EXPLANATORY NOTE

In the 1993 case of Oposa v. Factoran\(^1\) the Supreme Court recognized the concept of inter-generational equity, upholding the rights of minors to sue for the judicious management of our country's forests and the necessity of maintaining a sound ecological balance and protecting and enhancing the quality of the environment in accordance with Sections 15 and 16, Article II of the 1987 Constitution.

Recognizing that a system of inter-generational equity involving both rights and responsibilities may be substantially more effective in achieving the twin goals of environment protection and sustainable development, this bill seeks to impose a positive duty upon all graduating elementary, high school and college students to plant at least ten (10) trees as a prerequisite for graduation, These trees shall be their legacy to the environment and to future generations.

Indeed, while we recognize the right of the youth to a balance and healthful ecology, as proclaimed in the 1987 Constitution, there is no reason why they cannot be made to contribute in order to ensure that this would be an actual reality.

With over 12 Million students graduation from elementary and nearly 5 Million students graduation from high school\(^2\) and almost 500,000\(^3\) graduating from college each year, this initiative, if properly implemented, will ensure that at least 175 Million new trees would be

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\(^1\) Oposa v. Factoran, G.R. No. 101083 promulgated on 30 July 1993 (En Banc).
\(^2\) Basic Education Information System - Data Bulletin. Previous School Year Promotees and Graduates in Government Elementary and Secondary Schools by Year/ Grade Level and by Sex, School Year 2010-2011, Information retrieved from Research & Statistics Division Office of Planning Service, Department of Education on 20 March 2012
\(^3\) 2009 Data. Information retrieved from Commission on Higher Education on 20 March 2012.
planted each year. In the course of one generation,\(^4\) no less than 525 Billion trees can be planted under this initiative. Even with a survival rate of on ten percent (10\%), tins would mean an additional 525 Million trees would be available for the youth to enjoy, when they assume the mantle of leadership in the future.

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

\[\text{MANUEL DQ. CABOCHAN III}\]
\[\text{Representative}\]
\[\text{Magdalo Para sa Pilipino Party-List}\]

\(^4\) Computed at thirty (30) years.
AN ACT
REQUIRING ALL GRADUATING ELEMENTARY, HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE STUDENTS TO PLANT AT LEAST TEN (10) TREES EACH AS A PREREQUISITE FOR GRADUATION AND FOR OTHER RELATED PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. - This act shall be known as the "Graduation Legacy for the Environment Act of 2019".

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. - It is the policy of the State to pursue programs and projects that promote environmental protection, biodiversity, climate change mitigation, poverty reduction and food security. To this end, the educational system shall be a locus for propagating ethical and sustainable use of natural resources among the young to ensure the cultivation of a socially responsible and conscious citizenry.

SEC. 3. Tree-planting as a Mandatory Requisite for Graduation. - All graduating students from grade school, high school, and college shall be required to plant at least ten (10) trees as a mandatory prerequisite for their graduation. Said trees shall be their living legacy to the environment and to future generations of Filipinos.

SEC. 4. Location. - The trees to be planted under this Act shall be located in any of the following areas:

1) Forestlands;
2) Mangrove and protected areas;
3) Ancestral domains;
4) Civil and military reservations;
5) Urban areas under the greening plans of the LGUs;
6) Inactive and abandoned mine sites; and
7) Other suitable lands.

SEC. 5. Preference For Indigenous Species. – The planted species of trees should be appropriate to the location, climate and topography of the area with preference for the planting of indigenous species.
SEC. 6. Partner Agencies/Stakeholders. – The Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) shall implement the provisions of this Act, in partnership with the following agencies:
(a) Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)
(b) Department of Agriculture (DA)
(c) Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR)
(d) Department of Budget and Management (DBM)
(e) Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG)
(f) Department of Health
(g) Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC)
(h) Department of National Defense (DND)
(i) Department of Science and Technology (DOST)
(j) Department of Justice (DOJ)
(k) National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP)
(l) Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA)
(m) Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR)

The responsibilities of these agencies shall include:
1. Nursery establishment
2. Seedling production and site preparation
3. Site identification
4. Monitoring and evaluation
5. Provision of security, transportation, fire protection amenities and medical support
6. Technical support and extension services

SEC. 7. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – The DepEd, the CHED, in coordination with the DENR and DILG, and in consultation with other agencies, shall promulgate and issue the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) necessary to implement this Act within sixty (60) days after its approval.

SEC. 8. Appropriations. – The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be included in the budgets of the implementing departments/agencies in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 9. Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, executive orders, ordinances, rules and regulations and other issuances or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with any provision of this Act are hereby repealed, modified, superseded or amended accordingly.

SEC. 10. Separability Clause. – Should any portion or provision of this Act be declared unconstitutional or invalid by a competent court, the other provisions hereof shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SEC. 11. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,