

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

**20th Congress
First Regular Session**

House Bill No. **8729**



Introduced by Rep. Maria Vanessa C. Aumentado

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines is one of the world's most biologically diverse countries, yet it continues to experience persistent deforestation, forest degradation, illegal logging, wildlife poaching, forest fires, and unsustainable land conversion. At the forefront of addressing these threats are Foresters and Forest Rangers, whose work directly safeguards forest resources, watersheds, biodiversity, and forest-dependent communities.

Despite the vital and hazardous nature of their duties, Foresters and Forest Rangers remain among the most undercompensated and institutionally neglected personnel in government service. They routinely operate in remote and hostile environments, face armed criminal elements, endure extreme terrain and weather conditions, and render extended field service with inadequate compensation, benefits, insurance protection, legal support, and equipment. Many Forest Rangers continue to serve for years under contractual or casual arrangements despite performing permanent and high-risk functions.

This situation undermines morale, weakens enforcement capacity, and compromises the State's ability to effectively protect forestlands and implement environmental laws. While other frontline government personnel engaged in hazardous and technical functions are protected by special laws, Foresters and

Forest Rangers remain without a comprehensive statutory framework recognizing the nature of their service.

This bill seeks to correct this long-standing inequity by establishing a Magna Carta for Foresters and Forest Rangers. It provides standardized and competitive compensation, hazard pay and allowances, insurance and death benefits, legal assistance, adequate logistical support, security of tenure, and clear pathways for professional development and career advancement.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'M' and 'A' followed by a checkmark-like flourish.

MARIA VANESSA C. AUMENTADO

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AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A MAGNA CARTA FOR FORESTERS AND FOREST
RANGERS, PROVIDING FOR SALARY STANDARDIZATION, BENEFITS,
HAZARD PAY, AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT, 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 "Magna Carta for Foresters and Forest Rangers of 2026."

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. It is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect, conserve, and sustainably manage forest resources as a matter of national survival, climate resilience, and ecological security. Foresters and Forest Rangers are at the frontlines of forest protection, enforcement of environmental laws, disaster risk reduction, watershed protection, and biodiversity conservation.

In the performance of their duties, Foresters and Forest Rangers undertake functions comparable to those of other uniformed and law-enforcement personnel, often under equally dangerous and hostile conditions.

Despite the hazards and responsibilities inherent in their work, forest rangers remain among the most undercompensated and underprotected government personnel. This disparity weakens enforcement capability, lowers morale, and undermines national efforts to address deforestation, flooding, climate change, and food insecurity.

The State shall therefore ensure the promotion of the welfare, economic security, professionalization, and morale of forest rangers by granting them just compensation, standardized salary grades, adequate benefits, humane working conditions, and opportunities for career advancement.

SEC. 3. Definition of Terms.

1. **Foresters** - refer to duly licensed forestry professionals engaged in forest management and regulation.
2. **Forest Rangers** - refer to government personnel, whether permanent, contractual, or casual, tasked primarily with forest protection, enforcement of environmental and forestry laws, wildlife protection, and related field operations under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), local government units (LGUs), or other deputized government agencies.
3. **Department** - refers to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Sec. 4. Duties and Responsibilities. - The following are the duties and responsibilities;

1. Monitor and evaluate plant and animal life, soil erosion, forest fire hazards, poaching activities, hunting, logging and mining activities and for the protection, preservation of country's forest and wildlife.
2. Perform and implement programs and policies geared towards the protection and preservation of the country's forest, including the wildlife found therein, implement reforestation programs.
3. Coordinate actively with the law enforcement agencies including Armed Forces of the Philippines, local government units, and non-government

organizations for the strict enforcement and implementation of environmental laws.

SEC. 5. Coverage. - This Act shall apply to all Foresters and Forest Rangers employed by the DENR and Local Government Units.

SEC. 6. Salary Standardization.

1. Entry-level Foresters shall not be lower than Salary Grade 15.
2. Forest rangers shall receive a minimum salary grade equivalent to Salary Grade 6. Senior and supervisory forest rangers shall receive higher salary grades commensurate with rank, years of service, and responsibility.

SEC. 7. Hazard Pay and Allowances. - Foresters and Forest Rangers shall be entitled to hazard pay equivalent to at least twenty-five percent (25%) of their basic monthly salary, in addition to subsistence, communication, laundry, and remote assignment allowances.

SEC. 8. Insurance, Health, and Welfare Benefits. Forest rangers shall be covered by government life and accident insurance and shall be entitled to disability or death benefits when injured or killed in the line of duty.

SEC. 9. Training and Professional Development. The DENR shall provide regular training, scholarships, and career development programs to Foresters Forest Rangers.

SEC. 10. Security of Tenure and Promotion. Foresters and Forest Rangers shall enjoy security of tenure in accordance with civil service laws. Promotion shall be based on merit, fitness, and performance.

SEC. 12. Implementing Rules and Regulations. The DENR, in coordination with the DBM and CSC, shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act.

SEC. 13. Appropriations. Funds necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be charged against current appropriations and thereafter included in the General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 14. Effectivity. - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication.

Approved.