

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

**EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session**

**4081
House Bill No. _____**



Introduced by Rep. Christopher P. De Venecia

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Agriculture is one of the fundamental aspects of the Philippine economy. According to the 2018 Agriculture Indicators System publication of the Philippines Statistics Authority (PSA) entitled, "Population and Labor Force," 25.4% of the country's workforce are employed in agriculture. While farming has always been associated with rural areas and done on vast farmlands, farming can also be done in metropolitan areas and cities. This practice is called Urban Agriculture which, as defined in this act, refers to the development paradigm that encompasses principles, management technologies, and the policies relating to the practice and application of agricultural production of food and goods in urban areas.

Urban agriculture is already being practiced in many countries all over the world and, in fact, was already being practiced since 3,500 BC. At present, there has been a considerable interest in urban agriculture all over the world due to concerns on environment degradation, decreased food production, and increasing population. Additionally, urban agriculture contributes to the health of the city ecosystem, creates a more aesthetic appeal, and more importantly, reduces the carbon footprint by fixing carbon through photosynthesis. This proposed measure seeks to promote integrated urban agriculture development in all metropolitan areas nationwide ultimately to address food security concerns.

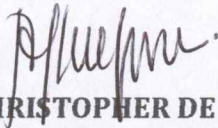
There are studies that show that in order to address the continuing rise of the need for food security, a sustainable alternative method of growing food in addition to the conventional rural agricultural practice needs to be in place. One of the solutions in addressing this issue is through urban agriculture which will not only improve the ecosystem of urban areas, but will also provide residents with sufficient, safe, and nutritious food source. Furthermore, urban agriculture will also help reduce poverty by increasing household income through saving and income generation.

In addition to the health and environmental aspects urban agriculture bring, developing green spaces in urban communities fosters a healthy and positive sense of

belongingness up to the household level. Realizing the process of how foods go from farm to table cultivates appreciation of the ordinary citizen, more specifically, the youth, on the plight of our farmers to bring fresh and high quality products for the Filipino people which develops their interest and love for contemporary farming.

It is perceived that in fifty years, the world population will double in number. As a result, demand for food will also increase together with the need for more lands and better agricultural practices. A proactive and sustainable method of food production would be most beneficial to address these challenges thus constituting the need for an integrated urban agriculture system in the country.

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


REP. CHRISTOPHER DE VENECIA
Fourth District, Pangasinan

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

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 4081

Introduced by Rep. Christopher P. De Venecia

**AN ACT PROMOTING INTEGRATED URBAN AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN ALL
CITIES AND METROPOLITAN AREAS NATIONWIDE TO ADDRESS FOOD SECURITY
CONCERNS AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Integrated Urban Agricultural Act.”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – The State shall ensure that the fundamental rights of every person to adequate food and to be free from hunger is guaranteed and protected. As such, the achievement of self-sufficiency and sustainability in food production is adopted as a primary State policy. Towards this end, the State shall develop climate-resilient communities in the metropolitan areas through the promotion of modern, appropriate, cost-effective, and environmentally safe agriculture technologies to ensure food security, promote a healthy citizenry and an improved quality of life for urban dwellers.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act:

- a) *Food Security* refers to a situation wherein food is available and affordable at all times, and where all people have access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life;
- b) *Integrated Urban Agriculture* refers to the development paradigm that encompasses principles, management technologies, and the policies relating to the practice and application of agricultural production of food and goods in urban areas; and
- c) *Vertical farming* refers to the method of farming that is brought to the urban space by employing concepts of indoor agriculture in skyscrapers and other modern buildings.
- d) *Hydroponics* refers to the method of growing plants without using soil.

SEC. 4. *Scope.* – This Act shall apply to all urban spaces such as idle, government or private lots or buildings, available land resources in State or private universities and colleges suitable for growing crops and raising poultry, livestock and aquaculture.

SEC. 5. *National Agriculture and Fisheries Council.* – The National Agriculture and Fisheries Council (NAF Council) is hereby created to monitor and ensure the proper implementation of this Act. The Council shall be composed of the following members:

- a) Secretary of the Department of Agriculture (Chairperson);
- b) Secretary of the Department of Education;
- c) Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources;
- d) Secretary of the Department of Health;
- e) Secretary of the Department of Interior and Local Government;
- f) Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology;
- g) Secretary of the Department of Trade and Industry;
- h) Chairperson of the Commission on Higher Education;
- i) Chairperson of the National Anti-Poverty Commission;
- j) Director General of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority;
- k) Chairperson of the Presidential Commission for the Urban Poor;
- l) Representative from the Academe;
- m) Representative from the private sector who has the expertise in urban agriculture and vertical farming; and
- n) Lead convenor of the Urban Agriculture Practitioners Network of the Philippines.

Cabinet secretaries who are members of the Council may designate their duly authorized and permanent representatives whose rank shall in no case be lower than assistant secretary.

SEC. 6. *Powers and Functions of the NAF Council.* – The NAF Council shall have the following additional powers and functions:

- a) Develop a unified strategy to link agricultural production to nutrition programs;
- b) Conduct policy studies, program monitoring and comprehensive researches on food production, sustainable food systems and the country's urban agriculture agenda;
- c) Ensure that department resources are used to effectively encourage agricultural production in urban communities;
- d) Create an urban agriculture map to identify the crops best suited for the geographical location of urban communities;
- e) Provide technical assistance in support of vertical farming, backyard food production and community gardening programs consistent with the goals of poverty reduction, food security and healthy eating habits in urban communities; and
- f) Submit periodic reports and policy recommendations to both houses of Congress for the proper implementation of this Act.

SEC. 7. *Inclusion of Urban Agriculture in the Educational System.* – Urban agriculture shall be integrated in the academic curriculum for elementary, secondary and tertiary levels students of both public and private academic institutions offering courses including, but not limited to, Agriculture, Practical Arts, Home Economics and/or other subjects related to the aforementioned courses. A practical application of the principles of vertical farming, hydroponics, and other urban farming methods shall also be included in the curriculum such as, but not limited to, the “Gulayan sa Paaralan” project.

A course curriculum on gardening shall be developed and included in the regular curriculum of elementary and secondary education. Instructional materials shall likewise be developed.

For universities and colleges, urban agriculture shall form part of the required period of time spent by students in the National Service Training Program (NSTP) or the Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC). A plan for the utilization or maximization of space occupied by schools shall be formulated specifically for urban agriculture purposes.

SEC. 8. *Responsibility of Local Government Units.* – The local government units (LGUs), in coordination with the NAF council, are encouraged to formulate policies on the practice of urban agriculture and on utilizing urban spaces, unused spaces and idle lands, consistent with its existing policy on the Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP) and zoning ordinances. The LGUs in cities and urban areas are also encouraged to enact local legislation institutionalizing urban agriculture as a regular component in the annual appropriations of the LGUs.

All homeowners’ associations, neighborhood associations, community associations, people’s organizations, and local business establishments shall be encouraged by the LGU to participate in urban agriculture activities.

SEC. 9. *Incentives.* – The NAF council shall establish the implementation of a reward and incentive package or credit to all homeowners’ associations, neighborhood associations, community associations, people’s organizations, and local business establishments who will exercise Urban Agriculture.

The NAF council shall also create an incentive package for private broadcasting corporations which will promote and contribute to the information dissemination of the principles, strategies, and benefits of Urban Agriculture.

SEC. 10. *Information and Education Campaign.* – In order to raise public awareness, provide information and engage the public to participate in activities and projects on urban agriculture, the NAF Council shall engage the assistance of the Philippine News Agency, People’s Television Network, Department of Agriculture, and Philippine Information Agency, through the Public Information Office in each city and municipality, to undertake a nationwide campaign.

In addition, the NAF Council members shall require the attached agencies under their respective departments and offices to integrate the subject of Urban Agriculture in its publications in all media platforms in which they have access to.

SEC. 11. *Appropriations.* – The funds necessary to carry out the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year's budget of the Department of Agriculture. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 12. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* Within six (6) months from the effectivity of this Act, the NAF Council, in coordination with the concerned agencies, shall promulgate the necessary implementing rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 13. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not so declared shall remain in force and effect.

SEC. 14. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, and rules and regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SEC. 15. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,