

Republic of the Philippines  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS  
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 4490



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Introduced by **Rep. LAWRENCE LEMUEL H. FORTUN**

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### EXPLANATORY NOTE

Forests and trees make vital contributions to both people and the planet, bolstering livelihoods, providing clean air and water, conserving biodiversity, and responding to climate change.<sup>1</sup>

Forests act as a source of food, medicine, and fuel for more than a billion people. In addition to helping respond to climate change and protecting soils and water, forests hold more than three-quarters of the world's terrestrial biodiversity, provide many products and services that contribute to socioeconomic development, and are particularly important for hundreds of millions of people in rural areas, including many of the world's poorest.<sup>2</sup>

In the Philippines, forests are the heart of the country's natural wealth being hosts to a myriad of resources of high ecological and economic value. While the productivity of the country's forestry sector has been on a downward trend, its contribution to the economy, in terms of gross value added, employment, and export revenues, is still substantial. Nonetheless, this continuing and worsening decline is bound to further aggravate if the government fails to pursue immediate and effective measures in managing the impact of human encroachment into our forest ecosystems and rehabilitating our degraded forests.

This bill seeks to create the Forest Studies and Development Center, which will provide vital research support for the restoration, protection, and sustainable management of Philippine forests. The Center shall promote and strengthen linkages among relevant government agencies and non-government organizations, academic institutions, and other stakeholders – both domestic and foreign – in order to foster a dynamic space for forest studies and advance the development of the forestry profession.

The Forest Studies and Development Center (FSDC) shall be located in the Caraga State University (CSU) in Butuan City. CSU is one of the leading forestry and agro-forestry schools in the country with its graduates topping and dominating the forestry licensure exams in the last five years. Aside from being a top university in these fields, its location is undoubtedly most strategic for forestry research and development. The university is situated in the so-called Timber City of the South, the City of Butuan, the regional center of the Caraga Region. Supplying about seventy percent (70%) of the country's log output, the region is known as the Timber Corridor of the Philippines.

With a very strategic location and a ready pool of highly-qualified academics in the fields of forestry and agro-forestry in the region, the creation of the Forest Studies and Development

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<sup>1</sup> F. (n.d.). 2018 State of the World's Forests. Retrieved from <http://www.fao.org/state-of-forests/en/>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

Center to be established in the Caraga State University will be most expedient and auspicious for forestry research and development studies and initiatives for the protection, preservation and rehabilitation of our remaining forest ecosystems.

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



**LAWRENCE LEMUEL H. FORTUN**  
1<sup>st</sup> District of Agusan del Norte



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**AN ACT**  
**ESTABLISHING THE FOREST STUDIES AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER IN THE**  
**CARAGA STATE UNIVERSITY (CSU), DEFINING ITS FUNCTIONS AND**  
**APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFORE**

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

**SECTION 1. Title.** – This Act shall be known as the “Forest Studies and Development Center in the CARAGA State University Act.”

**SEC. 2. Location.** – The Forest Studies and Development Center shall be based in the CARAGA STATE UNIVERSITY in Butuan City.

**SEC. 3. Delegation of Authority to the Board of Regents.** – The Board of Regents of the Caraga State University is hereby authorized to establish the Forest Studies and Development Center under the direct supervision of the Office of the President of the University, which shall have a faculty and staff with expertise in the disciplines of forestry, botany, zoology, agriculture, and environmental protection.

**SEC. 4. Creation and Objectives of the Center.** – There is hereby created a Forest Studies and Development Center in the Caraga State University with the following objectives:

- a. To foster the restoration, protection, and sustainable management of Philippine forests;
- b. To develop and strengthen technical partnerships with relevant government agencies, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, and other stakeholders in the field of forestry;
- c. To develop advocacies and competent professionals in the field of forestry;
- d. To strengthen the research component including the publication of papers and research findings in the field of forestry;
- e. To train and advance the technical, scientific, and management skills of forestry professionals to ensure the integrity of our forests;
- f. To organize and hold local, regional, or international forums, seminars and conferences on best practices and developments in the field of forestry.

**SEC. 5. Appropriations.** – The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be included in the General Appropriations of the year following its enactment into law and thereafter.

**SEC. 6. Effectivity.** – This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

**Approved,**