



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 1453



Introduced by Rep. Luisa Lloren Cuaresma
Lone District of Nueva Vizcaya

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines is among the countries that are losing their forest cover fast, ranking 4th in the world's top 10 most threatened forest hotspots according to Conservation International. Data from the DENR-Forest Management Bureau in 2010 show that combined reforestation efforts by the government and the private sector are not enough to arrest the rapid deforestation. Previous administrations had been weak in compelling timber license holders to fulfill their obligation of reforesting concession areas. If the deforestation rate of 157,400 hectares per year continues, the country's remaining forest cover will be wiped out in less than 40 years.

According to the "*Status of Philippine Forests*" report of the Philippine Tropical Forest Conservation Foundation, Inc. (2015), "Forests also have key ecosystem functions that are vital to a healthy environment. These include water and air purification; collection of water in catchment areas and watersheds; and soil conservation to help support a variety of plants. Forest cover and vegetation help prevent soil erosion by keeping soils intact. They moderate floods, drought and extremes in temperature. Forests also play a major role in climate change mitigation as forests are a major carbon sink. Forest resources provide the basis for many cultures, particularly of indigenous groups whose lives are closely interwoven with forest resources. Belief systems are governed by spirits found in mountains, trees, lakes and other facets of nature; and rituals are performed as part of traditional natural resource management activities. In the Philippines, approximately 30 percent of the population, including some twelve to fifteen million indigenous peoples, depend on forests for their survival, and their cultures revolve around their interactions within their natural environment (DENR 2009)."

Halting deforestation is more than planting trees. For as long as commercial logging continues, all efforts that are meant to stop deforestation are bound to fail. The persistence of any form of logging in our forests, plus the threats of more disasters brought by climate change will show that it is high time for a log ban and a massive reforestation effort.

This bill seeks to impose a total log ban in forests, timberland, forest reserves and watersheds for the next twenty-five (25) years to allow all efforts to save our remaining forests and to ensure the successful reforestation of the badly denuded areas.

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


LUISA LLOREN CUARESMA



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**AN ACT TOTALLY BANNING LOGGING OPERATIONS FOR THE NEXT
TWENTY-FIVE YEARS**

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

SECTION 1. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the obligation of the State to protect the remaining forest cover areas of the country not only to prevent flash floods and hazardous flooding but also to preserve biodiversity, protect threatened habitats and sanctuaries of endangered and rare species, and allow natural regeneration of residual forests and development of plantation forests. Towards this end, the State shall prohibit logging operations of any kind in any forest, timber land, forest reserve or watershed for the next twenty-five (25) years.

SECTION 2. *Prohibited Acts.* – The following shall be prohibited under this Act:

- (a) It shall be unlawful for any person to cut, fell or destroy any tree standing on any forest, timber land, forest reserve or watershed within the next twenty-five (25) years from the approval of this Act. This prohibition shall not apply to trees grown in legitimate commercial tree farms;
- (b) Cutting of trees grown in private lands shall only be allowed upon a certification, citing the purpose for such, issued by the DENR;

(c) The DENR is henceforth hereby prohibited from issuing logging contracts/agreements in all natural and residual forests, such as Integrated Forest Management Agreements (IFMA), Socialized Integrated Forest Management Agreements (SIFMA), Community-Based Forest Management Agreement (CBFMA) and other agreements/contracts with logging components in natural and residual forests. It shall review/evaluate all existing IFMAs, SIFMAs, CBFMAs and other forestry agreement/contracts and immediately terminate/cancel the agreements of those who have violated the terms and conditions of their contracts/agreements as well as existing forest laws, rules and regulations. The same cancellation/termination shall also apply if holders thereof engage in logging activities in any natural or residual forest or abet the commission of the same;

Moreover, the DENR shall close and not allow to operate all sawmills, veneer plants and other wood processing plants that are unable to present proof of sustainable sources of legally cut logs for a period of at least five (5) years within one month from the effectivity of this act.

SECTION 3. *Penalties.* - Any person who violates this Act shall be punished by imprisonment of not less than five (5) years but not more than ten (10) years.

Any juridical entity that violates this Act shall forfeit its license or permit to do business in the Philippines. In addition, it shall be made to pay a fine of not less than Five hundred thousand pesos (₱500,000.00) but not more than Five million pesos (₱5,000,000.00) at the discretion of the Court. The Chairman and/or the Chief Executive Officer or any other officer of the company or government agency responsible for the violation of this law shall be imprisoned for a period of not less than five (5) years but not more than ten (10) years also at the discretion of the Court. Aliens who violate this law shall be deported after their sentences shall have been served.

SECTION 4. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, decrees, executive orders, proclamations, rules and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 5. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect upon its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of national circulation.

Approved,