



Eighteenth Congress  
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **2183**



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Introduced by  
**REPRESENTATIVE LOREN B. LEGARDA**

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**AN ACT**  
**PROVIDING FOR URBAN AND COUNTRYSIDE GREENING IN THE**  
**PHILIPPINES THROUGH MANDATORY TREE PLANTING AND ADOPTION OF A**  
**FOREST SANCTUARY BY PUBLIC SCHOOLS UNDER THE DEPARTMENT OF**  
**EDUCATION**

**Explanatory Note**

In 2018, the World Risk Report ranked the Philippines third among the countries with the highest disaster risk. Recognized to be one of the most vulnerable countries to potential dangerous consequences of climate change such as increasing frequency and/or severity of droughts, fires, floods and storms, damage to ecosystems, and biodiversity loss, it is indeed high time for the Philippine archipelago and the local communities to be the voice of the vulnerable by addressing these challenges through pursuing green growth in preventing and reducing the adverse impacts of climate change.

The increase of carbon dioxide in the Earth's atmosphere contributes to global warming and climate change. As reported by NASA, Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) is an important heat-trapping (greenhouse) gas, which is released through human activities such as deforestation.<sup>1</sup>

Trees and forests act as effective carbon sinks and also help improve air quality. According to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, a single tree can sequester 0.56 metric tons of carbon dioxide in its lifetime.<sup>2</sup> Thus, integrating tree-planting in our environmental agenda is a must and encouraging the youth, as the most active partners in challenging development norms, to actively participate in this cause will strengthen our initiatives towards the greening of urban and the countryside in the Philippines.

This measure seeks to empower the youth as effective catalysts for change, as well as the academe as the best medium to disseminate information, as they adopt or create forest sanctuaries or gardens both in urban areas as well as in the

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<sup>1</sup> <https://climate.nasa.gov/vital-signs/carbon-dioxide/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://r3.denr.gov.ph/index.php/86-region-news-items/227-c-luzon-forests-can-serve-as-carbon-sink>

countryside. With more than twelve million students in the public school sector planting trees the whole year round, the country's forests can surely be revived in the shortest time possible. More than the actual number of trees we plant, what is more important is to instill in the minds of present and future generations that we have to save the environment while there is still time.

In light of the foregoing considerations, the immediate passage of this measure is sought.

**ORIGINAL SIGNED**  
**LOREN B. LEGARDA**





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

1 **SECTION 1. Title.** – This Act shall be known as the “Forest Sanctuaries Act of  
2 2019.”

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

7 **SEC. 3. Scope.** – This Act shall apply to all barangays, municipalities, cities, and  
8 provinces, particularly in all public parks and public school grounds in urban and  
9 rural areas, idle public lands, unless otherwise identified to be used for other  
10 purposes, and privately-owned land whose proprietors voluntarily subject their  
11 properties to the provisions of this Act, upon the creation of appropriate agreements  
12 with the schools implementing this Act.

1    **SEC. 4. Objectives.** – Pursuant to the policy declared herein, it is the objective of  
2    this Act:

3           (a) To build, adopt, develop and maintain forest parks or sanctuaries by public  
4           elementary and secondary schools;

5           (b) To require the planting of trees and shrubbery as well as provision of  
6           financial, physical, and technical support by national agencies and local  
7           government units;

8           (c) To promote environmental consciousness by encouraging active  
9           participation in tree-planting activities in the community, especially among  
10          students, youth, other civic action groups, and the academe; and

11          (d) To protect trees from harmful human activity and increase the country's  
12          forest cover.

13   **SEC. 5. National Forest Sanctuary Committee.** – A National Forest Sanctuary  
14   Committee is hereby created with the Secretary of the Department of Education  
15   (DepEd) as Chairman and the respective secretaries of the Department of  
16   Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Tourism (DOT),  
17   Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), and the Department of  
18   Agriculture (DA) as members.

19   The National Forest Sanctuary Committee shall promulgate the pertinent rules and  
20   regulations as may be necessary to fully implement the objectives and purposes of  
21   this Act not later than ninety (90) days after the approval of this Act.

22   The National Forest Sanctuary Committee shall convene every quarter to hear the  
23   reports or performance from the Regional Committees.

24   **SEC. 6. Specific Functions of the Executive Department.** – The DENR shall  
25   provide the technical, scientific, and physical support in: 1) determining of the



1 suitable species of trees and provision of seeds or samplings to be planted in  
2 existing forest/mangrove sanctuaries or areas where a forest/mangrove sanctuary or  
3 urban garden is to be established, 2) classifying and determining of existing  
4 forest/mangrove sanctuaries, proposed forest/mangrove sanctuaries and urban  
5 gardens, and 3) tree planting activities.

6 The Local Government Units (LGUs) shall: (1) in partnership with DENR and DA, aid  
7 in the determination of suitable areas for the proposed forest/mangrove  
8 sanctuaries/urban gardens, (2) mobilize all concerned local agencies and  
9 communities to ensure prompt and effective implementation of this Act in all public  
10 schools within their jurisdiction, (3) mobilize non-government organizations,  
11 foundations and other private entities or corporations to provide financial, physical or  
12 other kinds of support for the implementation of this Act, and (4) effect the  
13 apprehension for the consequent prosecution of all persons violating the penal  
14 provisions of this Act;

15 The DILG shall coordinate all local government units to ensure prompt and effective  
16 implementation of this Act;

17 The DOT shall assist in the conceptualization and site-evaluation and cooperate in  
18 the maintenance or creation of forest/mangrove sanctuaries and urban gardens and  
19 provide additional funding from its resources;

20 The DA shall aid in the determination of suitable areas for the proposed  
21 forest/mangrove sanctuaries/urban gardens and provide the technical and scientific  
22 support i.e. the necessary tools, equipment, and manpower to effect the  
23 implementation of this Act; and

1 The DepEd, as lead agency of this Act, shall coordinate all tree-planting activities of  
2 all public elementary and high schools and integrate the tree-planting activities into  
3 the school curriculum to promote environmental consciousness. It shall also  
4 undertake relevant projects for the promotion of these activities.

5 **SEC. 7. *Tree Planting Guidelines.*** – Tree Planting in duly qualified areas shall  
6 comply with the following guidelines:

7 (1) Considering the classification and condition of the soil and the total land  
8 area of the site, suitable species of forest trees or fast-growing trees shall  
9 be planted in the identified areas;

10 (2) In cases where multiple trees can be planted, the trees should be planted  
11 in clusters not more than four (4) meters apart from one another

12 (3) The DepEd and DENR shall facilitate and supervise all the tree planting  
13 activities and the consequent maintenance of the same within its  
14 jurisdiction. The government agencies concerned shall perform their  
15 duties and responsibilities as indicated in Section 6 of this Act.

16 **SEC. 8. *Prohibited Acts.*** – All forest/mangrove parks or sanctuaries or urban  
17 gardens established under this Act shall be protected and maintained by all  
18 concerned public schools, the DENR, DepEd, and other government agencies and  
19 local governments. These forest/mangrove sanctuaries shall not be cut or destroyed,  
20 except when the cutting and destroying of the same is necessary for public safety.

21 **SEC. 9. *Penalties.*** – Any person found guilty of violating Section 8 of this Act shall  
22 be punished with imprisonment of not less than six (6) months to not less than one  
23 (1) year or a fine not less than Three Thousand Pesos (P3,000.00) to not more than  
24 Ten Thousand Pesos (P10,000.00), or both imprisonment and fine, at the discretion  
25 of the court.



1   **SEC 10. *Submission of Reports.*** – The National Forest Sanctuary Committee  
2   shall, within ninety (90) days after the approval of this Act, submit periodic reports to  
3   both houses of Congress of the Philippines

4   **SEC. 11. *Funding.*** – The fund needed for the implementation of this Act shall be  
5   taken from any available appropriation in the General Appropriations Act (GAA) of  
6   the year of its implementation; *Provided*, that funds for this purpose shall also be  
7   included in every annual GAA; *Provided further*, that there shall be equitable and  
8   proportionate appropriations of funds annually for this purpose for all barangays,  
9   municipalities, cities and provinces. In addition, adequate portions of financial grants  
10   and concessional loans extended by foreign governments and multilateral agencies  
11   every year, the amount to be determined by the President, shall be allocated to  
12   augment the annual appropriations until this Act is fully implemented.

13   **SEC. 12. *Separability Clause.*** – All laws, decrees, rules and regulations, or parts  
14   thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

15   **SEC. 13. *Effectivity Clause.*** – This Act shall take effect upon its publication in at  
16   least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

17   Approved,