



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Constitution Hills, Quezon City



SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 5501

Introduced by
REPRESENTATIVE PANTALEON D. ALVAREZ

**AN ACT
PROHIBITING THE ACCEPTANCE, PROCESSING, AND
APPROVAL OF APPLICATIONS FOR LAND USE CONVERSION OF
AGRICULTURAL LANDS, IRRIGATED LANDS, AND IRRIGABLE
LANDS TO NON-AGRICULTURAL PURPOSES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In 1996, the World Food Summit defined food security as the state “when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.”¹ To achieve this goal, it is indispensable that sufficient land resources are protected and available in order to produce sufficient food for the nation.

One of the legal instruments designed to achieve food security is Republic Act No. 6657 (hereinafter referred to as “CARP”). Further, it was instituted to promote social justice and to move the nation toward sound rural development and industrialization, and the establishment of owner cultivatorship of economic-size farms as the basis of Philippine agriculture.


¹ Rodriguez, Fritzie. (2015, September 01) “How food security threatens us.” Retrieved from <http://www.rappler.com/move-ph/51726-food-security-philippines>; last accessed on 10 January 2016.

With this program, farmers are expected to own land which they can till to uplift their socio-economic status in life, while providing adequate food for our countrymen. However, the same law allows for the reclassification or conversion of agricultural land and its disposition should the land cease to be economically feasible and sound for agricultural purposes after the lapse of five (5) years, or if the same has become more urbanized and will be more economically valuable for residential, commercial, or industrial purposes.

As a result, prime agricultural lands, as well as irrigated or irrigable lands, have been adversely affected by rampant and unchecked conversions. This has led to a disturbing threat not only against our country's food security, but to the whole agrarian reform program as well.

The obligation of the State is to ensure food security and to promote social justice. This House Bill is being filed to protect our remaining prime agricultural lands and irrigated and irrigable lands, while maintaining, and hopefully strengthening, our present level of food security.

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


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

SEC. 1. Declaration of Policy. – It is the policy of the State to promote industrialization, full employment based on sound agricultural development and agrarian reform, and to achieve food security for the people. To this end, the State shall protect irrigated and irrigable land resources from rampant and reckless reclassification into non-agricultural processes. Further, the State shall likewise protect the welfare of the farmers and fisherfolk who are valuable elements toward food security and sufficiency of the country.

SEC. 2. Definition of Terms. – For purposes of this Act, the following terms shall be defined as:

(2.1.) Irrigated Land – Refers to land serviced by natural irrigation or irrigation facilities. This includes lands where water is not readily available because existing irrigation facilities need

rehabilitation or upgrading or where irrigation water is not available year-round.

(2.2.) Irrigable Land - Refers to land displaying marked characteristics justifying the operation of an irrigation system.

(2.3.) Prime Agricultural Land - Refers to land that can be used for various or specific agricultural activities and can provide optimum and sustainable yield with minimum inputs and development costs.

(2.4.) Processing and Approval - Refers to the processing and approval of the application for land use conversion with the Department of Agrarian Reform for conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural purposes.

SEC. 3. Prohibition on Conversion of Prime Agricultural Lands, Irrigated Lands, and Irrigable Lands. - A prohibition is herein imposed on the acceptance, processing, and approval of application for conversion of irrigated, irrigable, and prime agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses, such as: residential, commercial, or industrial in the entire Philippines upon the effectivity of this Act.

SEC. 4. Effect of the Prohibition. - No application for conversion shall be accepted, processed, and approved by the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) or any of its offices nationwide during the effect of the prohibition. Conversions made within the period referred to in Sec. 3 of this Act shall be null and void.

SEC. 7. Penalty Provision. - Public officials or employees who violate the provisions of this Act shall be punished with imprisonment of not less than five (5) years but not more than seven (7) years and a fine of not less than Three Hundred Thousand Pesos (P300,000.00) but not more than Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (P500,000.00)

Further, they shall be removed from service and shall suffer the penalty of perpetual absolute disqualification. Private persons who act in conspiracy with public officers and/or employees shall likewise be punished under this Section.

SEC. 8. Repealing Clause. – All laws, rules and regulations, decrees, and issuances, or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SEC. 9. Separability Clause. – If any part or provision of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, other provisions which are not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 10. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – The DAR shall promulgate the rules and regulations for the implementation of this Act after its effectivity.

SEC. 11. Effectivity Clause. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,