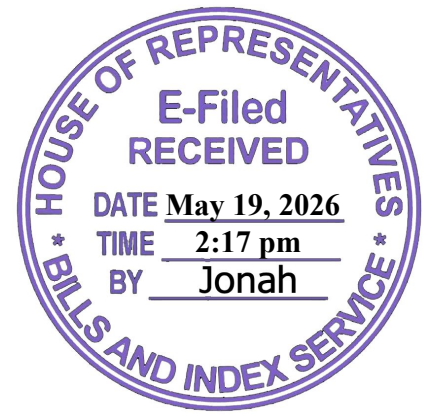


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **9320**



Introduced by **Representative ERIC G. YAP**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to maintain tariff protection on selected agricultural products and ensure their continued exclusion from tariff elimination commitments under the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), and other similar trade agreements. It establishes safeguards to protect local vegetable farmers, particularly those in agriculture-dependent provinces.

Farmers in agricultural areas, including Benguet and other highland provinces, continue to experience severe economic losses due to declining farmgate prices, import competition, smuggling¹, and rising production and transport costs². Reports have shown instances where locally produced vegetables were sold at extremely low prices, discarded³, or left unharvested because market returns no longer covered production expenses. The continued influx of imported and smuggled⁴ agricultural products have further weakened demand in increasingly vulnerable conditions.

To address these, the proposed measure retains tariff protection for essential agricultural commodities and institutionalizes mechanisms to prevent the premature removal of existing tariff protections. It authorizes the government to invoke available modification, renegotiation, and withdrawal measures to protect the

¹ Cariaso, Bella. (4 January 2024). *Price plunge forces Benguet farmers to give away carrots*. The Philippine Star. Accessed from: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/01/04/2323299/price-plunge-forces-benguet-farmers-give-away-carrots> on 4 May 2026.

² Lema, K. and Portugal, A. (2026, April 7). *High fuel costs forcing Philippine farmers to abandon harvests*. Reuters. Accessed from: <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/high-fuel-costs-forcing-philippine-farmers-abandon-harvests-2026-04-07/> on 4 May 2026.

³ GMA Integrated News. (9 January 2024). *Farmers dump excess cabbage in Benguet but LGU says there's no oversupply*. GMA News Online. Accessed from: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/regions/893509/farmers-dump-excess-cabbage-in-benguet-but-lgu-says-there-s-no-oversupply/story> on 4 May 2026.

⁴ GMA Integrated News. (10 January 2024). *Smuggling cause of poor vegetable sales from Benguet; gov't task force needed*. GMA News Online. Accessed from: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/regions/893703/smuggling-cause-of-poor-vegetable-sales-from-benguet-gov-t-task-force-needed-traders/story> on 4 May 2026.

domestic agricultural sector. It likewise establishes responsive safeguards against import surges, mandates regular injury assessments, and provides complementary support programs to improve the competitiveness and resilience of local farmers.

The protection of the country's agricultural production is essential to ensure food security, sustain rural livelihoods, and preserve the Philippines' long-term agricultural capacity. It places value on the work of Filipino farmers and recognizes that protecting their livelihood means protecting the nation's ability to feed its people. It ultimately ensures that agriculture remains a viable, competitive, industry capable of supporting future generations.

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



HON. ERIC G. YAP

Republic of the Philippines
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House Bill No. **9320**

Introduced by **Representative ERIC G. YAP**

AN ACT
MAINTAINING TARIFF PROTECTION ON SELECTED AGRICULTURAL
PRODUCTS, ENSURING THEIR EXCLUSION FROM TARIFF ELIMINATION
UNDER THE REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP
AND SIMILAR AGREEMENTS, PROVIDING SAFEGUARDS AND SUPPORT
FOR LOCAL VEGETABLE 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 “*Agricultural Tariff Protection and Vegetable Farmers’ Safeguard Act.*”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect Filipino farmers and agricultural enterprises from unfair foreign competition; promote food security, sustainable agricultural development, and rural livelihoods; ensure that trade liberalization policies remain consistent with national interest and social justice; uphold the constitutional mandate to prioritize Filipino labor and locally produced goods; strengthen agriculture-dependent provinces and local economies; and utilize lawful tariff measures, safeguards, and trade remedies to preserve sensitive agricultural sectors.

SEC. 3. *Coverage.* – This Act shall apply to vegetables classified under Section II, Chapter 7, entitled “Edible Vegetables and Certain Roots and Tubers” of the 2012 World Customs Organization’s Harmonized System, including but not limited to:

- a. Cabbage;
- b. Carrots;
- c. Cauliflower;
- d. Potatoes;
- e. Radish;

f. Broccoli; and

g. Lettuce.

The Department of Agriculture (DA), in coordination with the Tariff Commission, may include additional vegetables determined to be sensitive agricultural commodities.

SEC. 4. *Maintenance and Retention of Tariff Protection.* – The State shall maintain existing tariff rates on the covered agricultural products at levels sufficient to protect domestic producers.

No tariff reduction shall be implemented unless authorized by Congress upon a clear showing that such reduction will not prejudice domestic farmers, food security, and agriculture-dependent provinces.

SEC. 5. *Exclusion from Tariff Elimination under Trade Agreements.* – The National Government, through the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), DA, Department of Economy, Planning, and Development (DEPDev), Department of Finance, Bureau of Customs (BOC), and Tariff Commission shall ensure the continued exclusion of the covered products from tariff elimination commitments under the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), and similar future trade agreements.

SEC. 6. *Authority to Modify Tariff Commitments.* – Pursuant to Article 2.15 of the RCEP, the President, upon recommendation of the concerned agencies, is authorized to:

- a. Initiate negotiations for the modification or withdrawal of tariff concessions;
- b. Invoke review, safeguard, renegotiation, or withdrawal mechanisms; and
- c. Implement necessary adjustments to protect domestic agricultural sectors.

SEC. 7. *Safeguard Measures against Import Surges.* – The government shall establish automatic and responsive safeguard mechanisms, including:

- a. Temporary additional tariffs when import volumes exceed threshold levels;
- b. Quantitative restrictions when necessary to prevent market disruption;
- c. Monitoring of import prices to prevent dumping and predatory pricing; and

d. Immediate tariff review upon determination of injury or threat of injury to local farmers.

SEC. 8. *Agricultural Injury Review Mechanism.* – The Tariff Commission, in coordination with the DA, shall conduct annual reviews of:

- a. Import volumes;
- b. Domestic and farmgate prices;
- c. Production levels;
- d. Farmer incomes; and
- e. Evidence of injury or threat of injury.

Upon determination of injury, the Commission shall immediately recommend appropriate tariff adjustments, safeguards, quotas, or emergency measures.

SEC. 9. *Priority Protection for Agriculture-Dependent Provinces.* – Implementation of this Act shall prioritize provinces heavily dependent on vegetable production, including Benguet and similarly situated areas, considering:

- a. Higher production costs due to terrain and climate;
- b. Strategic contribution to national food supply; and
- c. Increased vulnerability to import competition.

SEC. 10. *Support Programs for Farmers.* – In addition to tariff protection, the government shall implement comprehensive support programs, including:

- a. Farm-to-market logistics improvement;
- b. Post-harvest facilities and cold storage systems;
- c. Access to credit, financing, and crop insurance;
- d. Seed, fertilizer, and input support;
- e. Market linkage and price stabilization programs; and
- f. Infrastructure development in farming communities.

SEC. 11. *Inter-Agency Coordination and Monitoring.* – The DA, DTI, DEPDev, BOC, and Tariff Commission shall:

- a. Monitor importation trends and market conditions;

- b. Maintain a centralized database on agricultural trade;
- c. Recommend policy adjustments; and
- d. Submit annual reports to Congress on the implementation of this Act.

SEC. 12. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 13. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within ninety (90) days from effectivity, the DA, DTI, DEPDev, BOC, and Tariff Commission shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations.

SEC. 14. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remainder shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 15. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules, and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

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

Approved,