



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

**TWENTIETH CONGRESS**  
*Second Regular Session*



**HOUSE BILL NO. 11338**

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**Introduced by Rep. Cielo Krisel B. Lagman**

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**AN ACT MANDATING THE PERMANENT APPOINTMENT OF THE  
PROVINCIAL/CITY/MUNICIPAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
OFFICER (ENRO), PROVIDING ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR THE SALARY AND  
OTHER EMOLUMENTS OF THE ENRO IN THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNIT'S  
ANNUAL APPROPRIATIONS ORDINANCE, AMENDING SECTION 484 (a), ARTICLE  
XIV OF REPUBLIC ACT 7160 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT CODE OF 1991**

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

The Philippines is known for being extremely rich in natural resources and is recognized as one of only 17 megadiverse countries which together comprise around 70% of the entire world's biodiversity (World Economic Forum). Lamentably, it is also “a hotspot of biodiversity loss, ranking among the top ten countries in the world with the largest number of species threatened with extinction.” (Interactive Country Fiches) This, combined with the magnitude and severity of land and marine degradation; air, water and land pollution; and vulnerability to the ravages of climate change, paints a dismal picture of a severe and compounding environment and natural resources crisis.

The situation undeniably demands immediate action. The government has responded by, among others, formulating the first National Adaptation Plan specifically to address the impacts of climate change; and enacting the Philippine Ecosystem and Natural Capital Accounting System

(PENCAS) Act, “aimed to enhance ecological balance and climate resilience through natural resource accounting”. Both measures acknowledge the vital role of local government in the attainment of their objectives. Not only is this self-evident; it is also backed by facts revealed in a number of studies.

A study on environmental crimes in the Philippines shows that there is a need to “strengthen localized environmental law enforcement, especially in hotspot areas where illegal activities are rampant, such as illegal logging, overfishing, mining violations, and improper waste dumping”. The same study stresses that this entails not only committed funding, but adequate environmental law officers. (Medrano & Rowela, 2025)

Further underscoring the importance of local environmental law officers is a study stating that “... the Philippines faces significant biodiversity loss due to economic pressures and illegal activities like logging and wildlife trade, resulting in over USD1 billion in natural resource loss annually”. (Caliwan, 2023)

This is a considerable amount, but the costs of an environmental crisis obviously cannot be measured in terms of money nor in the loss of natural resources alone. The most dire impact is ultimately felt by people in terms of whether their human rights such as the rights to health, education, work, and life are protected and fulfilled or violated and abused. Unsurprisingly, those who work for environmental protection are human rights defenders. Tragically, in the course of their work in defending the environment, they are constantly at risk of being victims of human rights violations and abuses.

This is true worldwide and the situation is dire enough that in 2022 a Special Rapporteur on Environmental Defenders was elected to “take measures to protect any person experiencing or at imminent threat of penalization, persecution, or harassment for seeking to exercise their rights under the Aarhus Convention<sup>1</sup>.” (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe) The most recent thematic report of the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances published in September 2025 is on enforced disappearance in the context of the defence of land, natural resources and environment. Within this context, the Philippines has earned the shameful distinction of being the most dangerous country for defenders protecting land and environmental rights. (Global Witness, 2025)

Having environment and natural resources officers (ENROs) at the provincial, municipal and city levels is imperative not only for the country’s environment and natural resources but for our environment defenders as well. Given both the urgency and importance of the functions of ENROs, and to ensure that they are able to perform their tasks to their fullest capacities without

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<sup>1</sup> The Aarhus Convention refers to the UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters adopted in 1998 in Aarhus, Denmark. It is also referred to as the Convention on Environmental Defenders.

the threat of job insecurity on top of having to discharge a wide range of both duties from policymaking to implementation, it is necessary that their appointment be both mandatory and permanent.

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



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REPUBLIC ACT 7160 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE  
OF 1991**

**SECTION 1.** This Act shall be known as the “Mandatory Permanent Appointment of the Provincial/City/Municipal ENRO Act”.

**SEC. 2.** Section 484 (a), ARTICLE XIV of Republic Act 7160, otherwise known as the Local Government Code of 1991 is hereby amended to read as follows:

- (a) No person shall be appointed environment and natural resources officer (ENRO) unless he/she is a citizen of the Philippines, PREFERABLY a resident of the local government unit concerned, of good moral character, A REPUTABLE ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS DEFENDER WHO ACTIVELY PROTECTS THE HUMAN RIGHT TO A HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT AND ECOSYSTEM, a holder of a degree preferably in environment, forestry, agriculture or any related course from a recognized college

or university [, and a first grade civil service eligible or its equivalent]. He/She must have acquired experience in environmental and natural resources management, conservation, and utilization, for at least five (5) years in the case of the provincial or city environment and natural resources officer, and three (3) years in the case of the Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Officer.

[The appointment of the environment and natural resources officer is optional for provincial, city, and municipal governments.]

THE PROVINCIAL/CITY/MUNICIPAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES OFFICER (ENRO) MUST BE A FIRST GRADE CIVIL SERVICE ELIGIBLE OR ITS EQUIVALENT. THE PROVINCIAL AND CITY ENRO SHALL HAVE A SALARY GRADE OF 24 AND THE MUNICIPAL ENRO SHALL HAVE A SALARY GRADE OF 22. THE APPOINTMENT OF THE ENRO IS MANDATORY AND PERMANENT FOR PROVINCIAL/CITY/MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS.

**SEC. 3.** The Annual Appropriations Ordinance of the provincial/city/municipal governments shall provide adequate funds for the salary and other emoluments of the ENRO.

**SEC. 4.** The provincial/city/municipal governments in coordination with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) shall ensure a human rights-based enabling environment for the ENROs to fully and effectively discharge their functions toward the prompt attainment of the goals of their office.

**SEC. 5.** If any section or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, other sections or provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

**SEC. 6.** All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations and other issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

**SEC. 7.** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

*Approved,*