

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 10028



Introduced by HON. PHILIP CONRAD "DOK BONG" M. ACOP

AN ACT
MANDATING THE INTEGRATION OF URBAN GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND
"SPONGE CITY" HYDROLOGICAL PRINCIPLES IN URBAN PLANNING AND
DEVELOPMENT, ESTABLISHING THE NATIONAL SPONGE CITY FRAMEWORK,
AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

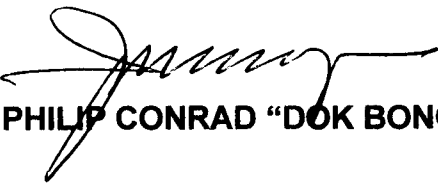
The Philippines faces compounding threats from severe seasonal typhoons and rapid, dense urbanization. Traditional "grey infrastructure"—which relies exclusively on concrete drainage channels, floodwalls, and pipes—accelerates stormwater runoff, overwhelms municipal drainage networks, and leads to catastrophic urban flooding. This proposed bill shifts the legislative paradigm from simply fighting water to managing it naturally. By mandating the integration of "Sponge City" principles, this bill requires urban areas to mimic natural ecosystems. Instead of immediately funneling rainwater into over-stressed drainage systems, cities will be structurally designed to absorb, store, filter, and reuse water where it falls, thereby mitigating flash floods, cooling the urban heat island effect, and strengthening local water security.

To ensure a coordinated national transition, the proposed bill tasks the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), in coordination with the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), and the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), with formulating a comprehensive National Sponge City Master Plan within one year. Local Government Units (LGUs), particularly Highly Urbanized Cities (HUCs), must embed these principles into their local zoning and climate action plans. Practically, this means a minimum of twenty percent of public open spaces must be retrofitted with permeable materials, rain gardens, or bioretention swales. Furthermore, the DPWH must shift to hybrid green-grey civil works by using permeable pavements for new urban sidewalks and minor roads, while all new government buildings exceeding one thousand square meters must integrate either vegetated green roofs or rainwater harvesting systems.

Recognizing that government action alone is insufficient to transform entire cities, the proposed bill creates an attractive, market-driven framework for the private sector. Private developers who exceed the minimum green benchmarks are granted

progressive real property tax discounts relative to the size of their green installations, alongside fast-tracked processing for local building permits and environmental compliance certificates. Ultimately, this bill converts Philippine cities from defensive, flood-prone landscapes into proactive, self-sustaining water catchments. By turning concrete spaces into functional “sponges,” this legislation aims to prevent billions in annual economic flood damage, safeguard urban populations, and foster cooler, healthier, and more climate-resilient communities.

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



HON. PHILIP CONRAD “DOK BONG” M. ACOP

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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 “*Sustainable Urban Sponge and Green Infrastructure Act.*”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature. Recognizing the compounding threats of climate change and rapid urbanization, the State shall adopt innovative, nature-based solutions to mitigate urban flooding, reduce urban heat, and secure water resilience by mandating that all future urban spaces be designed to absorb, capture, and utilize rainwater effectively.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act:

1. ***Urban Green Infrastructure (UGI)*** refers to a strategically planned network of natural and semi-natural areas with other environmental features designed and managed to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services, such as water purification, air quality improvement, and spaces for recreation.
2. ***Sponge City*** refers to a comprehensive urban water management strategy wherein an urban area is designed to mimic natural hydrology, allowing it to absorb, store, filter, and purify rainwater, and release it when needed, primarily through nature-based systems rather than traditional concrete drainage alone.

3. **Permeable Pavement** refers to paving materials and techniques for roads, sidewalks, and parking lots that allow stormwater to percolate through the surface into the soil or an underlying aggregate layer.
4. **Runoff Coefficient** refers to the larger or smaller portion of total rainfall that runs off a surface during or immediately after a storm event.

SEC. 4. The National Sponge City Master Plan. – Within one (1) year from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), in coordination with the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), and the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), shall formulate a National Sponge City Master Plan.

This plan shall serve as the primary blueprint for transforming Highly Urbanized Cities (HUCs) and rapidly urbanizing municipalities into flood-resilient communities by setting targets for runoff reduction, permeable surface ratios, and green space connectivity.

SEC. 5. Mandate on Local Government Units (LGUs). – All LGUs, particularly Highly Urbanized Cities, shall integrate Sponge City principles into their respective Comprehensive Land Use Plans (CLUPs) and Local Climate Change Action Plans (LCCAPs). LGUs shall ensure that:

1. A minimum of twenty percent (20%) of all public open spaces, plazas, and park developments within their jurisdiction shall utilize permeable materials and incorporate rain gardens or bioretention swales.
2. Local zoning ordinances shall require new commercial and industrial developments to maintain a maximum allowable stormwater runoff rate, effectively forcing the integration of onsite water retention systems.

SEC. 6. Integration in Public Works and Buildings. – The DPWH shall transition from exclusive grey infrastructure to hybrid green-grey infrastructure.

1. **Public Roads and Sidewalks:** All new construction or major rehabilitation of urban sidewalks, parking lots, and minor residential roads shall utilize permeable pavements wherever technically feasible.
2. **Green Roofs and Rainwater Harvesting:** All new government building construction with a footprint exceeding one thousand (1,000) square meters shall be required to install either a green roof (vegetated roof system) or a functional rainwater harvesting and utilization system designed to reduce peak runoff into the municipal drainage system.

SEC. 7. Incentives for Private Developers. – Private developers who exceed the minimum permeable surface requirements or integrate large-scale green infrastructure (such as constructed wetlands or extensive green roofs) in their projects shall be entitled to:

1. A progressive discount on real property taxes related to the greened portion of the property, to be determined by the local government unit.
2. Accelerated processing of environmental compliance certificates (ECCs) and local building permits.

SEC. 8. Appropriations. – The amount necessary to carry out the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriations of the DENR, DPWH, and DILG. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for its continued implementation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act (GAA).

SEC. 9. Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR). – Within ninety (90) days from the approval of this Act, the DENR, DPWH, DILG, and NEDA, in consultation with league of cities, environmental engineering experts, and relevant non-government organizations, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 10. 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. 11. Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules, and regulations inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 12. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,