



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Eighteenth Congress

First Regular Session

House Bill No. 3198

Introduced by

**HON. ANNA MARIE VILLARAZA-SUAREZ and
HON. DAVID C. SUAREZ**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The fundamental law, in several provisions, enjoins the State and the people to conserve and develop our national patrimony. It mandates the State to conserve our forest lands and national parks, prohibit, for such period it may deem necessary, logging in endangered forests and watershed areas, and to protect the nation's marine wealth and exclusive economic zones. Most importantly, the constitution directs that the exploration, development, and utilization of natural resources shall be under the full control and supervision of the State.

Pursuant to aforementioned constitutional directives, Executive Order No.193 series of 2015, known as the Extended National Greening Program (NEGP), was issued to rehabilitate and reforest all remaining unproductive, denuded, and degraded forestlands nationwide. In its 'whereas clause', it stated that there is still an estimated 7.1 million hectares of unproductive, denuded, and degraded forestlands, which contribute to environment-related risks, such as soil erosion, landslides, and flooding. There is a need to institutionalize such program and to develop and implement similar and/or complementary programs aimed at preserving not only forestlands, but other natural resources such as mangroves, wildlife and the nation's flora and fauna for the benefit of future generations.

This bill lays down the national policy and a program framework for the conservation, protection and rejuvenation of public forests, mangroves and the wildlife and seeks to establish a coordinating council tasked to put into effect the said policy and framework through the development and implementation of a comprehensive environmental program of renewal and reforestation. The measure also encourages the participation of various sectors, particularly the youth, in carrying out its objectives.

For the foregoing reasons, the immediate approval of this bill is earnestly sought.



HON. ANNA MARIE VILLARAZA-SUAREZ
REPRESENTATIVE
ALONA PARTYLIST



HON. DAVID S. SUAREZ
REPRESENTATIVE
2ND DISTRICT, QUEZON



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**HON. ANNA MARIE VILLARAZA-SUAREZ and
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**AN ACT
TO CONSERVE AND PROTECT PHILIPPINE PUBLIC FORESTS, MANGROVES
AND WILDLIFE THROUGH A COMPREHENSIVE ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAM
OF RENEWAL, REPLANTING AND REFORESTATION, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES**

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. — This Act shall be known as the 'Comprehensive Environment Program Act of 2019.

SECTION 2. Declaration of National Policy and Program Framework. — It is hereby declared the policy of the State to conserve, protect, and support the renewal program of public forests, mangroves and the wildlife. To this end, the State hereby adopts the following comprehensive program frameworks:

- (a) The specific limits of public forests, national parks and other forest reserve areas, including mangroves with forest cover, shall be determined, by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in consultation with various stakeholders including individuals, non-governmental organizations and public associations representing environmental management, local governments, academic community and others. Public consultations shall be conducted.

- (b) Public forests under lease and/or which have been denuded and deforested due to logging shall be reforested, with tree species of its original forested state or similar species, and reclassified as protection and conservation forests.
- (c) Mangroves without forest cover which have been utilized and cut to the detriment of ecological balance and to the destruction of marine, air and other wildlife which take sanctuary shall be replenished with the mangrove and other species of plants and reseeded with the wildlife which would naturally thrive therein.
- (d) Virgin forests and public parks and forest reserves declared as such shall in no case be reclassified and be opened for exploitation and shall remain so unless otherwise declared by law.
- (e) The protection of marine, air and wildlife, including the endangered species of Philippine fauna shall be the ultimate objective of the government.
- (f) Philippine flora, both natural to our forests and those which would enhance ecological balance and the productivity and aesthetic value of our public forests, shall be replanted and maintained in the public forests.
- (g) Areas of the public forests leased or tolerated for use for social forestry or agro-forestry shall be limited to the area and percentage of the total public forests as may be indicated in the implementing rules and regulations that will be issued for the purpose.

SECTION 3. Coordinating Council for the Conservation, Protection and Renewal of the Nation's Patrimony. — There is hereby created a Coordinating Council for the Conservation, Protection and Renewal of the Nation's Patrimony hereinafter referred to as the Council. The Council shall be headed by the Secretary of Environmental and Natural Resources as Chairman, with the Undersecretaries of Agriculture and of Education as Vice-Chairmen. The members shall include three (3) representatives from the government sector and three (3) representatives from the private sector appointed by the President of the Philippines upon the recommendation of the Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources and from the list of nominees submitted by the sectors themselves.

The Council shall formulate policies and develop projects to implement the national policy and program framework as defined in this Act. It shall also promulgate rules and regulations to carry out the purposes of this Act and adopt a code of services and guidelines to conserve, protect and renew the nation's patrimony.

To assist the Council, the Chairman shall designate an Executive Secretary and a Secretariat from among the staff of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, with such allowances as may be approved by the Council. The per diems

and allowances of the Council shall be approved by the Council, subject to the existing rules and regulations and auditing and accounting laws.

SECTION 4. *Reforestation and Renewal Program by the Youth.* — Subject to such rules and regulations as the Council may promulgate, students and community youth below the age of twenty-five (25) years, shall be harnessed for the reforestation and renewal of public forests, mangrove and wildlife. Students who will render service as provided in this Act may be credited with the required units for the National Service Training Program.

SECTION 5. *Coordination with Agricultural and Fisheries Schools.* — Subject to such rules and regulations as the Council may promulgate, agricultural and fisheries schools, both public and private, shall be encouraged to participate in the programs envisioned in this Act.

SECTION 6. *Comprehensive Program.* — In consultation with all stakeholders and various sectors comprising the entire agriculture and fisheries sectors, agro-business and the concerned academic communities, a comprehensive program including the projects that may be supported by the Council shall be formulated to serve as guide for the effective implementation of this Act.

SECTION 7. *Conservation, Protection and Renewal Trust Fund.* — The Council may receive donations from national and international sources for the implementation of this Act or for a specific project or projects. Donations received shall be placed in a trust fund for specific purposes and projects, as approved by the Council, subject to existing auditing and accounting regulations and for purposes of this Act.

SECTION 8. *Appropriations* - There is hereby authorized the amount of One Million Pesos (P1,000,000.00) for the operations of the Council, and Ten Million Pesos (P10,000,000.00) for the projects under this Act to conserve, protect and renew public, forests, mangroves, and the wildlife under the comprehensive program framework of this Act. Thereafter, the operating expenses of the Council and the projects planned for implementation under this Act shall be included in the budget of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources as part of its annual appropriation.

The program harnessing youth for reforestation shall be funded by project funds of the Council or from donations earmarked for the purpose.

SECTION 9. *Separability Clause.* — When any part or provision of this Act is held unconstitutional or invalid, the other parts or provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SECTION 10. *Repealing Clause.* — Any law, decree, rule, regulation, executive order or part thereof inconsistent with this Act, is hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 11. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect upon its complete publication in the *Official Gazette* or in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.