

AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE ZONIFICATION OF ABACA AREAS, ACTUAL AND POTENTIAL, AND PRESCRIBING CERTAIN PLANTING RESTRICTIONS AND OTHER MEASURES FOR THE CONTROL OF ABACA MOSAIC DISEAS...

REPUBLIC ACT NO. 1176, June 18, 1954

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

SECTION 1. It shall be the declared policy of Congress to promote the development of the abaca industry by the adoption of adequate measures for the control of abaca mosaic disease which threatens the very existence of the industry, particularly in Davao and Cotabato. Towards this end, and in recognition of the fact established through scientific investigations that the mosaic disease is caused by a virus which is transmitted by aphids and plant lice from diseased to healthy abaca plants through intermediate host plants, the most important of which is corn, and that where corn is interplanted with abaca or planted close to abaca plantations the rate of infection is rapid and the extent of infection is heavy and widespread, the Secretary of Agriculture and Natural Resources, with the approval of the President of the Philippines, is hereby authorized to zonify areas actually planted to abaca and potential abaca areas into abaca zone and non-abaca zone, with a buffer zone around an abaca zone or between an abaca and a non-abaca zone, in order to enforce more effectively measures herein provided for the control of abaca mosaic disease.

SEC. 2. In the exercise of the above-mentioned authority, the following guiding principles shall be observed:

- "Potential abaca area" shall mean a'ny sizeable block of public land released after the promulgation of this Act by the Bureau of Forestry for agricultural purposes and suitable to the planting of, but not yet actually planted to abaca. In the zonification of potential abaca areas, natural boundaries shall be availed of as much as feasible.
- An "abaca area" shall mean any sizeable block of cultivated land already utilized for the growing of abaca to the extent of sixty per cent or more. The zonification of abaca areas into abaca zones and non-abaca zones shall be done on the basis of the degree of mosaic infection, as the Secretary of Agriculture and Natural Resources upon the recommendation of the Director of Plant Industry shall determine.
- A "buffer zone" shall not be less than five hundred meters wide and, if located between a declared abaca zone and a non-abaca zone within areas planted to abaca, shall be taken from the non-abaca zone.

SEC. 3. The planting of corn within declared abaca zones is prohibited, provided that if on the date the area is declared an abaca zone becomes effective there is a corn crop standing, the crop may be allowed to reach maturity and be harvested.

SEC. 4. The planting of both corn and abaca within the buffer zones is prohibited, provided that the owners of standing corn or abaca at the time the zoning takes effect shall have six months from said date within which to clear their land of corn and two years within which to clear it of abaca.

SEC. 5. Within declared abaca zones, the owners of abaca plantations are given two years from the date this zonification takes effect to destroy completely by burning use of chemicals or other methods approved by the Bureau of Plant Industry, all mosaic-infected plants and hereafter to keep their plantations free from infection promptly destroying every plant that shows of the disease.

SEC. 6. The abaca planters in the zonified abaca one shall organize themselves and form a mosaic control association and elect their officers including one executive officer who may or may not be a member of such association.

SEC. 7. Such portion of the fiber inspection fees as may be collected from fibers coming from the abaca zones for the control of abaca mosaic disease shall be expended by the association in that area under the supervision of the Director of Plant Industry: Provided, however, That the owners of the plantations within the zonified areas under section two of this Act shall provide the mosaic control association through the Bureau of Plant Industry the necessary chemicals and laborers to be utilized in the campaign for the control of the mosaic disease, the said facilities to depend upon the degree of infestation as may be determined by the Secretary of Agriculture and Natural Resources upon the recommendation of the Director of Plant Industry.

SEC. 8. The Secretary of Agriculture and Natural Resources upon the recommendation of the Director of Plant Industry shall promulgate such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out effectively the purposes of this Act.

SEC. 9. The President of the Philippines is hereby empowered to suspend, by means of Executive Order, the effectivity of this Act or any provisions thereof whenever and/or wherever in his discretion public interest or welfare so requires.

SEC. 10. Violations of any of the provisions of this Act shall subject the violator, upon conviction, to a fine not more than two hundred pesos or imprisonment of not more than six months, or both, such fine and imprisonment, at the discretion of the court.

SEC. 11. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved, June 18, 1954.

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