

Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Quezon City

**EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS**  
First Regular Session

**HOUSE BILL NO. 3412**



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Introduced by **REP. JOSE FRANCISCO "KIKO" B. BENITEZ, Ph.D.**

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

The Constitution provides for the protection and promotion of the right to health of the people (Article II, Section 15), as well as proper nutrition, especially of children (Art. XV, Sec. 3). As such, the Philippines has adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Under Sustainable Development Goal 2, the Philippines has committed to end hunger, ensure food security, improve nutrition, increase agricultural productivity and promote sustainable, resilient food production systems.

The Government has instituted programs towards these ends. However, the country is still far from achieving food security. According to the Expanded National Nutrition Survey conducted by the Food and Nutrition Research Institute, 53.9 percent of Filipino households are food insecure.

Meanwhile, based on the Second Quarter 2019 Survey of the Social Weather Station, 10 percent or an estimated 2.5 million families experienced involuntary hunger at least once in the past three months prior to the survey. The highest hunger incidence was recorded in Metro Manila, with 15.7 percent or approximately 520,000 families experiencing hunger. This is four (4) percentage points higher than the number in March 2019.

To address this, it is imperative to introduce game-changing solutions, increasing food production by maximizing available spaces and utilizing emerging agricultural technologies and methods, particularly in urban areas where hunger incidence is prevalent.

The promotion of household-, community- and school-based urban agriculture will contribute to food security and poverty reduction, strengthen community-building, support the National Greening Program, and instill among citizens, especially the youth, environmental consciousness. Urban agriculture also puts value in otherwise idle urban spaces, maximizing limited land resources that are increasingly shrinking due to rapid urbanization and unsustainable urban development.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate approval of this measure is earnestly sought.

  
**REP. JOSE FRANCISCO "KIKO" B. BENITEZ, Ph.D.**

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**AN ACT**  
**PROMOTING INTEGRATED URBAN AGRICULTURE IN URBAN AREAS**  
**NATIONWIDE TO ADDRESS FOOD SECURITY AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS**  
**THEREFOR**

*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 “Integrated Urban Agriculture Act.”

**SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** – The State shall promote and protect the fundamental right of every person to adequate food and freedom from hunger. Recognizing the challenges to food security and ecological balance in urban areas, the State shall optimize the use and productivity of urban land resources and spaces to support sufficient and sustainable food production. Towards this end, the State shall promote the development of modern, cost-effective, space-efficient, and environmentally-safe agriculture technologies in urban areas to guarantee food security, ensure public health and improve the quality of life of urban populations. Accordingly, the State shall ensure the integration of principles, strategies and technologies on urban agriculture in urban planning.

**SEC. 3. Definition of Terms.** – For purposes of this Act:

- a. “Food security” refers to a situation wherein all people have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food, at all times, 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;
- c. “Vertical farming” refers to the method or practice of indoor agriculture, or growing produce in vertically stacked layers in skyscrapers and modern buildings using geponic, hydroponic or aeroponic growing methods.
- d. “Community gardens” refer to any piece of land cultivated by a group of people using either individual or shared plots on public or private land with the consent of the owner, to produce edibles, such as herbs, vegetables, fruits or ornamentals. Community gardens may be found in neighborhoods and schools, or connected to



institutions such as hospitals or located on the grounds or roofs of shared housing, such as, but not limited to, tenements and apartment complexes.

- e. "Idle lands" refer to non-agricultural lands in urban and urbanizable areas on which no improvements have been made by the owner, as certified by the city, municipal or provincial assessor. Idle government lands refer to lands owned by any government entity that have been idle and have not been used for the purpose for which they have been reserved for the past 10 years;
- f. "Urban areas" refer to all cities regardless of their population density and to municipalities with a population density of at least five hundred (500) persons per square kilometer;
- g. "Urbanizable areas" refer to sites and lands which, considering the present characteristics and prevailing conditions, display marked and great potential of becoming urban areas within the period of five (5) years;
- h. "Urban planning" refers to multi-disciplinary art and science of analyzing, specifying, clarifying, harmonizing, managing and regulating the use and development of land and water resources, in relation to their environs, for the development of sustainable communities and ecosystems in urban and urbanizable areas; and,
- i. "Social preparation" refers to the series of activities designed to prepare the underprivileged and homeless families to cope with the changes brought about by government development projects.

**SEC. 4. Scope.** – This Act shall apply to all urban spaces, such as, but not limited to, idle government or private lands, subdivisions/villages, public housing, and open spaces, in all urban areas and urbanizable areas in the country.

**SEC. 5. Community Gardening and Vertical Farming.** – Local government units shall identify and develop idle government and/or private lands, without prejudice to the rights of owners of private lands, and open spaces, within their jurisdiction, for full or partial conversion to community gardens; *Provided, That*, spaces allocated for urban agriculture shall not be prime lots. LGUs, in coordination with the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Cooperative Development Authority, shall capacitate neighborhood associations and people's organization, and/or facilitate the organization and registration of community-based cooperatives, to undertake community gardening.

The Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development shall ensure the provision of adequate spaces for community gardens and/or vertical farms in the design and development of subdivision, condominium and public housing projects. Towards this end, the DHSUD, in coordination with the DA, shall capacitate homeowners' association to undertake community gardening and/or vertical farming.

The DA shall provide the necessary technical assistance and support services, including, but not limited to, provision of seeds and seedlings, and gardening tools, access to loans from government financial institutions, and agricultural training, to ensure the full productivity of community gardens and vertical farms.



**SEC. 6. Urban Agriculture in Urban Planning.** – The DHSUD shall ensure the integration of urban agriculture in urban planning. Towards this end, the DHSUD shall promulgate guidelines for the harmonization of Comprehensive Land Use Plans and zoning ordinances of local government units with urban agriculture policies, frameworks, strategies and standards.

LGUs are hereby mandated to incorporate urban agricultural development in their respective Annual Development Plans, Annual Investment Plans, Physical Framework Plans, and Development Master Plans.

**SEC. 7. Urban Agriculture Education.** – Urban agriculture shall be integrated in the academic curriculum for elementary, secondary and tertiary level students of both public and private academic institutions offering courses in Agriculture, Practical Arts, Home Economics and/or other subjects related to agriculture. 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.

The Department of Education shall strengthen the implementation of Gulayan sa Paaralan Program in elementary and secondary schools, establishing school gardens to ensure continuous supply of vegetables for school feeding, in accordance with Republic Act No. 11037.

For universities and colleges, urban agriculture shall form part of the required period of time spent by students in the National Service Training Program or the Citizens' Military Training. A plan for the utilization or maximization of space occupied by schools shall be formulated specifically for urban agriculture purposes.

**SEC. 8. Research and Development.** – The DA and the Department of Science and Technology, as well as relevant state universities, government research and development institutions, and the private sector, shall intensify research on methods and technologies to support urban agriculture, including the development and operation of demonstration urban community gardens and vertical farms.

**SEC. 9. Incentives for Real Estate Developers and Local Government Units.** – Compliance by subdivision and condominium developers and/or owners with Section 5 of this Act may qualify them for incentives provided for under Republic Act No. 10771, subject to rules and regulations promulgated by the Department of Finance and the DHSUD.

The commitment and performance of LGUs in the implementation of this Act shall be included in the criteria for the awarding of the Seal of Good Local Governance and the provision of incentives, provided for under Republic Act No. 11292.

**SEC. 10. Inter-Agency Coordination.** – There is hereby established a National Convergence Program on Urban Agriculture. The Department of Agriculture is hereby designated the Secretariat of the Convergence Program. The following agencies shall perform duties and responsibilities in order to develop and sustain concerted action to promote urban agriculture:

- a) The Department of Agriculture shall provide technical assistance and support services to local government units, community-based cooperatives, homeowners' associations,



neighborhood associations and people's organizations to ensure the viability and cost-effectiveness of urban agriculture projects;

- b) The Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development shall ensure the integration of urban agriculture principles, policies, strategies, frameworks and standards in the design and development of subdivision, condominium and public housing projects, and in the preparation or updating of development and investment plans, CLUPs and zoning ordinances of LGUs, promulgate rules thereof and monitor their compliance therewith. The DHSUD shall provide assistance to homeowners' associations to strengthen their capacity to undertake urban agriculture projects in their neighborhoods and communities;
- c) The Department of Interior and Local Government shall monitor the compliance of LGUs with the provisions of this Act in order to determine their qualification for incentives provided for under Republic Act No. 11292;
- d) The Department of Education (DepEd) shall integrate the principles and practice of urban agriculture into primary and secondary education curricula, including the establishment of school gardens under the Gulayan sa Paaralan Program. DepEd shall ensure the adequate training of teachers and the development of appropriate instructional materials for this purpose;
- e) Department of Science and Technology shall conduct research on modern, cost-effective methods and technologies to support urban agricultural production, as well as post-harvest handling of surplus produce from urban agriculture projects;
- f) Department of Trade and Industry shall provide technical assistance in processing and packaging of surplus produce from urban agriculture projects and ensure access of local government units, cooperatives, homeowners' associations, and people's organizations to markets;
- g) Department of Finance shall administer the grant of incentives under Section 9 of this Act to qualified persons based on their compliance to Section 5 of this Act;
- h) Department of Budget and Management shall ensure adequate funding for the functions and programs provided for by under this Act;
- i) The Commission on Higher Education shall develop and implement curriculum and related standards and instructional materials in support of urban agriculture;
- j) The Cooperative Development Authority shall provide guidance and assistance to LGUs in the development of cooperatives within their jurisdiction;
- k) The Presidential Commission for the Urban Poor shall undertake social preparation activities to encourage participation and empower poor and underprivileged communities from the preparation and planning to implementation and evaluation of urban development projects; and,

- l) Philippine Information Agency shall undertake a nationwide information campaign, utilizing all forms of media, to raise awareness and encourage participation of the public in the implementation of this Act.

**SEC. 11. Periodic report to Congress.** – The Department of Agriculture and partner agencies in the National Convergence Program on Urban Agriculture shall submit annual performance reports to Congress.

**SEC. 12. Appropriations.** – The funds necessary to carry out the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the respective budget of concerned agencies for the current year. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

**SEC. 13. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – Within six (6) months from the effectivity of this Act, the agencies under the National Convergence Program on Urban Agriculture shall promulgate the necessary implementing rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act.

**SEC. 14. Separability Clause.** – If any part or provision of this Act is held unconstitutional or invalid, other parts or provisions hereof which are not affected shall continue to remain in full force and effect.

**SEC. 15. Repealing Clause.** – All laws, executive orders, issuances, rules and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby amended, repealed or modified accordingly.

**SEC. 16. Effectivity.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,