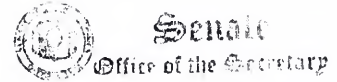


NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE )  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
First Regular Session )



'22 JUL 25 P 2 :27

SENATE  
S. No. 875

RECEIVED BY

Introduced by Senator Grace Poe

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**AN ACT**  
**ADDRESSING FOOD SECURITY CONCERNS THROUGH INTEGRATING**  
**INSTRUCTIONAL GARDENS IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL**  
**CURRICULA AND PROMOTING THE USE OF URBAN AGRICULTURE, AND**  
**FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The 1987 Philippine Constitution laid down principles that promote and protect the agriculture sector, both directly and indirectly, such as:

- *"The State shall promote a just and dynamic social order that will ensure the prosperity and independence of the nation and free the people from poverty through policies that provide adequate social services, promote full employment, a rising standard of living, and an improved quality of life for all." (Article II, Section 9);*
- *"The goals of the national economy are a more equitable distribution of opportunities, income, wealth; a sustained increase in the amount of goods and services produced by the nation for the benefit of the people; and an expanding productivity as the key to raising the quality of life for all, especially the underprivileged." (Article XII, Section 1); and*
- *"The State shall promote industrialization and full employment based on sound agricultural development and agrarian reform, through industries that make full of efficient use of human and natural resources, and which are competitive in both domestic and foreign markets..." (Article XII, Section 1)*

However, amid these constitutional provisions that afford agriculture the utmost support it needs, many still consider it as the "poor man's sector" because it remains to be neglected in terms of investments and development. In fact, farmers and fisherfolks are still among the poorest in the country; and food security remains elusive to a lot of Filipinos. This is worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic. According to a Social Weather Station (SWS), in May 2021, 4.2 million families experienced hunger. The survey conducted from 28 April 28 to 2 May 2021 among 1,200 adults revealed that "16.8% of Filipino families experienced "involuntary hunger" or hunger due to lack of food at least once in the past three months"<sup>1</sup>.

Hence, to further advance agriculture and food security, this measure aims to promote the practice of urban agriculture. Urban agriculture, as enshrined in this bill, is the practice of cultivating, processing, and distributing food in or around a village, town, or city which could also involve animal agriculture, aquaculture, and agroforestry, among others. It is one way to promote food security as it will provide citizens easy access to several agricultural products right within their cities and/or communities. In addition, under this measure, urban agriculture and vertical farming shall be integrated into the academic curriculum for primary and secondary level students of both public and private academic institutions offering courses on Agriculture, Practical Arts, Home Economics, and/or other subjects related to agriculture. The local government units are likewise mandated to institutionalize urban agriculture and vertical farming activities in unused spaces and idle lands in their respective localities.

It is the hope of this measure that the Philippines benefit from this form of agriculture in the same way that other countries that implement urban farming have.

In this light, the approval of this bill is fervently sought.



GRACE POE  
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<sup>1</sup> Rivas, R. (13 July 2021). *4.2 million Filipino families stay hungry in May 2021 – SWS*.  
<https://www.rappler.com/nation/millions-filipino-families-stay-hungry-sws-survey-may-2021/>

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

1 Section 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "Instructional Gardens  
2 and Urban Agriculture Act."

3 Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It shall be the policy of the State to promote  
4 food security, food quality, improved health, fight hunger and malnutrition, poverty  
5 alleviation, improved quality of environment through greening, reduction in pollution,  
6 and creation of savings in household expenditures. Towards this end, key reforms  
7 for the development of appropriate, cost-effective, and environmentally safe  
8 agricultural practices are hereby encouraged in order to ensure the food security of  
9 the country.

10 Sec. 3. *Definition of Terms.* - For purposes of this Act, the following terms  
11 shall be defined as follows;

12 a) *Instructional Gardens* refer to a program of instruction in all elementary and  
13 secondary schools, where knowledge and skills, not only in urban agriculture  
14 and vertical farming, but in agricultural food production in general, are  
15 imparted to school children through relevant theories and actual engagement  
16 in agricultural cultivation/production. The theories and actual production shall  
17 revolve around the concepts of composting, waste management techniques,

1 healthy and nutritious farm produce, sustainable farm practices, among  
2 others.

3 b) *Urban Agriculture* refers to the practice of cultivating, processing and  
4 distributing of food in or around a village, town or city. Urban agriculture also  
5 involves animal husbandry, aquaculture, agro-forestry and horticulture.

6 c) *Vertical Farming* refers to the method of farming that is brought to the urban  
7 space by employing the concepts of indoor agriculture in sky scrapers and  
8 other modern buildings.

9 *Sec. 4. Promotion of and Comprehensive Research on Urban Agriculture and*  
10 *Vertical Farming.* – For purposes of this Act, the respective Secretaries of the  
11 Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Department of Science and Technology  
12 (DOST) are hereby mandated to promote the use of urban agriculture and vertical  
13 farming in the country's urban areas and in other areas in the country where such  
14 farming methods are suited, as an intervention mechanism for further addressing  
15 food security concerns of the country.

16 Idle and/or abandoned government lots and buildings owned by either the  
17 national government or local governments or available land resources in state  
18 universities and colleges shall be considered for growing crops, raising livestock, and  
19 producing food using the said methods.

20 *Sec. 5. Institutionalization of Instructional Gardens in School Curricula.-*  
21 Instructional Gardens program shall be integrated in the academic curricula for  
22 elementary and secondary level students of both public and private academic  
23 institutions, particularly in subjects in Agriculture, Practical Arts, Home Economics,  
24 and/or other related subjects.

25 The Department of Education (DepEd), in coordination with the Department  
26 of Agriculture, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the  
27 implementation of this Section within six (6) months from the effectivity of this Act.

28 *Sec. 6. Local Government Units' Participation.* – Local government units shall  
29 formulate a policy on the practice of urban agriculture and vertical farming, utilizing  
30 unused spaces and idle lands. This shall require the enactment of local legislation  
31 institutionalizing urban agriculture in all levels of the LGU. Local government units

1 shall also grant necessary incentives to their constituents who actively participate in  
2 urban farming activities.

3        *Sec. 7. Tax Incentives.* – All allocations of grants, endowments, donations, or  
4 contributions and technical assistance provided by private individuals or  
5 corporations to schools for the promotion and implementation of Institutional  
6 Gardens in the school curricula, as certified by the Department of Education  
7 (DepEd), shall be exempt from taxes and duties.

8        *Sec. 8. Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).* – Within six (6) months  
9 from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Agriculture and the Department of  
10 Science and Technology shall promulgate the necessary IRR to implement the  
11 provisions of this Act.

12        *Sec. 9. Appropriations.* – The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of  
13 this Act shall be included and incorporated in the annual general appropriations of  
14 the Department of Agriculture, Department of Science and Technology, and the  
15 Department of Education.

16        *Sec. 10. Separability Clause.*– If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or  
17 unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force  
18 and effect.

19        *Sec. 11. Repealing Clause.* – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders,  
20 presidential proclamations, rules and regulations or parts thereof contrary to or  
21 inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

22        *Sec. 12. Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its  
23 publication in the Official Gazette or in any newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,