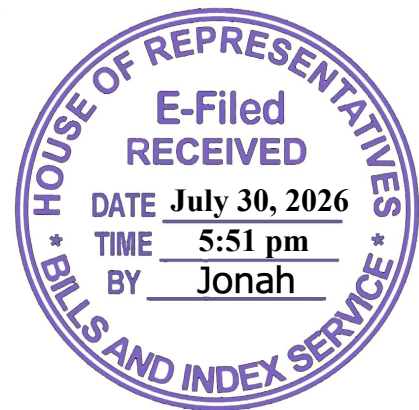


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Philippines

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 10463



INTRODUCED BY REP. MARCELINO "MARCY" R. TEODORO

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Section 16, Article II of the 1987 Constitution mandates 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. This constitutional policy recognizes that environmental protection is not merely an aspiration but a fundamental obligation of the State owed to both present and future generations.

The Philippines is among the countries most vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. Rising temperatures, increasingly destructive typhoons, severe flooding, landslides, and declining air quality have underscored the urgent need to preserve our remaining forest resources and urban tree cover. Trees are indispensable natural assets that absorb carbon dioxide, reduce urban heat, regulate water flow, prevent soil erosion, improve air quality, protect biodiversity, and enhance the health and well-being of communities.

Despite existing environmental laws, the unnecessary cutting of mature trees continues to accompany numerous public infrastructure and private development projects. While development is essential to national progress, it should not come at the needless sacrifice of irreplaceable natural resources. In many instances, engineering and design alternatives capable of preserving existing trees are either overlooked or not seriously considered.

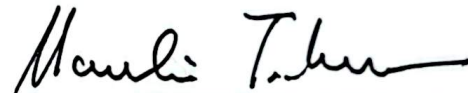
This measure seeks to institutionalize the principle that tree preservation must always be the first option, and tree cutting should only be the last resort. It requires government agencies, local government units, contractors, and private developers to exhaust all reasonable alternatives before any tree may be removed. The bill further strengthens

transparency in the issuance of tree-cutting permits, mandates comprehensive Tree Preservation Plans, imposes more stringent penalties for unlawful tree cutting, and requires substantial replacement planting and long-term monitoring to ensure environmental restoration.

Beyond environmental conservation, this measure promotes climate resilience, disaster risk reduction, sustainable urban planning, and responsible governance. It affirms that economic development and environmental stewardship are not competing objectives but complementary pillars of sustainable nation-building.

The protection of our trees is an investment in the safety, health, and future of every Filipino. The decisions we make today will determine the quality of the environment that succeeding generations will inherit. It is therefore imperative that Congress enact stronger measures to ensure that our nation's trees are preserved whenever reasonably possible and that their destruction is allowed only under the most exceptional circumstances.

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



HON. MARCELINO "MARCY" R. TEODORO

Representative

1st District, Marikina City

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Philippines

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
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HOUSE BILL NO. 10463

INTRODUCED BY REP. MARCELINO "MARCY" R. TEODORO

AN ACT
STRENGTHENING THE PROTECTION OF TREES AND URBAN FORESTS,
PROHIBITING THE UNNECESSARY CUTTING OF TREES, PROVIDING
EXCEPTIONS THERETO, PRESCRIBING PENALTIES, 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 "**Tree Preservation and Urban Forest Protection Act.**"

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy.

It is the policy of the State to protect and preserve the nation's forests, urban tree cover, and biodiversity. Development shall be pursued in a manner that harmonizes with environmental protection, recognizing that mature trees are indispensable in mitigating climate change, reducing flooding, improving air quality, and promoting public health.

SECTION 3. Prohibition.

Except as otherwise provided under this Act, no person, corporation, contractor, or government agency shall cut, remove, destroy, poison, or otherwise cause the death of any mature tree without lawful authority and compliance with the requirements of this Act.

SECTION 4. Permissible Grounds.

Tree cutting may be allowed only under any of the following circumstances:

1. The tree poses an imminent danger to life or property;
2. The tree is dead, diseased, or beyond rehabilitation as certified by the DENR;
3. The cutting is indispensable to a project of overriding public necessity, and no reasonable engineering or design alternative exists to preserve the tree; or
4. Such other exceptional circumstances as may be determined by the DENR pursuant to implementing rules.

SECTION 5. Tree Preservation Plan.

Every public infrastructure and private development project affecting existing trees shall submit a Tree Preservation Plan demonstrating:

- (a) the inventory of all affected trees;
- (b) alternatives considered to avoid tree cutting;
- (c) engineering modifications adopted to preserve existing trees whenever practicable;
- (d) the number of trees proposed for removal; and
- (e) the reforestation and replacement program.

No permit shall be issued unless the DENR determines that tree cutting is the last feasible option.

SECTION 6. Mandatory Public Disclosure.

Applications for tree-cutting permits involving public infrastructure projects shall be published on the official website of the implementing agency and in a conspicuous place at the project site for at least fifteen (15) days prior to approval.

SECTION 7. Replacement Requirement.

Every tree lawfully removed shall be replaced by planting not less than one hundred (100) indigenous trees, which shall be monitored and maintained for a minimum period of five (5) years, with at least an eighty-five percent (85%) survival rate.

SECTION 8. Penalties.

Any person who violates this Act shall suffer:

- (a) imprisonment of six (6) years to twelve (12) years;
- (b) a fine ranging from P500,000 to P5,000,000, depending on the number, species, age, and ecological value of the trees unlawfully cut;

(c) cancellation of permits, licenses, or contracts, where applicable; and
(d) perpetual disqualification from participating in government infrastructure projects in cases involving contractors or corporations.

Public officials who knowingly issue unlawful permits or authorize illegal tree cutting shall likewise be subject to administrative, civil, and criminal liability.

SECTION 9. Citizen Suits.

Any Filipino citizen, environmental organization, or affected local government unit shall have legal standing to institute actions to enforce the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 10. Implementing Rules and Regulations.

Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DENR, in coordination with the DPWH, DILG, DHSUD, DOTr, and concerned stakeholders, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations.

SECTION 11. Separability Clause.

If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remaining provisions shall remain valid and effective.

SECTION 12. Repealing Clause.

All laws, executive orders, rules, and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 13. Effectivity.

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

Approved,