

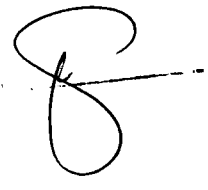
NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Third Regular Session)

Office of the Secretary

25 JAN 22 P2:27

SENATE

S. No. 2933

RECEIVED BY 

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

**AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR THE URBAN AND COUNTRYSIDE GREENING IN THE
PHILIPPINES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Based on the 2023 Philippine Forestry Statistics, the Philippines has a total forest cover of 7.22 million hectares in 2020, which is significantly lower than the 17.8 million hectares of forest cover in 1934. Moreover, a total of 1.42 million hectares of tree cover was lost from 2001 to 2022¹.

While this depressing information reflects the massive environmental destruction throughout the years, heightened awareness about the importance of dense foliage and ongoing reforestation efforts to reverse this situation offer glimmer of hope. The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) reported last year that the country's total open and closed forest cover reached 23.4% of the total land cover, indicating a growth of 2.9% or 193,354 hectares from 6.72 million hectares in 2015².

Executive Order No. 26 (2011) declared the implementation of a National Greening Program (NGP) as a government priority, and sought to plant 1.5 billion trees in 1.5 million hectares of lands of the public domain (including mangrove and protected areas, abandoned mine sites, civil and military reservations, etc.) within a

¹ <https://climate.gov.ph/news/851>

² "The Philippines' Open and Closed Forest Cover Grew by 2.9 percent in 2020." December 20, 2024. <https://psa.gov.ph/content/philippines-open-and-closed-forest-cover-grew-29-percent-2020>

five-year period until 2016. The program was later expanded to cover all remaining unproductive, denuded and degraded forestlands (estimated to be 7.1 million hectares) and was extended up to year 2028³.

This measure aims to sustain and build on the gains from the existing tree planting programs, and ensure continued greening of our urban and rural landscapes. This bill is also expected to bring health benefits to the people, considering the projected reduced air pollution, and positive impact to mental wellbeing of more green spaces.

In light of the undisputed and countless advantages of preserving, building and maintaining forest parks, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



JINGGOY EJERCITO ESTRADA


³ Executive Order No. 193, series of 2015. "Expanding the Coverage of the National Greening Program."

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

1 Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the "*Urban and Countryside*
2 *Greening Act.*"

3 Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – Recognizing the vital role of trees in ecological
4 stability, it is hereby declared the national policy to ensure sufficient greenery in urban
5 and countryside and to promote the right of the people to enjoy the benefits of a
6 balanced and healthy ecology.

7 Sec. 3. *Scope.* – This Act shall apply to all barangays, municipalities, cities, and
8 provinces.

9 Sec. 4. *Objectives.* – Pursuant to the policy declared herein, it is the objective
10 of this Act:

- 11 a) To build, develop, and maintain forest parks in provincial, city and municipal
12 levels by the planting of trees in national, provincial, municipal or barangay
13 roads and other public open spaces where appropriate;
- 14 b) To require from the national agencies and local government units the
15 planting of trees and shrubbery in specified areas;

- 1 c) To promote environmental consciousness among the community members,
2 i.e. students, youth, other civic action groups, by encouraging active
3 participation in tree-planting activities; and
4 d) To protect trees from various human activities.

5 **Sec. 5. *National Greening Committee.*** – A National Greening Committee is
6 hereby created with the Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural
7 Resources (DENR) as Chairperson and the respective Secretaries of the Department
8 of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Department of Tourism (DOT), Department
9 of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Education (DepEd), and
10 the Department of Agriculture (DA), as members.

11 The National Greening Committee shall have the power to promulgate the
12 pertinent rules and regulations as may be necessary to fully implement the objectives
13 and purposes of this Act within a period not later than ninety (90) days after the
14 approval of this Act.

15 It shall have the power to rule on disputes involving the Regional Greening
16 Committee created under Section 6 and to appoint or form an *ad hoc* committee when
17 the Regional Greening Committee is unable to perform its duties.

18 The National Greening Committee shall convene every quarter to hear the
19 reports or performance report from the Regional Greening Committee.

20 **Sec. 6. *Regional Greening Committee.*** – A Greening Committee for every region
21 in the country, in cooperation with the various local government offices, is hereby
22 created to initiate and oversee all tree planning activities to be done in barangays,
23 municipalities, cities and provinces in the respective regions.

24 The Regional Director representing the Secretary of the Department of
25 Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) shall serve as Chairperson of the
26 Committee. Members of the Committee shall be composed of the regional directors of
27 the Department of Tourism (DOT), Department of the Interior and Local Government
28 (DILG), Department of Education (DepEd), and the Department of Agriculture (DA), a
29 representative of the concerned local government unit (LGU), and at most three (3)
30 representatives from civic action groups appointed by the Chairperson.

1 The Regional Greening Committee shall coordinate with all the concerned
2 government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), people's
3 organizations (POs), and other civic action groups for assistance and cooperation in
4 the implementation of this Act.

5 *Sec. 7. Specific Functions of the Executive Departments.* – Aside from the
6 Committee responsibilities:

- 7 a) The DENR shall determine the suitable species of trees and provide seeds
8 or saplings to be planted along or on major thoroughfares, suited to the
9 kind, classification, and condition of the area and shall provide technical
10 support involving tree-planting activities;
- 11 b) The LGU shall:
- 12 1) Mobilize all local concerned agencies and communities to ensure prompt
13 and effective implementation of this Act in every barangay, municipality,
14 city and province;
- 15 2) Provide effective measures and ways for the optimum maintenance and
16 sustainability of trees and shrubbery; and
- 17 3) Coordinate with the police for the apprehension and with the DOJ for
18 the prosecution of all persons violating Sections 8 and 9 of this Act;
- 19 c) The DPWH and DA shall provide the technical support including the
20 necessary tools, equipment, and manpower for the implementation of this
21 Act;
- 22 d) The DOT shall assist in the conceptualization and site evaluation and
23 cooperate in the maintenance of parks and specified areas and provide
24 additional funding from its resources;
- 25 e) The DILG shall coordinate the local government units to ensure prompt and
26 effective implementation of this Act; and
- 27 f) The DepEd shall integrate tree planting activities into the school curriculum
28 to raise awareness and to promote environmental consciousness.

29 *Sec. 8. Requirements for Tree Planting along National Roads.* – Projects
30 concerning the construction and development of national roads shall comply with the
31 following standard requirements:

- 1 a) The trees that will be planted along the national roads shall be endemic
2 plant species of the varieties of the root systems which grow downward
3 rather than sideward to avoid road and sidewalk slabs destruction;
- 4 b) Trees shall be planted in a neat row, within the road right-of-way (ROW)
5 and as close as possible to the ROW limit, with sufficient allowance so that
6 fully grown trees will not encroach on the adjoining property or touch
7 electric and other overhead utility lines;
- 8 c) The center-to-center spacing between trees shall be 10-20 meters (m). For
9 road sections with a generally north-south alignment, the trees on one side
10 of the road shall be planted alternately with trees on the other side, thus
11 ensuring adequate sunlight needed for drying the road;
- 12 d) For roads without curbs, the trees shall be planted with minimum clear
13 distance of 0.60 meters beyond the edge of the shoulder, but in no case
14 less than 0.30 meters from the edge of the pavement;
- 15 e) For roads with curbs, particularly in urban areas, the trees shall be planted
16 with a minimum setback of 1.00 meter beyond the face of the curb;
- 17 f) Where there are longitudinal drainage canals, the trees shall be planted on
18 the outer side of such canals;
- 19 g) On roadway curves and intersections, the pertinent design standards on
20 sight distance shall be observed;
- 21 h) Non-traversable hazards (ravine, waiting shed, and the like) along the line
22 of trees shall be provided with appropriate clearly marked barriers so that
23 these do not pose hazards to motorists; and
- 24 i) The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) shall, within ninety
25 (90) days after the approval of this Act and every one hundred eighty (180)
26 days thereafter, submit periodic reports to the National Greening
27 Committee.

28 *Sec. 9. Tree Planting in Urban and Countryside Parks, Public Vacant Lots, and*
29 *Other Permissible Areas.* – Planting of trees shall be mandatory in urban and
30 countryside parks as well as in school grounds, vacant lots, and other unutilized sites
31 with the quality of soil where different or certain species of trees can thrive. This shall

1 apply to all publicly-owned lands, without exempting the properties of interested
2 private individuals or institutions.

3 a) Scope. – The areas covered by this provision shall include:

- 4 1) All public parks in urban and rural areas;
- 5 2) All public school grounds in the city and in the provinces;
- 6 3) All idle public lands in urban and rural areas, unless otherwise identified
7 to soon be used for purposes such as agriculture, infrastructure-building,
8 and others;
- 9 4) Parks, schools, and other pieces of lands owned by private individuals,
10 organizations, or institutions whose proprietor/s voluntarily and willingly
11 subject their properties in this Act.

12 b) General Guidelines. – Tree planting in the duly qualified areas shall comply
13 with the following general guidelines:

- 14 1) Considering the classification and condition of the soil and total land area
15 of the site, suited species of forest tree or fast-growing trees shall be
16 planted in the identified areas;
- 17 2) In cases where multiple trees can be planted, the trees should be planted
18 in clusters wherein one is not more than four (4) meters apart from one
19 another;
- 20 3) The Regional Greening Committee shall facilitate and supervise all the
21 tree planting activities in its jurisdiction. The government agencies
22 concerned shall perform their duties and responsibilities as indicated in
23 Section 7, Specific Functions of the Executive Department, of this Act;
- 24 4) The Regional Greening Committee shall, within ninety (90) days after
25 the approval of the Act and every one hundred eighty (180) days,
26 thereafter submit periodic reports to the National Greening Committee.

27 *Sec. 10. Issuing of Permits.* – The issuance of permit allowing a person or
28 company to cut, uproot, or in any way disturb the planted trees given by the DENR
29 should also be approved and co-signed by the Regional Greening Committee following
30 public consultations done by and the consensus of the Regional Greening Committee.

1 Sec. 11. *Prohibited Acts.* – No cutting and destroying of trees and plants shall
2 be permitted, except when the cutting and destroying of the same is necessary for
3 public safety, and subject to the issuance of permits.

4 Sec. 12. *Persons Liable and Penalties Therefor.* – Any person who violates
5 Sections 9 and 10 shall be punished with imprisonment of not less than six (6) months
6 to not more than one (1) year or a fine of not less than Three thousand pesos (Php
7 3,000.00) to not more than Ten thousand pesos (Php 10,000.00), or both
8 imprisonment and fine at the discretion of the court.

9 Sec. 13. *Submission of Reports.* – The National Greening Committee shall within
10 ninety (90) days after the approval of this Act and every one hundred eighty (180)
11 days thereafter submit periodic reports to both houses of Congress of the Philippines
12 for evaluation and consideration.

13 Sec. 14. *Funding.* – The fund needed for the implementation of this Act shall
14 be taken from any available appropriation in the General Appropriations Act (GAA) of
15 this year of its implementation: Provided, That funds for this purposes shall also be
16 included in the every annual GAA: Provided further, That there shall be equitable and
17 proportionate appropriations of funds annually for this purpose for all barangays,
18 municipalities, cities and provinces. In addition, adequate portion of financial grants
19 and concessional loans extended to Philippines by foreign governments and
20 multilateral agencies every year, the amount to be determined by the President, shall
21 be allocated to augment the annual appropriations until this Act is fully implemented.

22 Sec. 15. *Separability Clause.* – If for any reason, any provision of this Act is
23 declared unconstitutional or invalid, such parts not affected thereby shall remain in
24 full force and effect.

25 Sec. 16. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and
26 regulations and other issuances or parts thereof which are contrary to or inconsistent
27 with any provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

28 Sec. 17. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
29 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,