hospital nutrition
- d. AFP & DND – troop rations
- e. LGUs – relief goods and local food programs

Multi-year procurement contracts may be established to ensure stable farmer income.

SEC. 12. Grants for Value-Adding and Agro-Enterprise Development. A Heritage Crop Value-Adding Fund shall provide grants for:

- a. Processing & packaging facilities
- b. Branding and geographic indication
- c. Agro-tourism initiatives
- d. Market development
- e. Product innovation (snacks, beverages, specialty goods)

Sec. 13. Youth Heritage Farming Grants. Special grants shall support:

- a. Youth-led heritage crop farms
- b. Agribusiness start-ups
- c. Community demonstration farms
- d. Leadership and entrepreneurship training

SEC. 15. Local Government Responsibilities. LGUs shall:

- a. Maintain Community Seed Libraries;
- b. Integrate heirloom crop preservation into agricultural development plans;
- c. Provide technical and logistical support for local seed rescue activities;
- d. Conduct farmer training and public awareness campaigns.

SEC. 16. Funding. The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged to the appropriations of the DA and DOST. Thereafter, such sums as may be needed for its continued operation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act (GAA).

Additional funding may be obtained through International grants, Climate resilience funds, Public-private partnerships, and Philanthropic and academic institutions.

SEC. 17. Implementing Rules and Regulations. Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DA, DOST, and NCIP, in consultation with SUCs, LGUs, and indigenous communities, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations.

SEC. 18. Separability Clause. If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remainder shall continue to be in force.

SEC. 19. Repealing Clause. All laws inconsistent with 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 in two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,