

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

H. No. 9575

BY REPRESENTATIVES MACAPAGAL ARROYO, VILLAFUERTE, CABOCHAN, DE VENECIA, SY-ALVARADO, VILLARAZA-SUAREZ, SUAREZ (D.), GARIN (S.), VARGAS, NIETO, MACEDA, MALAPITAN, MARTINEZ, VALERIANO, BARBA, DELOS SANTOS, SUAREZ (A.), YAP (E.), VERGARA, REYES, ROMAN, TAMBUNTING, SAVELLANO, ARROYO, GERON, COJUANGCO, GASATAYA, TAN (S.A.), ALONTE, DALIPE, DEL MAR, RIVERA, SINGSON-MEEHAN, VILLANUEVA (E.), SUANSING (E.), CABATBAT, ACOSTA, SACDALAN, AMATONG, PLAZA, LARA, BASCUG, BORDADO, VILLANUEVA (N.), VILLARICA, UNABIA, FARIÑAS I (R.C.), ESTRELLA, GUICO, CARI, VIOLAGO, LACSON, DEFENSOR (L.), NOEL, BENITEZ, BABASA, VARGAS ALFONSO, DY (F.), DY (F.M.C.), ONG (J.), NATIVIDAD-NAGAÑO, HARESCO, FUENTEBELLA, DY (I.P.), ZUBIRI, FLORES, CABREDO, ACOP, ALBANO, SIAO, GORRICETA, VALMAYOR, ROQUE, LUSOTAN, DATOL, SANGCOPAN, DIMAPORO (A.), SILVERIO, ESCUDERO, ARENAS, GARCIA (P.J.), OAMINAL, QUIMBO, REVILLA, RODRIGUEZ, BIAZON, CALDERON, CAMPOS, CUA, CUARESMA, DAZA, DUAVIT, FRASCO, GONZAGA, MOMO, SAGARBARRIA, TEJADA, BALINDONG, CAMINERO, DAGOOC, DELOSO-MONTALLA, DIMAPORO (M.K.), DUJALI, GULLAS, GUYA, LABADLABAD, ORTEGA, TAN (A.S.), TAN (A.), TIANGCO, TORRES-GOMEZ, TUTOR, DE JESUS, GO (M.), LOYOLA, ROBES, SAULOG, NOGRALES (J.J.), PADIERNOS, HERRERA-DY, NOLASCO, EBCAS, SUANSING (H.), BOLILIA, GATCHALIAN, ESPINO, CRISOLOGO, ATIENZA, SALIMBANGON, GARCIA (J.E.), TUPAS, SUNTAY, LAGON, VILLAR, GARBIN, AGABAS, ONG (R.), CANAMA, CHATTO, BARONDA, BELMONTE, GO (E.C.), BAGATSING, LEGARDA, KHO (W.), VILLA, FARIÑAS (R.C.), ECLEO, FORTUN, YU, SALCEDA, ENVERGA AND OLIVAREZ, PER COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 1045

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING THE YOUNG FARMERS AND FISHERFOLK CHALLENGE PROGRAM, CREATING FOR THE PURPOSE THE YOUNG FARMERS AND FISHERFOLK CHALLENGE COUNCIL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

1 **SECTION 1. *Short title.*** This Act shall be known as the “*Young Farmers and Fisherfolk*
2 *Challenge Act*”.

3
4 **SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** It is hereby declared the policy of the State to ensure that
5 the rights of young farmers and fisherfolk are recognized, protected and promoted. Pursuant to
6 this, the State shall engage the youth in nation building and rural development, providing for this
7 purpose access to knowledge, information and education, access to land, new sources of financial
8 services and capital, green jobs, access to new and niche markets, and participation in policy
9 dialogue.

10
11 **SEC. 3. *Young Farmers and Fisherfolk Challenge Program.*** There is hereby established
12 a Young Farmers and Fisherfolk Challenge Program, hereinafter referred to as the Program, that
13 shall support and empower the young farmers and fisherfolk to be active partners in food security
14 and agricultural development and modernization. The Program shall encourage the youth to pursue
15 a career or engage in activities related to agriculture, ensure young farmers and fisherfolk
16 participation in policy formulation and program implementation relative to the agriculture sector,
17 and provide institutional support for agri-business and agri-entrepreneurship initiatives of the
18 youth to fully realize their role as agents and partners for development.

19
20 **SEC. 4. *Beneficiaries of the Program.*** The Program is intended to support young farmers
21 and fisherfolk between fifteen (15) to forty (40) years of age, who are engaged in farming and
22 fisheries activities, and are included in the Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture
23 (RSBSA). The Department of Agriculture (DA) shall update its existing database to reflect these
24 indicators.

25
26 **SEC. 5. *Creation of a Young Farmers and Fisherfolk Challenge Council.*** There is hereby
27 created the Young Farmers and Fisherfolk Challenge Council, hereinafter referred to as the
28 Council, to properly oversee the implementation of the Program.

29
30 The Council shall be composed of the following:

- 31
32 a. Secretary of the Department of Agriculture (DA) or a duly authorized representative who
33 is at least an Undersecretary, who shall be the Chair;
- 34 b. Representative of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) who shall likewise be an
35 Undersecretary;
- 36 c. Representative of the Department of Education (DepEd) who shall likewise be an
37 Undersecretary;
- 38 d. Representative of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST);
- 39 e. Representative of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED);
- 40 f. Representative of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR);

- 1 g. Representative of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA);
- 2 h. Representative of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG);
- 3 i. Representative of a national organization of young farmers' cooperative or association,
- 4 provided that the representative shall be between fifteen (15) to forty (40) years of age;
- 5 j. Representative of a national organization of fisherfolk's cooperative or association,
- 6 provided that the representative shall be between fifteen (15) to forty (40) years of age;
- 7 k. Representative of a farmers' women organization or cooperative, provided that the
- 8 representative shall be between fifteen (15) to forty (40) years of age;
- 9 l. Representative of a national organization for agritourism; and
- 10 m. Representative of a national organization for food, restaurant, and business sectors.

11
12 The Philippine Council for Agriculture and Fisheries shall serve as its Secretariat.

13
14 **SEC. 6. Powers and Functions of the Council.** The Council shall have the following
15 powers and functions:

- 16
17 a. Formulate the Program, in consultation with research institutions such as the Southeast
18 Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA),
19 Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and
20 Development (PCAARRD), University of the Philippines - Los Baños (UPLB) and other
21 relevant state universities and colleges (SUCs);
- 22
23 b. Identify and streamline access to relevant capacity-building and livelihood programs across
24 the different departments and agencies of government, including on-the-job trainings, job
25 fairs, employment in farm tourism and agro-industrial zones, and other employment-
26 bridging initiatives;
- 27
28 c. Identify and streamline access to possible sources of credit across the different
29 departments, agencies, and instrumentalities, including access to start-up capital;
- 30
31 d. Monitor initiatives in emerging best practices in agriculture such as smart farming, farm
32 tourism in compliance with RA 10816, or the "Farm Tourism Development Act of 2016,"
33 agroponics, aquaponics, hydroponics, and organic and boutique vegetables;
- 34
35 e. Improve and facilitate access to marketing services such as through product packaging,
36 promotions including branding and advertising, networking events, provision of subsidies
37 to enable participation in trade fairs and exhibits, and linkage with media;
- 38
39 f. Coordinate with local government units (LGUs) in providing subsidized rental rates for
40 public retail areas and public markets to farmers and fisherfolk;
- 41
42 g. Serve as a conduit between stakeholders and national and international leaders including
43 Congress and the private sector in formulating policies directly addressing the concerns of
44 young farmers and fisherfolk;
- 45
46 h. Propose subjects related to agriculture and agribusiness such as gardening, backyard
47 farming, urban farming, reforestation, agricultural appreciation, agricultural
48 entrepreneurship, smart farming, farm tourism, and coastal management in all pertinent
49 levels of the DepEd's K-12 system with the end goal of increasing enrollment in the
50 technical-vocational track in Senior High School in courses related to agriculture, CHED,
51 including the National Service Training Program (NSTP) and TESDA;
- 52
53 i. Ensure scholarships and subsidized tuition fees for young farmers and fisherfolk in SUCs;

- 1 j. Provide on-the-job training programs for young farmers and fisherfolk in areas such as
2 “green jobs”, reforestation, coastal management, fisheries, and other rural-based jobs,
3 through the DOLE’s Special Program for Employment of Students (SPES) and other
4 livelihood and training programs;
5
- 6 k. Explore and facilitate the extension of short-term leases for public land to young farmers
7 and fisherfolk, providing free or subsidized land for cultivation and for aquaculture, and
8 developing other packages such as, lease-to-buy schemes that would allow young farmers
9 and fisherfolk to use available or unutilized agricultural land or fishing ground for the
10 purposes of said Program;
11
- 12 l. Expedite the leasing, distribution, and award of agrarian reform land to qualified
13 beneficiaries;
14
- 15 m. Facilitate the use of excess land holdings of SUCs and PEIs for agricultural training and
16 developmental processes;
17
- 18 n. Foster the formation of new ideas and technologies by assisting agricultural enterprises of
19 qualified young farmers and fisherfolk entrepreneurs, pursuant to Republic Act No. 11337,
20 otherwise known as the “Innovative Start-up Act of 2018”;
21
- 22 o. Initiate social partnerships and rural development initiatives in partnership with the private
23 sector;
24
- 25 p. Optimize existing loan guarantee funds administered by various government entities to
26 increase the credit worthiness of young farmers and fisherfolk experiencing difficulty in
27 obtaining loans from banks due to lack of acceptable collaterals, credit knowledge and
28 credit track record; and
29
- 30 q. Accept donations, contributions, grants, bequests or gifts, in cash or in kind, from various
31 sources, domestic or foreign, for purposes relevant to the functions of the Council. Said
32 donations shall be deemed automatically appropriated for purposes specified by the donor
33 or in the absence thereof, for the programs and projects as may be approved by the Council
34 subject to the usual accounting and auditing rules and regulations: *Provided, That*, cash
35 donations shall not be used to fund the personal services requirements of the Council.
36

37 **SEC. 6-A. Tax Exemption on Donations.** All grants, bequests, endowments, donations
38 and contributions made to and used actually, directly and exclusively by the Council shall be
39 exempt from donor’s tax and the same shall be considered as allowable deduction from gross
40 income for purposes of computing the taxable income of the donor, in accordance with the
41 provisions of the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997, as amended.
42

43 **SEC. 7. Waiver of Government Fees and Charges.** Subject to the exceptions provided in
44 Section 8 of Republic Act No. 11261, otherwise known as the “First-Time Jobseekers Assistance
45 Act”, all government agencies and instrumentalities, including government-owned and controlled
46 corporations, LGUs, and government hospitals shall not collect fees or charges from young
47 farmers and fisherfolks who are first-time jobseekers: *Provided, That* such fee or charge is in
48 connection with the application for and the granting of licenses, proofs of identification,
49 clearances, certificates or other documents usually required in the course of employment locally
50 or abroad: *Provided further*, That the benefit provided shall only be availed of once.

1 **SEC. 8. *Annual Report.*** The Council shall submit to the President and to both Houses of
2 Congress, not later than the 30th of March of every year following the effectivity of this Act, a
3 report giving a detailed account on the effective implementation of this Act, and recommended
4 legislation where applicable and necessary.

5
6 **SEC. 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** Within ninety (90) days from the
7 effectivity of this Act, the DA and DAR shall, in coordination with the DOST, DOLE, DENR,
8 DepEd, CHED, Land Bank of the Philippines, and National Youth Commission, issue the
9 necessary rules and regulations for the implementation of this Act.

10
11 **SEC. 10. *Appropriations.*** The funds necessary to carry out the initial implementation of
12 this Act shall be charged against the current year's budget of the Department of Agriculture.
13 Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be
14 included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

15
16 **SEC. 11. *Separability Clause.*** If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or
17 unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected by such declaration shall remain in full force
18 and effect.

19
20 **SEC. 12. *Repealing Clause.*** All laws, executive orders, administrative orders, and rules
21 and regulations inconsistent with this act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

22
23 **SEC. 13. *Effectivity.*** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the
24 *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,