

**[ REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10690, October 23, 2015 ]**

**AN ACT REGULATING THE PRACTICE OF FORESTRY IN THE PHILIPPINES AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, REPEALING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NUMBERED SIX THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED THIRTY-NINE (R.A. NO. 6239), KNOWN AS "THE FORESTRY PROFESSION LAW"**

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

ARTICLE I

TITLE, POLICY, OBJECTIVES, TERMS AND SCOPE OF PRACTICE

SECTION 1. *Title.* – This Act shall be known as "The Forestry Profession Act".

SEC. 2. *Statement of Policy.* – The State recognizes the importance of professional foresters in nation building and development. Hence, it shall develop and nurture competent, ethical, globally competitive and well-rounded professional foresters who shall observe the highest standards of excellence, and whose professionalism shall be fostered through the administration of transparent, credible and relevant licensure examinations, a system of registration and self-regulation, and through continuing education.

SEC. 3. *Objectives.* – This Act shall govern:

- (a) The examination, registration and licensure of professional foresters;
- (b) The supervision, control and regulation of the practice of forestry in the Philippines;
- (c) The development and upgrading of the curriculum;
- (d) The development of the professional competence of foresters through mandatory Continuing Professional Development (CPD); and
- (e) The integration of the forestry profession.

SEC. 4. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act:

(a) *Accredited Professional Organization (APO)* refers to the organization integrating all associations, federations, and groups of licensed foresters that have been accredited by the Professional Regulatory Board for Foresters to be created hereunder, subject to the approval of the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) created under Republic Act No. 8981, known as the "PRC Modernization Act of 2000", as amended;

(b) *Forestry* refers to the art, science, practice, and business of sustainable management of forest and forestland resources for the production of goods and services and the enhancement of benefits and values of such resources to provide the needs of the present and future generations; and

(c) *Professional forester* refers to a registered and licensed natural person who holds a valid certificate of registration and a valid professional identification card issued by the Professional Regulatory Board for Foresters and the PRC pursuant to this Act.

SEC. 5. *Scope of Practice of Forestry.* – The practice of forestry shall include the following:

(a) Different aspects of actual or supervisory activities or services such as the parametric classification of lands of the public domain and subclassification and capability determination of forestlands; inventory of forest or timber and other forest products; reconnaissance and survey of road locations and quarry sites; planning and implementing of harvesting operations and timber improvement; scaling and grading of, and manifesting taxes on logs and derivative wood products as well as other forest products preparation of designs, plans and specifications of forest products processing plants; treatment of wood and other forest products; inspection and investigation of harvesting and processing plants; preparation, certification or authentication, or both, of log and lumber dealers, sawmill operators and other mill test reports; planning and implementation of forest nursery, afforestation, reforestation, industrial and community-based tree plantation, tree farm and agroforestry farm projects; planning and implementation of forest parks, wilderness areas, coastal areas and other protected area systems development; planning and implementation of forest protection systems, forest and soil resources conservation measures; and conduct of environmental risk scoping and environmental impact assessment;

(b) The preparation and conduct of feasibility studies pertaining to natural forest and plantation forest management, watershed management, range or grazing land management, wildlife and biodiversity systems management, wood technology and timber engineering, wood products manufacturing and marketing management, and technical or management consultancy;

(c) The conduct of forest experiments, research and development, training and extension concerning forestry, and the teaching of forestry subjects in any accredited college or school of forestry;

(d) Government institutional activities or services wherein the principal policy and strategy is forestry, and the practice of professional forestry is essential, such as in the undertaking, supervision, or administration of studies, programs, stations, centers, community/provincial/regional offices, and such other activities or services that, by law, should be inherently exercised by professional foresters; and

(e) Forestry activities and services required by local government units, private corporations, foundations, nongovernment organizations, and foreign assisted projects.

The Professional Regulatory Board for Foresters, subject to approval by the PRC, may revise, exclude from, or add to the above enumerated acts or activities as the need arises to conform to the latest trends in the practice of forestry.

## ARTICLE II

### CREATION OF THE PROFESSIONAL REGULATORY BOARD FOR FORESTERS

SEC. 6. *Creation and Composition of the Professional Regulatory Board for Foresters.* – There is hereby created a collegial body under the administrative supervision and control of the PRC, which shall be called the Professional Regulatory Board for Foresters, hereinafter referred to as the Board. The Board shall be composed of a Chairperson and two (2) members to be appointed by the President of the Republic of the Philippines from a list of three (3) recommendees for each position, chosen and submitted by the PRC from a list of five (5) nominees for every position endorsed by the APO.

SEC. 7. *Qualifications of Members of the Board.* – At the time of their respective appointments, the members of the Board, including the Chairperson, must:

- (a) Be a natural born Filipino citizen and a resident of the Philippines;
- (b) Be of good moral character;
- (c) Not be convicted by a court of competent jurisdiction of an offense involving moral turpitude;
- (d) Be a holder of a Bachelor's Degree in Forestry, preferably with a Masteral or Doctorate Degree in Forestry conferred by a duly licensed school, college or university recognized by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED);
- (e) Be a registered forester with a valid certification of registration and a valid professional identification card, and with at least ten (10) years of practice prior to appointment;
- (f) Be a member in good standing of the APO;
- (g) Not be a member of the faculty of any school, college or university where a regular or review course in forestry is offered, not a member of a staff of reviewers in a review school or center, and does not have any direct or indirect pecuniary interest in any such institution; and
- (h) Not be an officer or trustee of the APO.

SEC. 8. *Term of Office of the Members of the Board.* – The Chairperson and members of the Board shall hold office for a term of three (3) years from the date of appointment or until their successors shall have been qualified and appointed. They may be reappointed in the same office for another term of three (3) years immediately after the expiry of their term: *Provided*, That the holding of such position shall not be more than two (2) terms or not more than six (6) years: *Provided, further*, That the first Board appointed under this Act shall hold these terms of office: the Chairperson for three (3) years; the first member for two (2) years; and the second member for one (1) year: *Provided, finally*, That an appointee to a vacancy shall serve only the unexpired portion of the term of office. The Chairperson and the members shall take their oaths of office before a duly authorized officer.

SEC. 9. *Compensation, Allowances of the Board Members.* – The Chairperson and members of the Board shall receive compensation, allowances, and other benefits

comparable to those of the chairpersons and members of other professional regulatory boards under the PRC.

SEC. 10. *Powers, Functions, Duties and Responsibilities of the Board.* – The Board shall exercise executive and administrative rule-making and quasi-judicial powers to carry out the provisions of this Act. It shall be vested with the following specific powers, functions, duties, and responsibilities:

- (a) To regulate the practice of forestry in accordance with the provisions of this Act;
- (b) To adopt and promulgate the Code of Ethics, the Code of Good Governance, and the Code of Technical Standards for the Practice of Forestry;
- (c) To adopt an official seal of the Board;
- (d) To prescribe and promulgate guidelines on the mandatory CPD for foresters in consultation with the APO;
- (e) To prescribe and promulgate the syllabi/table of specifications for the subjects in the licensure examination in consultation with the academe and the CHED;
- (f) To issue or cancel temporary or special permits granted to foreign foresters;
- (g) To adopt a program for walk-in licensure examination, if necessary;
- (h) To evaluate and approve applications for licensure examination;
- (i) To prepare questions for the subjects in the licensure examination, give and correct the examination, and release their results;
- (j) To register qualified persons for the practice of forestry, and issue thereto certificates of registration and professional identification cards;
- (k) To administer oaths;
- (l) To monitor the conditions affecting the practice of forestry through ocular inspections of establishments where foresters are practicing, and adopt such measures as may be deemed proper for the enhancement and maintenance of high professional, moral, ethical, and technical standards;
- (m) To enter into a memorandum of agreement with the CHED and the PRC to ensure that all higher educational instructions and offerings of degree, course, or program comply with the policies, standards, and requirements of the course prescribed by the CHED in the areas of curriculum, faculty, library, and facilities;
- (n) To ensure quality forestry education by examining the facilities of universities or colleges offering Bachelor of Science in Forestry seeking permission to open forestry courses, and ensuring that these comply with the requirements set by the CHED. The authority to open or close colleges or universities offering BS Forestry shall be vested on the CHED upon the written recommendation of the Board;
- (o) To hear and investigate cases on violations of this Act, its implementing rules and regulations (IRR), the Code of Ethics, the Code of Good Governance, the Code of Technical Standards for the practice of forestry, and other policies and, for this purpose, to issue summons, subpoena *ad testificandum* and subpoena *duces tecum*

to alleged violators and witnesses to compel their attendance in hearings or investigations;

(p) To delegate the hearing or investigation of cases against the alleged violators: *Provided*, That the hearing or investigation of cases wherein the issue or question strictly involves concerns over the technical practice of forestry shall be presided over by at least one (1) member of the Board assisted by a Legal or Hearing Officer of the PRC;

(q) To endorse cases involving criminal violations of this Act and other laws, its IRR, and other policies, to the Prosecution Office for investigation;

(r) To decide administrative cases against examinees or registered foresters: *Provided*, That upon the finding of guilt, the examination papers of the examinees shall be cancelled and they shall be barred from taking another licensure examination: *Provided, further*, That in the case of registered foresters, their certificate of registration shall be suspended and revoked: *Provided, furthermore*, That the effectivity of the penalty shall only commence from the date of surrender of the certificates together with the professional identification cards: *Provided, finally*, That the decision of the Board shall, unless appealed to the PRC, become final and executory after fifteen (15) days from receipt of notice of judgment or decision;

(s) To reissue or reinstate revoked or suspended certificates of registration and unexpired professional identification cards to the holders thereof: *Provided*, That the revoked certificates of registration shall only be reissued after the lapse of the period provided in this Act: *Provided, further*, That the Board shall issue a resolution thereon subject to the approval of the PRC, after the fitness to practice anew the forestry profession is satisfactory established: *Provided, finally*, That the suspended certificate of registration shall only be reissued upon the expiration of the period imposed in the decision of the Board;

(t) To conduct, through the legal or hearing officers, summary proceedings on minor violations of this Act, its IRR, any of the codes aforementioned, the general instructions to examinees, and to render summary judgment thereon which shall, unless appealed to the PRC, become final and executory after fifteen (15) days from receipt of notice of judgment or decision;

(u) To prepare an annual report of accomplishments, programs, projects, and activities of the Board during the year of submission to the PRC after the close of each calendar year, and to make appropriate recommendations to the Commission on issues or problems affecting the forestry profession;

(v) To discharge other implied, incidental, necessary powers, duties, functions, and responsibilities to effectively carry out the provisions of this Act and its policies or measures and the achievement of its objectives; and

(w) To issue and promulgate rules and regulations implementing the provisions of this Act.

The rules and regulations, codes, and other policies embodied in a resolution issued and promulgated by the Board shall be subject to review and approval by the PRC. However, the Board's decision, resolution, or order rendered in an administrative case which is not interlocutory shall be subject to review only on appeal to the PRC or the regular courts.