

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8050



Introduced by Honorable EULOGIO "LEO" R. RODRIGUEZ

EXPLANATORY NOTE

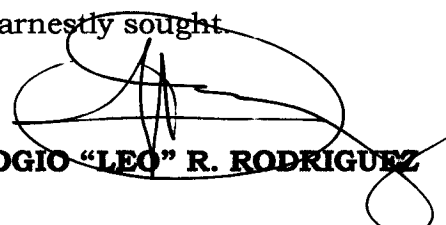
The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), through its Forest Management Bureau, estimates 47,000 hectares of forest cover loss annually, this translates to roughly 60% of total forest loss over the past 80 years. Forests serve as the first line of defense against natural calamities, particularly in island provinces such as Catanduanes, which frequently experience torrential rain and severe flooding. Continued deforestation has resulted in watershed degradation and water insecurity, soil erosion and food insecurity, and serious threat to local biodiversity. With climate change compounding these impacts, urgent and sustained environmental rehabilitation to restore ecological balance is imperative.

Reforestation is a civic responsibility and must be institutionalized. The country's growing youth population presents a strategic opportunity to help reverse deforestation. Latest available school data show that in 2024, nearly 826,000 students graduated from college, while 1.853 million graduated from senior high school in School Year 2024-2025. Engaging these graduates in environmental action will instill upon them the value of public service and civic participation. This is consistent with the constitutional recognition of the vital role of the youth in nation building and the constitutional mandate inculcating in them patriotism and nationalism, and encouraging their involvement in public and civic affairs. Towards this end, this bill aims to involve youth participation in addressing the country's dwindling forest stock, a national and global issue that threatens the very future of their sector.

By requiring graduating college and senior high students to plant two (2) trees as a prerequisite for graduation, an estimated 5.4 million trees could be planted annually. This measure will meaningfully contribute to reforestation, climate change mitigation, and sustainable development efforts, while promoting civic participation.

Notably, the House of Representatives had already approved this bill on the graduation legacy for reforestation on Third and Final Reading during the 19th Congress. However, due to lack of material time, the Senate was unable to consider and approve the said measure. In this view, to address the threats of deforestation while engaging the youth to civic activities, this representation has filed the same bill in the 20th Congress.

Hence, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


EULOGIO "LEO" R. RODRIGUEZ

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **8050**

Introduced by Honorable EULOGIO “LEO” R. RODRIGUEZ

AN ACT
REQUIRING ALL GRADUATING SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE
STUDENTS TO PLANT (2) TREES EACH AS A CIVIC DUTY FOR ENVIRONMENT
PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the “Graduation Legacy for Reforestation Act.”

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is the declared policy of the State to protect and advance the right of the Filipino people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature. Towards this end, the State shall promote and pursue reforestation programs and encourage tree planting as a means of involving the youth in public and civic affairs.

SEC. 3. Tree Planting as a Mandatory Requisite for Graduation. – As an act of public service before they join the country’s labor force, all graduating students in senior high school and college, except physically handicapped and students with special needs, shall plant two (2) trees each as a prerequisite for graduation.

SEC. 4. Tree Planting Sites. – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the concerned local government units (LGUs) shall determine the appropriate tree planting sites within the LGU territories, in coordination with schools, colleges, and universities.

SEC. 5. Selection of Species. – The species of trees to be planted should be appropriate to the location, climate, and topography of the area. Subject to the exception provided under Section 6 of this Act, only indigenous species shall be allowed, with preference for species endemic to the specific province or region.

SEC. 6. Exception for Certified Non-Native Species. – Non-native species may be permitted for planting only upon certification by the DENR that said species are non-invasive and will not harm the local ecosystem or displace indigenous flora and fauna. Under no circumstances shall invasive species be allowed for planting or introduction. Such certification shall be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment and a period of quarantined observation. No permit shall be issued without scientific evidence that the species poses zero risk or ecological disruption or genetic contamination to native populations.

SEC. 7. Partner Agencies and Stakeholders and Their Responsibilities.

– The Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) shall implement the provisions of this Act, in partnership with the following agencies:

- (a) DENR;
- (b) Department of Agriculture (DA);
- (c) Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG);
- (d) Department of Science and Technology (DOST); and
- (e) National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP).

The responsibilities of these agencies shall include:

- (1) Establishment of nursery and seedling preparation;
- (2) Review and approval of tree species to be planted;
- (3) Site identification and preparation;
- (4) Technical support and extension services; and
- (5) Monitoring and evaluation;

SEC. 8. Provision of Seedlings. – The Community Environment and Natural Resources Offices (CENRO) of the DENR and the DA, in partnership with LGUs throughout the Philippines, shall maintain a seedling bank that will serve as a ready source of seedlings to be used in the implementation of this Act.

SEC. 9. Appropriations. – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriations of the departments and agencies concerned. Thereafter, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

LGUs concerned may set aside funds from any local revenue an amount deemed appropriate for the implementation of this Act.

SEC. 10. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – Within sixty (60) days after the effectivity of this Act, the DepEd and CHED, in coordination with the DENR and DILG, and in consultation with other agencies, promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 11. Separability Clause. – If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, other provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 12. Repealing Clause. – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, letters of instruction, administrative rules and regulations or parts thereof, which

are contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 13. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,