



Republic of the Philippines

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

DILG-NAPOLCOM Center, EDSA corner Quezon Avenue, West Triangle, Quezon City

http://www.dilg.gov.ph



May 7, 2019

MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR

NO. 2019- 66

T O : ALL PROVINCIAL GOVERNORS, CITY MAYORS, MUNICIPAL MAYORS, BARMM CHIEF MINISTER, BARMM DILG MINISTER, PRESIDING OFFICERS OF THE SANGGUNIANs, DILG REGIONAL DIRECTORS OF REGIONS III, IV-A, V TO XIII, ARMM AND CAR

SUBJECT : ISSUANCE OF LOCAL ORDINANCES BANNING THE ILLEGAL HARVESTING, BUYING, SELLING, AND MUTILATING OF YOUNG LEAF SHEATHS OF ABACA PLANTS

Abaca is a top export commodity in the country supplying about 85% of the total world abaca production, which has a high demand in the global trade as raw materials for cordage, textile, handicrafts and textile papers. It is considered as one of the country's high values commercial crops contributing an average of PhP 3.15 B in revenues (2015 data) and providing direct and indirect employment to an estimated 1.5 million Filipinos. The practice of harvesting, buying, selling and mutilating of immature and young leaf sheaths of abaca resulted to an increased spread of abaca viral diseases, particularly the bunchy-top, bract, mosaic, and other microorganisms, especially during transport.

As shown in the experiences of the Provinces of Sorsogon and Catanduanes that have issued their respective ordinances to regulate the spread of abaca diseases and the prohibition of certain acts and practices, the unscrupulous practice of mutilating and indiscriminately harvesting immature abaca fresh leaf sheaths especially in disease-infected areas is deleterious to the abaca industry. Hence, regulation of such practice is imperative.

In furtherance of the recently-issued Resolution No. 12 (dated July 19, 2018) by the Department of Agriculture-Committee on Commercial Crops (Fiber Crops Industry Development Sub Committee), all abaca producing local government units (LGUs) are enjoined to issue their respective local ordinance banning the illegal harvesting, buying, selling and mutilating of young leaf sheaths of abaca plants, also known as "bakkak" or "umbak."

All local authorities concerned shall submit a copy of the said ordinance to the Secretary of Interior and Local Government, through the Bureau of Local Government Supervision, at email addresses: *tsg_blg@yahoo.com*, copy furnished *pcaf.fibercrops@gmail.com*.

The DILG-BARMM Minister and all concerned DILG Regional Directors are also directed to cause the widest dissemination of this Memorandum Circular to all LGUs within their respective jurisdictions.


EDUARDO M. AÑO
Secretary *m*





Republic of the Philippines
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PHILIPPINE COUNCIL FOR AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES
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**PCAF – COMMITTEE ON COMMERCIAL CROPS
Fiber Crops Industry Development Sub-Committee**

**Resolution No. 12
Series of 2018**

RECOMMENDING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT THROUGH THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS THE ISSUANCE OF AN ORDINANCE ON BANNING THE ILLEGAL HARVESTING, BUYING, SELLING, AND MUTILATING OF YOUNG LEAF SHEATHS OF ABACA PLANTS ALSO KNOWN AS “BAKBAK” OR “UMBAK” IN MAJOR ABACA PRODUCING AREAS

WHEREAS, abaca is a top export commodity of the Philippines supplying about 85% of the total world abaca production which has high demand in the global trade as raw materials for cordage, textile, handicrafts and textile papers;

WHEREAS, it is considered as one of the country’s high value commercial crops contributing an average of Php3.15B revenue in 2015 and providing direct and indirect employment to an estimated 1.5 million Filipinos;

WHEREAS, the practice of harvesting, buying, selling and mutilating of young leaf sheaths of abaca locally known as “bakkbak” or “umbak” poses threats to the industry since these affect the quality of the abaca fibers harvested, resulting to low export quality fibers;

WHEREAS, “bakkbak” or “umbak” refers to abaca leaf sheaths or overlapping leafsheaths which are tightly laid one upon the other that form a solid mass commonly called as the stalk or stem of the abaca;

WHEREAS, the harvesting, buying and selling of the “bakkbak” or “umbak” have increased the spread of abaca viral diseases, particularly the bunchy-top, bract, mosaic, and other microorganisms, especially during transport;

WHEREAS, the provinces of Sorsogon and Camarines Sur have issued Ordinance Nos. 11-2017 and 059, Series of 2015, respectively, to regulate the spread of abaca diseases and the prohibition of certain acts and practices;

WHEREAS, stated in Section 11 of Sorsogon’s ordinance and Article IV of Camarines Sur’s ordinance that unscrupulous practice of mutilating and indiscriminately harvesting immature abaca fresh leafsheaths especially in disease-infected abaca areas is deleterious to the abaca industry and thus, regulation of such practice is imperative;

WHEREAS, both ordinances mentioned that gathering/collecting of abaca “bakkbak” or “umbak” shall require a written permit from the abaca farmer-owner and same shall be a pre-requisite in securing Barangay Permit, while those buying abaca “bakkbak” or “umbak” from illegal gatherers shall be equally guilty for violation of the said provisions;

WHEREAS, practice of “bakkbak” or “umbak” harvesting is proven present in the provinces of Catanduanes, Albay, Sorsogon, Leyte, Samar, Davao Oriental, Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur, Surigao del Norte, Surigao del Sur, and Dinagat Islands;

WHEREAS, the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) serves as an advisor to the President in the promulgation of policies, rules and regulations, other issuances, and implementing laws on public safety has the general supervision over local governments units;

WHEREAS, the Republic Act No. 7160 or the Local Government Code of 1991 provides that Local Government Units (LGUs) have the duty and authority to protect and co-manage the environment and enhance the right of its people to balance the ecology;

WHEREAS, the issuances of ordinances will help the fiber industry control and regulate the harvesting of immature leaf sheaths of abaca and will control the spread of abaca diseases;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the PCAF Committee on Commercial Crops – Fiber Crops Industry Development Sub-Committee is recommending to the DILG through the LGUs the issuance of an ordinance on banning the illegal harvesting, buying selling, and mutilating of young leaf sheaths of abaca plants also known as “bakbak” or “umbak” in major abaca producing areas.

Unanimously adopted during the meeting of the Fiber Crops Industry Development Sub-Committee held on July 19, 2018 at the Apacible Conference Room A, Apacible Hall, DA Compound, Diliman, Quezon City.



MICHAEL E. CLAPAROLS

Chairperson

Fiber Crops Industry Development Sub-Committee

AREA PLANTED TO ABACA
(in hectares)

Region/Province	2014	2015	2016	2017
PHILIPPINES	176,547.9	179,849.9	180,301.6	153,754.9
<i>CAR</i> CAR/ILOCOS REGION	775.5	774.7	774.7	775.7
Benguet	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Ifugao	-	-	-	-
Mt. Province	774.5	773.7	773.7	774.7
<i>III</i> CENTRAL LUZON	800.3	809.3	816.6	352.9
Aurora	800.3	809.3	815.6	349.9
Nueva Ecija	-	-	1.0	2.0
Zambales	-	-	-	1.0
<i>IV-A</i> SOUTHERN TAGALOG	2,826.0	2,872.1	2,966.1	1,320.8
Batangas	-	1.0	1.0	1.0
Laguna	139.0	151.0	167.3	134.3
Marinduque	97.1	97.1	100.9	48.3
Oriental Mindoro	1,653.8	1,663.5	1,689.0	634.5
Palawan	619.5	640.0	677.5	297.4
Quezon	286.5	297.0	298.0	184.1
Rizal	16.6	9.0	18.9	7.8
Romblon	13.5	13.5	13.5	13.4
<i>V</i> BICOL REGION	52,352.0	52,493.1	52,536.9	50,653.4
Albay	6,042.7	6,103.2	6,141.4	5,742.7
Camarines Norte	1,043.6	1,046.6	1,059.6	857.2
Camarines Sur	5,489.9	5,516.0	5,550.8	5,326.4
Catanduanes	33,097.3	33,136.3	33,186.1	32,044.6
Sorsogon	6,678.5	6,691.0	6,599.0	6,682.5
<i>VI</i> WESTERN VISAYAS	8,829.9	8,926.6	9,045.6	8,381.4
Aklan	4,337.2	4,376.8	4,419.1	4,348.0
Antique	985.5	1,014.7	1,038.3	940.3
Capiz	1,649.5	1,677.3	1,704.3	1,565.0
Iloilo	1,574.9	1,583.0	1,603.0	1,304.1
Negros Occidental	282.8	274.8	280.9	224.0
<i>VII</i> CENTRAL VISAYAS	3,073.3	3,044.5	3,147.2	3,256.6
Bohol	109.7	10.8	74.7	109.7
Cebu	497.5	509.6	508.3	506.3
Negros Oriental	2,466.1	2,524.1	2,564.2	2,640.6
<i>VIII</i> EASTERN VISAYAS*	46,480.6	46,680.4	46,680.0	27,305.4
Billiran	924.8	924.6	925.0	490.0
Leyte	12,391.8	12,431.0	12,431.0	6,630.8
Southern Leyte	15,033.0	15,090.0	15,090.0	8,034.2
Eastern Samar	4,628.5	4,628.6	4,628.0	2,463.1
Northern Samar	11,097.7	11,171.8	11,172.0	8,389.4
Samar	2,404.8	2,434.4	2,434.0	1,297.9

*13 regions (abaca producing areas)
NOT Regions 1, 2, 4, 5 and NCR*

Source: PhilFIDA