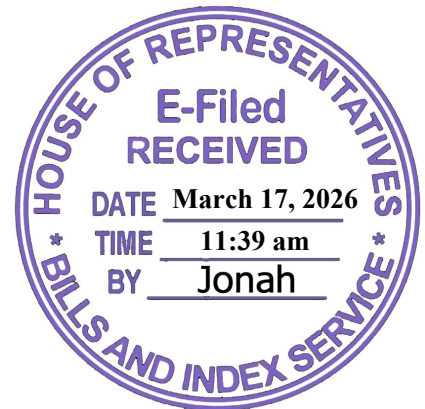


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8590



Introduced by:

HON. CHRISTOPHERSON "COCO" M. YAP

AN ACT

STRENGTHENING THE ESTABLISHMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND MAINTENANCE OF MUNICIPAL TREE PARKS IN EVERY MUNICIPALITY IN THE PHILIPPINES, PROVIDING MINIMUM STANDARDS THEREFOR, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Trees and green spaces are essential for healthy and sustainable communities. They help clean the air, reduce heat, prevent soil erosion, absorb floodwaters, and provide safe spaces where families and children can relax and enjoy nature. However, many municipalities in the Philippines still lack properly planned and maintained public tree parks. As urban areas grow and natural spaces shrink, it becomes increasingly important for local governments to protect and develop green areas for the benefit of present and future generations.

National policy has long encouraged the establishment of tree parks and forests in every locality. As early as 1969, Republic Act No. 5752 required municipalities and cities to work toward creating permanent forests or tree parks within their areas. Later, Letter of Instruction No. 1312 directed every barangay, municipality, and city to establish and maintain at least one forest or tree park. Despite these policies, many communities still lack accessible green spaces due to limited funding, land constraints, and the absence of clear standards for planning and maintenance.

This bill seeks to strengthen local environmental governance by requiring every municipality to establish, develop, and maintain at least one **Municipal Tree Park**. The measure encourages local governments to pass local ordinances and create park

management plans to ensure that these green spaces are properly developed and sustainably maintained. It also directs national agencies such as the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Department of the Interior and Local Government to provide technical guidance and support to local governments.

By ensuring that every municipality has a permanent and well-managed tree park, this measure promotes environmental protection, strengthens climate resilience, and creates healthier and greener communities for all Filipinos.

In view of the foregoing, **ug sa ngalan sa SERBISYONG TINUORAY**, the undersigned respectfully requests the immediate passage of this measure.


CHRISTOPHERSON "COCO" M. YAP
Representative, Second District of Southern Leyte

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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 *“Municipal Tree Park Act.”*

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. — It is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology, promote ecological balance and climate resilience, and strengthen local green spaces through the establishment and maintenance of municipal tree parks.

Consistent with existing laws and policies on municipal forests, tree parks, and related forest development projects, local government units (LGUs) shall be supported and guided to ensure that every municipality maintains accessible and sustainably managed tree parks for the benefit of present and future generations.

SECTION 3. Definition of Terms. — For purposes of this Act:

- (a) ***Tree Park*** refers to a designated public green area primarily planted with trees and compatible vegetation, established for ecological services,

biodiversity support, environmental education, and passive recreation, and managed under a municipal ordinance and a park management plan.

(b) **Municipality** refers to local government unit classified as a municipality under existing laws.

(c) **Park Management Plan** refers to a document adopted by the municipality providing, at minimum, the site profile, planting design, species selection, maintenance and protection measures, community participation, and monitoring and reporting scheme.

SECTION 4. Mandatory Establishment of Municipal Tree Park. — Every municipality shall establish, develop, and maintain at least one (1) Tree Park within its territorial jurisdiction.

The Tree Park shall, as a minimum standard, have an area of not less than one (1) hectare: *Provided*, That where a municipality can demonstrate, through a *sangguniang bayan* resolution and supporting land-use or site assessment, that no single contiguous one (1) hectare public site is reasonably available, the requirement may be complied with through any of the following:

- (a) two (2) or more park sites whose aggregate area is not less than one (1) hectare; or
- (b) a cluster or shared Tree Park located in a suitable and accessible site serving two (2) or more adjacent municipalities, under an inter-local cooperation agreement, without prejudice to each municipality's obligation to provide accessible green space.

In all cases, the Tree Park shall be located on:

- (i) public land owned by the municipality; or
- (ii) land lawfully acquired or accepted by donation; or
- (iii) land otherwise made available to the municipality through lawful instruments consistent with existing laws.

SECTION 5. Site Selection and Minimum Standards. — The DENR, in coordination with the DILG and representative LGUs, shall issue minimum standards on site selection, design, and maintenance, taking into account, among others: accessibility, safety, suitability for tree growth, climate and disaster risk, and compatibility with local land-use plans.

In specifying areas for planting or reforestation, the municipality may prioritize, as applicable, idle or vacant public lands, public parks, and other suitable public areas, and may include privately owned lands only with the owner's consent.

SECTION 6. Municipal Ordinance; Park Management Plan. — Within one (1) year from the effectivity of this Act, every municipality shall enact an ordinance establishing its Tree Park(s), appropriating local funds therefor, and adopting a Park Management Plan.

SECTION 7. Roles of National Government Agencies. —

- (a) Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). — The DENR shall provide technical assistance on species selection (including the use of endemic or indigenous species where appropriate), planting design, biodiversity management, and maintenance and protection measures, and shall harmonize assistance with existing reforestation and greening programs.
- (b) Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG). — The DILG shall assist in capacity building, governance guidance, and monitoring of LGU compliance.
- (c) Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR). — The DENR and DILG shall promulgate the IRR within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, in consultation with LGUs and relevant stakeholders.

SECTION 8. Primary Responsibility of LGUs; Maintenance. — The municipality shall be primarily responsible for the establishment, development, protection, and maintenance of the Tree Park(s), including the designation of a municipal office or unit responsible for day-to-day administration.

Barangays, civil society organizations, and deputized partners may be mobilized for maintenance and protection, consistent with applicable rules.

SECTION 9. Funding. — The amount necessary to implement this Act shall be charged against the available funds of the municipality, subject to budgeting, accounting, and auditing rules.

To support implementation, the DENR may, subject to existing laws and available appropriations, extend assistance from applicable reforestation, greening, or forest

development programs and may prioritize municipalities with approved ordinances and Park Management Plans.

LGUs are encouraged to enter into partnerships with the private sector, nongovernmental organizations, people's organizations, civic groups, and academic institutions for technical, financial, and community support, consistent with law.

SECTION 10. Incentives and Recognition. — Subject to existing laws, rules, and available funds, municipalities that demonstrate effective establishment and maintenance of Tree Parks based on the IRR standards shall be prioritized in relevant DENR technical assistance, capacity-building, and program support.

SECTION 11. Monitoring and Reporting. — The municipality shall submit an annual report to the DENR and DILG, in a form prescribed by the IRR, stating the location, area, number of trees planted and surviving, maintenance activities, partnerships, and budget utilization for the Tree Park(s).

SECTION 12. Separability Clause. — If any provision of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 13. Repealing Clause. — All laws, rules, and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 14. Effectivity. — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,