



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives



20th CONGRESS
Second Regular Session
HOUSE BILL NO. 10374

Introduced by Hon. Charisse Anne C. Hernandez

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The 1987 Constitution recognizes the vital role of agriculture in national development and mandates the State to protect the people's right to a balanced and healthful ecology, promote sustainable economic growth, conserve the nation's cultural heritage, and improve the quality of life of every Filipino. Achieving these constitutional objectives requires policies that safeguard the country's rich agricultural resources while preserving the cultural traditions and local knowledge that have shaped Filipino food systems for generations.

The Philippines is recognized as one of the world's megadiverse countries, possessing a remarkable wealth of agricultural, marine, and cultural resources. Across its regions are indigenous crops, heirloom rice varieties, native livestock breeds, traditional fisheries, artisanal food products, and culinary traditions that reflect the country's history, identity, and diverse cultural communities. These resources not only sustain rural livelihoods but also contribute significantly to food security, biodiversity conservation, tourism, and local economic development.

Despite these strengths, Philippine food systems face increasing challenges. Rapid urbanization, climate change, biodiversity loss, industrialized food production, changing consumer preferences, and the gradual disappearance of traditional farming and culinary practices threaten the survival of many locally produced food products and indigenous food traditions. Many small farmers, fisherfolk, food artisans, and community-based food enterprises continue to struggle with limited market access, low productivity, and inadequate institutional support.

The global Slow Food Movement, established in Italy in 1986, promotes food that is good, clean, and fair—food that is nutritious and culturally appropriate, produced through environmentally sustainable methods, and provides equitable opportunities and livelihoods for producers. Since its establishment, the movement has grown into a worldwide network spanning more than 160 countries, demonstrating that sustainable local food systems can simultaneously promote economic development, environmental stewardship, public health, and cultural preservation.

For the Philippines, embracing the principles of Slow Food presents a strategic opportunity to strengthen local agriculture and fisheries, improve the competitiveness of Filipino food producers,

encourage healthy and responsible food consumption, conserve biodiversity, preserve culinary heritage, and expand culinary and farm tourism. These objectives complement existing national policies under the Organic Agriculture Act, the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act, the Farm Tourism Development Act, the Philippine Heritage Act, and other laws promoting sustainable development and inclusive economic growth.

However, while several government programs support agriculture, tourism, culture, and rural enterprises, there remains no comprehensive national policy that integrates these efforts into a unified framework for sustainable local food systems and the preservation of Philippine food heritage.

This measure seeks to institutionalize a Philippine Slow Food Program under the leadership of the Department of Agriculture. It establishes a National Slow Food Registry to document and promote Philippine food heritage, encourages collaboration among national government agencies, local government units, educational institutions, Indigenous Cultural Communities, civil society organizations, and the private sector, and provides strategic support to farmers, fisherfolk, food artisans, cooperatives, and micro, small, and medium enterprises engaged in sustainable food production.

Rather than creating another bureaucracy, this measure maximizes existing institutional mechanisms through an inter-agency coordinating body and strengthens partnerships that will enable communities to protect their food heritage while generating sustainable livelihood opportunities.

By institutionalizing a national framework for Slow Food, the State affirms its commitment to preserving Filipino identity, promoting sustainable agriculture and fisheries, supporting rural communities, and ensuring that future generations continue to benefit from the country's rich culinary and agricultural heritage.

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



CHARISSE ANNE C. HERNANDEZ
Member, House of Representatives

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 10374

Introduced by Honorable Charisse Anne C. Hernandez

AN ACT
INSTITUTIONALIZING THE PHILIPPINE SLOW FOOD PROGRAM,
PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS, CONSERVING PHILIPPINE
FOOD HERITAGE AND AGRICULTURAL BIODIVERSITY, STRENGTHENING THE
LIVELIHOODS OF LOCAL FOOD PRODUCERS, ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL SLOW
FOOD REGISTRY, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. This Act shall be known as the "**Philippine Slow Food Act of 2026.**"

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote sustainable, resilient, and inclusive local food systems that protect agricultural biodiversity, preserve Philippine food heritage, strengthen food and nutrition security, improve the livelihoods of farmers, fisherfolk, Indigenous Cultural Communities, food artisans, and micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), encourage responsible food production and consumption, and advance rural development, environmental sustainability, and culinary tourism.

Towards this end, the State shall institutionalize the Philippine Slow Food Program and promote food systems that are good, clean, and fair, while encouraging innovation, cultural preservation, climate resilience, and community participation.

SEC. 3. Objectives. This Act shall pursue the following objectives:

- (a) Promote sustainable local food systems that contribute to food security, nutrition security, and environmental sustainability;
- (b) Conserve and promote Philippine food heritage, including traditional and indigenous food products, culinary traditions, heirloom crops, native livestock, and artisanal fisheries;
- (c) Improve the competitiveness, productivity, and market access of local food producers;
- (d) Strengthen agricultural biodiversity and climate-resilient food production;
- (e) Promote research, education, innovation, and public awareness on sustainable food systems;
- (f) Encourage farm tourism, culinary tourism, and heritage tourism centered on Philippine food culture; and

- (g) Foster collaboration among government agencies, local government units, academic institutions, civil society organizations, the private sector, and local communities in advancing the objectives of this Act.

SEC. 4. Definition of Terms. For purposes of this Act:

- (a) **Slow Food** refers to a food system that promotes food which is good (healthy, nutritious, culturally appropriate, and of high quality), clean (produced using environmentally sustainable and biodiversity-friendly methods), and fair (ensuring equitable opportunities and compensation for producers and workers).
- (b) **Food Heritage** refers to traditional, indigenous, and locally significant food products, recipes, culinary practices, ingredients, processing methods, and food-related knowledge transmitted across generations.
- (c) **Local Food System** refers to the production, processing, distribution, marketing, and consumption of food primarily sourced from local communities or regions.
- (d) **Food Artisan** refers to an individual, cooperative, or enterprise engaged in the traditional or small-scale production or processing of food using locally sourced ingredients and culturally significant methods.
- (e) **Agricultural Biodiversity** refers to the variety and variability of crops, livestock, fisheries, microorganisms, and other biological resources used for food and agriculture.

SEC. 5. Establishment of the Philippine Slow Food Program. There is hereby established a Philippine Slow Food Program (PSFP) under the Department of Agriculture, which shall serve as the national framework for promoting sustainable local food systems, conserving Philippine food heritage, strengthening agricultural biodiversity, and enhancing the competitiveness of local food producers.

The Program shall:

- (a) Support sustainable agriculture and fisheries;
- (b) Promote Philippine food heritage and traditional culinary practices;
- (c) Enhance market access and value-adding opportunities for local food producers;
- (d) Encourage responsible food consumption and consumer education;
- (e) Support culinary, farm, and cultural tourism initiatives showcasing Philippine food heritage; and
- (f) Coordinate national and local initiatives consistent with the objectives of this Act.

SEC. 6. Creation of the National Slow Food Council. There is hereby created a National Slow Food Council (NSFC) to serve as the policy-making, coordinating, and advisory body for the implementation of this Act. The Council shall be chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture (DA).

The Chairperson will be authorized to compose and convene an inter-agency council composed of key implementing government agencies, Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines, and one (1) representative each from accredited organizations representing farmers, fisherfolk, Indigenous Cultural Communities, food artisans, academe, and civil society organizations.

The Department of Agriculture shall serve as the Secretariat of the Council using its existing personnel and resources.

SEC. 7. Powers and Functions of the Council. The Council shall have the following powers and functions:

- (a) Formulate the National Slow Food Development Framework and periodically review and update the same;
- (b) Coordinate the implementation of programs and projects under this Act among national government agencies, local government units, and stakeholders;
- (c) Recommend policies and measures to strengthen sustainable local food systems and preserve Philippine food heritage;
- (d) Promote partnerships with academic institutions, civil society organizations, producer organizations, the private sector, and international organizations;
- (e) Develop national standards, indicators, and monitoring mechanisms for the implementation of this Act;
- (f) Submit an annual report to the President of the Philippines and Congress on the implementation of this Act; and
- (g) Perform such other functions as may be necessary to carry out the objectives of this Act.

SEC. 8. National Slow Food Registry. The Department of Agriculture shall establish and maintain a National Slow Food Registry, which shall serve as the country's official database of significant food heritage resources and sustainable local food initiatives.

The Registry shall include, whenever applicable:

- (a) Indigenous and heritage food products;
- (b) Heirloom crop varieties and native plant species used for food;
- (c) Native livestock and poultry breeds;
- (d) Traditional fisheries and aquatic food resources;
- (e) Traditional recipes, culinary practices, food processing techniques, and food-related cultural knowledge;
- (f) Food artisans, cooperatives, producer organizations, and micro, small, and medium enterprises engaged in traditional and sustainable food production;
- (g) Recognized Slow Food Communities; and
- (h) Other food heritage resources as may be determined by the Council.

The Registry shall serve as a reference for policy development, research, conservation programs, tourism promotion, education, and market development.

SEC. 9. Responsibilities of the Department of Agriculture. The Department of Agriculture shall be the lead implementing agency and shall:

- (a) Formulate and implement the Philippine Slow Food Program;
- (b) Provide technical assistance, extension services, and capability-building programs for farmers, fisherfolk, food artisans, cooperatives, and MSMEs;
- (c) Promote biodiversity-friendly, climate-resilient, and sustainable food production systems;
- (d) Develop programs that encourage the conservation and utilization of indigenous crops, native livestock breeds, traditional fisheries, and locally significant food products;
- (e) Facilitate market access, value chain development, branding, and product promotion for local food producers;
- (f) Maintain the National Slow Food Registry;
- (g) Monitor and evaluate the implementation of this Act; and
- (h) Perform such other functions as may be necessary to achieve the objectives of this Act.

SEC. 10. Responsibilities of Other Government Agencies. The following agencies shall support the implementation of this Act:

- (a) **Department of Tourism (DOT)** shall promote culinary tourism, farm tourism, food festivals, gastronomic destinations, and heritage food trails showcasing Philippine food culture.
- (b) **Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)** shall provide assistance in enterprise development, product innovation, packaging, branding, digital marketing, export promotion, and market expansion for local food enterprises.
- (c) **Department of Science and Technology (DOST)** shall support research, innovation, food technology, product development, quality improvement, and appropriate technologies that enhance sustainable food production.
- (d) **Department of Education (DepEd)** shall encourage the integration of sustainable food systems, nutrition, Philippine food heritage, and responsible food consumption into appropriate learning competencies, subject to existing curriculum standards.
- (e) **Commission on Higher Education (CHED)** shall encourage higher education institutions to undertake research, extension programs, innovation, and academic initiatives related to sustainable agriculture, biodiversity conservation, culinary heritage, and local food systems.
- (f) **Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA)** shall develop and promote competency standards and training programs on heritage cuisine, food processing, artisanal food production, sustainable farming, and related livelihood skills.
- (g) **National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA)** shall document, preserve, and promote Philippine culinary traditions and food heritage as part of the country's cultural heritage.
- (h) **National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP)** shall support Indigenous Cultural Communities in preserving and promoting their traditional food systems and knowledge, consistent with Republic Act No. 8371, otherwise known as the *Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997*.
- (i) **Philippine Information Agency (PIA)** shall undertake nationwide information and advocacy campaigns to promote the objectives of this Act.

SEC. 11. Participation of Local Government Units. Local government units (LGUs) are encouraged to integrate the promotion of sustainable local food systems and the conservation of food heritage into their respective Comprehensive Development Plans, Comprehensive Land Use Plans, Local Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Plans, Local Tourism Development Plans, and Local Investment Programs.

LGUs may, subject to the availability of funds and existing laws, establish local Slow Food initiatives, farmers' markets, heritage food festivals, community food hubs, and similar programs in partnership with farmers, fisherfolk, cooperatives, Indigenous Cultural Communities, educational institutions, civil society organizations, and the private sector.

For outstanding initiatives, the Department of Agriculture may recognize LGUs as Slow Food Communities pursuant to Section 15 of this Act.

SEC. 12. Support for Local Food Producers and Enterprises. The Department of Agriculture (DA), in coordination with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of Science and Technology (DOST), Department of Tourism (DOT), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Cooperative Development Authority (CDA), and other concerned agencies, shall develop and implement programs to strengthen the competitiveness, productivity, and sustainability of local food producers and enterprises. Such programs shall include, but not be limited to:

- (a) Technical assistance and extension services;

- (b) Skills development and capacity-building;
- (c) Product research and development;
- (d) Food safety and quality improvement;
- (e) Packaging, branding, labeling, and marketing assistance;
- (f) Digitalization and e-commerce support;
- (g) Facilitation of participation in trade fairs, food exhibitions, culinary festivals, and local and international market promotion activities; and
- (h) Access to existing government financing, credit, insurance, and livelihood assistance programs, subject to existing laws, rules, and regulations.

Priority shall be given to farmers, fisherfolk, Indigenous Cultural Communities, cooperatives, women, youth, and micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) engaged in sustainable food production and traditional food enterprises.

SEC. 13. Conservation of Philippine Food Heritage and Agricultural Biodiversity. The Department of Agriculture, in coordination with the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), Department of Science and Technology (DOST), Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), state universities and colleges (SUCs), local government units (LGUs), and other concerned institutions, shall develop programs for the identification, documentation, conservation, protection, promotion, and sustainable utilization of Philippine food heritage and agricultural biodiversity. Such programs shall include but not limited to:

- (a) Conservation of heirloom and indigenous crop varieties;
- (b) Protection of native livestock breeds and traditional fisheries;
- (c) Documentation of traditional recipes, culinary practices, food preparation techniques, and indigenous food knowledge;
- (d) Establishment of community seed banks, demonstration farms, and heritage food learning sites, where practicable;
- (e) Promotion of sustainable harvesting and production practices that conserve biodiversity and natural resources; and
- (f) Other initiatives that contribute to the preservation and transmission of Philippine food heritage to future generations.

SEC. 14. Research, Innovation, Education, and Public Awareness. The Department of Agriculture, in collaboration with DOST, CHED, DepEd, TESDA, NCCA, and other concerned institutions, shall encourage research, innovation, education, and public awareness programs on sustainable local food systems. Such programs shall include but not limited to:

- (a) Research on indigenous crops, native livestock, traditional fisheries, and heritage food products;
- (b) Development of climate-resilient and biodiversity-friendly food production technologies;
- (c) Documentation and publication of Philippine culinary heritage and traditional food knowledge;
- (d) Educational campaigns promoting healthy, nutritious, locally produced, and environmentally sustainable food;
- (e) Training programs for farmers, fisherfolk, food artisans, culinary professionals, tourism stakeholders, and entrepreneurs; and
- (f) Partnerships with higher education institutions and research organizations for knowledge generation and innovation.

The Department of Education and the Commission on Higher Education are encouraged to integrate, where appropriate and consistent with existing curriculum standards, lessons on Philippine food heritage, sustainable agriculture, responsible food consumption, and biodiversity conservation into relevant educational programs.

SEC. 15. Recognition of Slow Food Communities and Incentives. To encourage excellence in promoting sustainable local food systems, the Department of Agriculture shall establish a Recognition Program for Slow Food Communities.

The Department may confer such recognition upon provinces, cities, municipalities, barangays, Indigenous Cultural Communities, academic institutions, cooperatives, producer organizations, tourism destinations, civil society organizations, and private sector partners that demonstrate exemplary initiatives in conserving Philippine food heritage; protecting agricultural biodiversity; supporting sustainable agriculture and fisheries; promoting healthy and responsible food consumption; advancing culinary, cultural, and farm tourism; and strengthening the livelihoods of local food producers.

Recognized Slow Food Communities shall be given priority consideration, subject to existing laws and the availability of funds, in the provision of technical assistance, training, market promotion, product development, research collaboration, and other government support programs administered by the DA and participating agencies.

SEC. 16. Promotion of Local and Sustainable Food in Government Programs. Consistent with Republic Act No. 12009, otherwise known as the New Government Procurement Act, and other applicable laws, national government agencies, government-owned or -controlled corporations, state universities and colleges, and local government units are encouraged, whenever practicable and economically advantageous, to prioritize the procurement and use of locally produced, seasonal, and sustainably produced food for official meetings, conferences, government events, institutional feeding programs, and similar activities.

SEC. 17. Annual Report to Congress. The Department of Agriculture (DA), through the National Slow Food Council, shall submit to the President of the Philippines, the Senate, and the House of Representatives an Annual Report on the Implementation of the Philippine Slow Food Program not later than March 31 of every year.

The Annual Report shall include, but not be limited to:

- (a) The status of implementation of the Philippine Slow Food Program;
- (b) Updates on the National Slow Food Registry;
- (c) Programs and projects implemented by participating agencies;
- (d) Financial utilization and accomplishments;
- (e) The number of recognized Slow Food Communities and best practices documented;
- (f) Measurable indicators on the conservation of food heritage, agricultural biodiversity, and support extended to local food producers; and
- (g) Recommendations for policy and legislative measures to further strengthen sustainable local food systems.

The Annual Report shall be made available to the public through the official website of the Department of Agriculture, subject to existing laws on data privacy and public access to information.

SEC. 18. Appropriations. The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the Department of Agriculture and the participating agencies.

Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 19. Implementing Rules and Regulations. Within one hundred twenty (120) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Agriculture, as the lead implementing agency, in consultation with the National Slow Food Council, local government units, farmers' and fisherfolk organizations, Indigenous Cultural Communities, academic institutions, civil society organizations, and other relevant stakeholders, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 20. 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. 21. Repealing Clause. — All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, administrative issuances, rules and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SEC. 22. Effectivity. — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,