

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 1321

Introduced by: **“KUYA” JOSE ANTONIO R. SY-ALVARADO**

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR THE UTILIZATION OF IDLE LANDS TO ENHANCE FOOD SECURITY, ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND LIVELIHOOD GENERATION, INSTITUTING FOR THE PURPOSE THE “LUPANG LINGKOD SA MAMAMAYAN” PROGRAM, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to provide for the utilization of idle private and public lands to enhance food security, environmental protection and livelihood income generation, instituting for the purpose the “*Lupang Lingkod sa Mamamayan*” Program.

Land is a natural resource of utmost importance. It supports human life, natural vegetation, wildlife, economic activities, transport and communication systems. It is necessary to optimize the use and productivity of land resources with careful planning.

Today, there are some 7.5 million hectares of idle public lands and large tracts of idle private lands nationwide lying and waiting to be tapped for their potentials.

Planting and harvesting of timber, fruits, vegetables or raising livestock that produce meat, eggs and poultry on an idle piece of land will earn substantial amount of money and generate work opportunities in the community. Besides, planting trees and vegetables on idle lands will also help curtail the impact of climate change or global warming, protect the people from disasters like floods, landslides, water shortage, air pollution, drought and help increase bio-diversity.

The idea of utilizing both the idle private and public lands by planting trees, growing crops for food or livestock farming with the participation of landowners, local government units, people’s organizations, non-governmental organizations and civil society groups is most timely today because of food shortage, poverty and calamities.

This bill seeks to institute the *Lupang Lingkod sa Mamamayan* Program which aims to enhance food security, environmental protection and livelihood generation by utilizing private and public idle lands nationwide, and for this purpose, encouraging landowners and local government units with idle public lands to enroll in the program to utilize these lands for growing food crops or for livestock farming.

The program shall be implemented and supervised by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in coordination with the Department of Agriculture (DA) and Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG). In addition, the provincial environment and natural resources officers are hereby designated as the program managers in

the provinces to be assisted by the city and municipal environment and natural resources officers for the effective implementation and success of the program nationwide.

As an incentive, the DENR shall provide free tree and crop seedlings, technical advice and assistance to landowners and LGUs to encourage the planting of trees and engaging in agriculture for job and income generating activities in coordination with the DA. In addition, government financial institutions such as the Agricultural and Fisheries Financing Program of the Land Bank of the Philippines will extend low-interest bearing loans for landowners and LGUs as starting capital for the utilization of idle lands.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is highly recommended.

“KUYA” JOSE ANTONIO R. SY-ALVARADO 
Representative, First District of Bulacan



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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 “*Lupang Lingkod sa Mamamayan Program Act.*”

SEC. 2. **Declaration of Policy.** – The State recognizes the value of the land as the natural resource of utmost importance because it supports human life, natural vegetation, wildlife, economic activities, transport and communication system. The State also recognizes that it is necessary to optimize the use and productivity of land resources with careful planning.

Towards this end, the State shall establish a continuing program to accelerate the development of idle and underutilized private and public lands throughout the country as a means for food and livestock production, income generation and environmental protection.

SEC. 3. **Lupang Lingkod sa Mamamayan Program.** – There is hereby established the “*Lupang Lingkod Sa Mamamayan*” Program, hereinafter referred to as the “Program.” The Program aims to initiate the utilization of idle private and public lands nationwide for greening, food production and livestock farming purposes in order to enhance food security, environmental protection and livelihood for income generation.

The Program shall be implemented and administered by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in coordination with the Department of Agriculture (DA) and Department of Interior and Local Government.

The DENR shall, in coordination with local government units, determine the available idle lands with no immediate utilization plans and barren forest lands that may be used to plant trees or to be utilized for cultivating crops for food, livestock farming and other agricultural purposes.

For purposes of this Act, **idle lands** refer to any private and public agricultural and non-agricultural lands not cultivated, tilled or developed to produce any crop nor devoted to any specific economic purpose continuously for a period of five (5) years immediately prior to the effectivity of this Act.

SEC.4. **Coverage.** – The following are considered idle lands:

- (a) Agricultural lands suitable for cultivation and other agricultural purposes with an area of more than one (1) hectare, five thousand (5,000) square meters of which remain uncultivated or unimproved;
- (b) Non-agricultural lands in the city or municipality with an area of more than one thousand (1,000) square meters, five hundred (500) square meters of which remain unused and unimproved; and
- (c) Lands owned by a private person or entity that have been idle or have not been used for the past five (5) years.

SEC. 5. **Lands Exempted from the Program.** – The following are exempted from the coverage of this Act:

- (a) Lands held for lease;
- (b) Lands declared as world heritage sites;
- (c) Reservation lands;
- (d) Grazing lands; and
- (e) Lands under litigation or any other cause that physically or legally prevents the owner or person with an interest in the property from improving or cultivating the same.

SEC. 6. **Enrollment Under the Program.** – Any landowner of idle private lands may enroll in the Program. All local government units (LGUs) with idle public lands located within their respective area of jurisdiction are required to enroll in the Program. The landowner or LGU shall utilize the lands in any of the following manner:

- (a) Timber or fruit-bearing tree plantation;
- (b) Vegetables, rice, corn or root crop production;
- (c) Livestock farming such as raising chickens, hogs, goats and cattle; and
- (d) Any environment-friendly business industry.

To participate in the Program, the landowner or LGU may apply with their respective city or municipal environment and natural resources officer.

SEC. 7. **Incentives.** – The landowners, LGUs, lessees of public lands and other entities enrolled in the Program are entitled to the following incentives;

- (a) Free tree and food crop seedlings and free technical assistance provided by the DENR and the DA or their attached agencies in the development and maintenance of the idle lands; and
- (b) Financial assistance from the Agricultural and Fisheries Financing Program of the Land Bank of the Philippines, in the form of low-interest bearing loans to be used to buy livestock for breeding, fertilizers, feeds, tools and farm equipment.

SEC. 8. **Requirements.** – In order to avail of the incentives provided under Section 7 of this Act, the applicant must submit to the CENRO or MENRO, as the case may be, the following requirements:

- (a) Title of the idle private land with respect to landowners;
- (b) Certificate declaring the public lands as idle lands issued by the DENR with respect to LGU or its lessee;
- (c) A land utilization proposal indicating the types of trees and plants and livestock to be raised or other economic activities in the idle lands;
- (c) A pledge of commitment for the maintenance of the Program to ensure a balanced and healthful ecology within the community; and
- (d) Other requirements to be determined by the DENR, in coordination with the DILG and DA, for the effective implementation of the Program.

SEC. 9. **Lead Agency; Program Manager.** – As the lead agency, the DENR shall undertake and ensure the implementation of the Program in partnership with the DA and the DILG. The Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer (PENRO) is hereby designated as the Program Manager in the province to be assisted by the city or municipal environment and natural resources officers, as the case may be, in order to guarantee the successful implementation and close monitoring of the Program in the LGUs.

As the Program Manager, the PENRO shall exercise the following duties and responsibilities:

- (a) Oversee and supervise the proper implementation of the Program;
- (b) Ensure the viability of the Program;
- (c) Ensure the proper inventory of idle private and public lands in the province;
- (d) Coordinate with the DA and DILG in the implementation of the Program; and
- (e) Perform other duties and responsibilities necessary for the effective implementation of this Act

SEC. 10. **Role of LGUs and DA** – (a) In case the idle public land is not under lease agreement, the LGU where the public idle land is located shall, in coordination with DENR and DA, be responsible for the development, maintenance, preservation, conservation of the trees planted, harvesting of cultivated crops or the livestock raised therein and marketing of the produce thereof. A portion of the proceeds derived from the utilization of the public land shall be set aside for its continued operations and maintenance.

(b) The DA shall supply free tree and crop seedlings and shall provide technical support and advice to landowners and LGUs on the management and maintenance of the lands enrolled under the Program. It shall also provide the necessary training on agriculture, horticulture, arboriculture, livestock farming, equipment operations, and farming procedures.

SEC. 11. **Lease Agreement of Idle Land.** – For purposes of this Act, local government units may enter into lease agreements with the private sector or people's organizations, non-governmental organizations and civil society groups for the utilization of the idle public lands subject to the limits provided by the Constitution.

SEC. 12. **Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – Within sixty (60) days from the approval of this Act, the Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources shall, in coordination with the Secretary of the Interior and Local Government and the Secretary of Agriculture, issue the rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 13. **Penal Provision.** – Any person who fraudulently uses the incentives as provided in Section 7 of this Act for purposes other than what is intended under the Program shall be punished with a fine of not less than Ten thousand pesos (P10,000.00) but not more than Twenty thousand pesos (P20,000.00), or imprisonment of not less than six (6) months but not more than two (2) years, or both, at the discretion of the court.

If the violation is committed by an association, partnership, or corporation, its managing directors or partners, or president or general manager, and other persons responsible for the violation shall be liable for the penalties provided for in this Act.

Any local chief executive of local government unit, or any public officer, who fails to comply with the mandate of this Act shall be administratively liable under existing laws. Prosecution under this Act shall be without prejudice to any administrative case that may be filed against the offending public officer.

SEC. 14. **Appropriations.** – The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior and Local Government. Thereafter, such sum as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

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

Approved,

