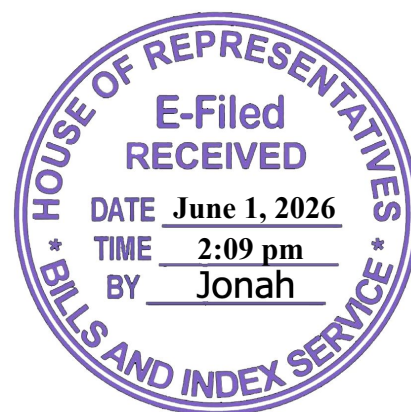


Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **9596**



Introduced by HON. JAMES "JOJO" ANG JR.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The 1987 Philippine Constitution declares that the State shall protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature. In pursuit of this constitutional mandate, Congress enacted various environmental laws, including Republic Act No. 9003 or the "Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000," Republic Act No. 8749 or the "Philippine Clean Air Act of 1999," Republic Act No. 9275 or the "Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004," and Republic Act No. 9729 or the "Climate Change Act of 2009."

In the landmark case of *Oposa v. Factoran*, the Supreme Court eloquently affirmed the doctrine of intergenerational responsibility, recognizing the duty of the present generation to protect the environment for "generations yet unborn." The Court declared that the right to a balanced and healthful ecology is so basic that it "need not even be written in the Constitution for they are assumed to exist from the inception of humankind." This principle underscores the urgent need to institutionalize effective and accountable environmental governance mechanisms at the local level to ensure that natural resources are preserved, protected, and sustainably managed for present and future Filipinos.

Despite the existence of these landmark environmental laws, implementation at the local government level remains weak and inconsistent. Many provinces, cities, and municipalities still lack permanent and properly staffed environment offices capable of effectively enforcing environmental laws, managing solid waste, protecting watersheds and coastal resources, regulating extractive activities, and implementing climate adaptation and disaster resilience programs.

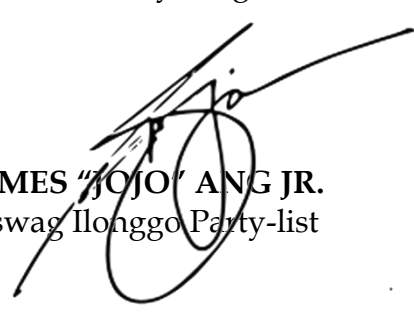
In many local government units (LGUs), environmental functions are merely assigned as additional duties to existing offices or personnel without specialized expertise, technical support, or institutional continuity. As a result, environmental governance suffers from fragmented implementation, poor enforcement, inadequate planning, and limited accountability.

The increasing threats posed by climate change, improper waste disposal, flooding, deforestation, water pollution, biodiversity loss, and environmental degradation underscore the urgent need to institutionalize permanent Local Environment and Natural Resources Offices in all provinces, cities, and municipalities nationwide.

This measure seeks to establish and institutionalize permanent Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Offices (PENROs) and Municipal/City Environment and Natural Resources Offices (MENROs/CENROs) in the entire country, provide for plantilla positions with minimum qualification standards, create dedicated environmental enforcement units, mandate annual environmental performance audits, and establish dedicated local environmental funds to ensure sustained implementation of environmental programs and policies.

By strengthening local environmental governance and institutional capacity, this proposed measure aims to empower LGUs to become more proactive, accountable, and effective stewards of the environment and natural resources for present and future generations.

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



JAMES "JOJO" ANG JR.
Uswag Ilonggo Party-list

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 9596

Introduced by HON. JAMES “JOJO” ANG JR.

**AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING A LOCAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL
RESOURCES OFFICE IN ALL PROVINCES, CITIES, AND MUNICIPALITIES,
PROVIDING FOR PERMANENT PLANTILLA POSITIONS,
ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT UNITS, ENVIRONMENTAL
PERFORMANCE AUDITS, AND DEDICATED LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL
FUNDS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

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

1 **SECTION 1. *Short Title.*** – This Act shall be known as the “Local Environment
2 and Natural Resources Office Institutionalization Act.”

3 **SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to
4 protect and promote the constitutional right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology
5 and to strengthen environmental governance through institutionalized, professionalized, and
6 adequately funded local environmental offices in all local government units.

7 The State recognizes the vital role of local government units in environmental
8 protection, ecological solid waste management, climate change adaptation and
9 mitigation, biodiversity conservation, pollution control, watershed management, and
10 sustainable development.

11 **SEC. 3. *Coverage.*** – *This Act shall apply to all provinces, cities, and municipalities*
12 *nationwide.*

1 **SEC. 4. *Creation and Institutionalization of Local Environment and Natural***
2 ***Resources Offices***- The creation and institutionalization shall be as follows:

- 3 (a) Every province shall establish and maintain a permanent Provincial
4 Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO).
5 (b) Every city and municipality shall establish and maintain a permanent City or
6 Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO/MENRO).
7 (c) The PENRO, CENRO, or MENRO shall be a regular department or office under
8 the organizational structure of the local government unit concerned.

9 **SEC. 5. *Powers and Functions***.- The PENRO, CENRO, or MENRO shall have the
10 following powers and functions:

- 11 (a) Formulate and implement local environmental management plans, policies,
12 and programs;
13 (b) Enforce environmental laws, ordinances, rules, and regulations;
14 (c) Implement ecological solid waste management programs pursuant to Republic
15 Act No. 9003;
16 (d) Conduct environmental monitoring, inspection, and compliance activities;
17 (e) Manage reforestation, watershed protection, and biodiversity conservation
18 programs;
19 (f) Coordinate climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction initiatives
20 related to environmental protection;
21 (g) Regulate and monitor local extractive and environmentally critical activities
22 consistent with existing laws;
23 (h) Conduct environmental education and community awareness campaigns;
24 (i) Maintain environmental databases, mapping systems, and records;
25 (j) Coordinate with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources
26 (DENR), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Climate
27 Change Commission (CCC), and other relevant agencies; and

(k) Perform such other functions as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 7. *Staffing Pattern and Qualification Standards-* *The staff qualifications are as follows:*

(a) A PENRO, CENRO, or MENRO shall be headed by a permanent Environment and Natural Resources Officer appointed by the local chief executive.

(b) The Environment and Natural Resources Officer shall preferably possess:

1) A bachelor's degree in environmental science, forestry, biology, environmental engineering, agriculture, fisheries, natural resource management, or related fields;

2) Relevant training and experience in environmental management; and

3) Eligibility as required under civil service laws, rules, and regulations.

(c) The LGUs shall create the necessary plantilla positions, technical personnel, and support staff necessary for the effective implementation of this Act, subject to existing budgeting, civil service, and compensation laws.

SEC. 8. *Environmental Enforcement Units-* Every province, city, and municipality shall establish an Environmental Enforcement Unit under the PENRO, CENRO, or MENRO tasked to:

(a) Conduct environmental inspections and monitoring;

(b) Apprehend violators of environmental laws and ordinances;

(c) Issue notices of violation and environmental citations as may be authorized by law or ordinance;

(d) Assist in anti-illegal dumping, anti-pollution, anti-illegal logging, anti-illegal quarrying, and related environmental operations; and

(e) Coordinate with law enforcement agencies and national government agencies in environmental protection activities.

Personnel assigned to the Environmental Enforcement Unit shall undergo mandatory environmental law enforcement training.

SEC. 9. *Annual Environmental Performance Audit* - The performance of the department shall be evaluated through these indicators:

(a) All provinces, cities, and municipalities shall conduct an annual environmental performance audit to assess compliance with environmental laws, policies, and programs.

(b) The audit shall include, among others:

- 1) Solid waste management compliance;
- 2) Functionality of Materials Recovery Facilities (MRFs);
- 3) Waste diversion rates;
- 4) Water and air quality management initiatives;
- 5) Reforestation and conservation activities;
- 6) Climate adaptation and mitigation programs;
- 7) Environmental law enforcement accomplishments; and
- 8) Utilization of environmental funds.

(c) The DILG, in coordination with the DENR and CCC, shall develop a standardized environmental audit and performance evaluation system.

SEC. 10. *Local Environmental Fund* - Every province, city, and municipality shall establish a Local Environmental Fund exclusively for environmental protection, conservation, enforcement, climate adaptation, and ecological programs.

The Local Environment Fund may be sourced from any of the following:

- (a) Annual appropriations of the LGU;
- (b) Environmental fees and charges;
- (c) Grants, donations, and endowments;
- (d) Fines and penalties collected from environmental violations; and

(e) Such other lawful sources as may be determined by the LGU.

The Local Environmental Fund shall be used exclusively for:

(a) Environmental programs and projects;

(b) Purchase of equipment and facilities;

(c) Capacity-building and training;

(d) Environmental enforcement activities;

(e) Disaster resilience and climate adaptation projects; and

(f) Community-based environmental initiatives.

SEC. 10. *Coordination with National Government Agencies-* The DENR, DILG, CCC, and other relevant agencies shall provide technical assistance, training, and capacity-building support to LGUs in the implementation of this Act.

SEC. 11. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DENR and DILG, in coordination with the CCC, Department of Budget and Management (DBM), and Civil Service Commission (CSC), shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC 12. *Appropriations.* - The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the concerned agencies and LGUs. Thereafter, such amounts as may be necessary shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act and local budgets.

SEC. 13. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SEC. 14. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

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

Approved,