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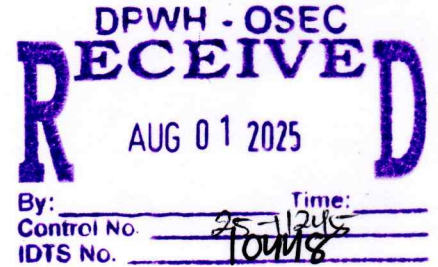
HON. MANUEL M. BONOAN

Secretary

Department of Public Works and Highways

Bonifacio Drive, Port area

Manila



Subject: **Proposal to Integrate Fruit-Bearing Trees into Tacloban's City's National Roads to Promote Food Security, Tourism, and the DENR's National Greening Program.**

Thru: **ENGR. EDGAR TABACON**, Region VIII Director
Department of Public Works and Highways
Palo, Leyte

Dear Secretary Bonoan,

Greetings!

We respectfully submit for your consideration an innovative yet practical initiative that may be integrated into both ongoing and future public infrastructure projects: the planting of selected native fruit-bearing trees along national and urban roadside corridors. This proposal aims to advance national food security goals, promote environmental sustainability, enhance road aesthetics for tourism, and contribute meaningfully to the National Greening Program (NGP).

In our current partnership with DPWH Region VIII, we are actively engaged in planting Banaba tree seedlings along the Tacloban City Bypass Road in compliance with DPWH Department Order No. 65, series of 2021. We commend the Department's foresight in mainstreaming biodiversity and climate resilience in its infrastructure mandates through this Circular.

To build on this laudable effort, we propose the pilot integration of fruit-bearing native trees—such as jackfruit (langka), guava, guyabano, tamarind, and mango—into roadside planting schemes. This idea takes inspiration from successful models implemented in New Zealand and other progressive cities that utilize public rights-of-way to support local food production, strengthen community resilience, and mitigate urban heat.

This initiative gains even greater relevance in light of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s fourth State of the Nation Address (SONA) on 28 July 2025, which emphasized food security as a key pillar of national development. The President announced a ₱113 billion increase in agriculture funding and the nationwide expansion of Kadiwa food access centers. Our proposal is fully aligned with this vision by creating localized, free, and accessible sources of fresh produce within high-density and low-income urban areas—without requiring additional land acquisition.

As an initial phase, we plan to propose this program along national roads within Tacloban City, including the stretch from Daniel Z. Romualdez (DZR) Airport down to the San Juanico Bridge, and from Magsaysay Boulevard through the Marasbaras–Palo boundary. In doing so, **we will actively engage each barangay traversed by these roads to ensure community participation, stewardship, and alignment with local development plans.**


We would also like to respectfully inquire whether the DPWH has any medium- to long-term plans (within the next 20 years) to widen or modify these road sections in Tacloban City. This information will allow us to design the greening interventions accordingly to ensure compatibility with future infrastructure development.

Finally, we respectfully suggest that this proposal be considered in support of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' National Greening Program (NGP), and be developed in collaboration with LGUs and relevant national agencies. In particular, it aligns with the programs of the Department of Tourism (DOT) for creating more attractive and sustainable destinations, and the Department of Agriculture (DA) for enhancing community-level food security and urban agriculture. Coordination across these agencies will be essential to ensure appropriate species selection, site management, and educational outreach.

We would welcome the opportunity to present this proposal in greater detail and to work with your technical and planning teams to shape a viable pilot for Region VIII. We believe this is a modest yet visionary step toward building "infrastructure for well-being"—where roads do not only connect communities, but nourish and inspire them as well.

Thank you very much for your kind attention and for your continuing commitment to sustainable, people-centered infrastructure development.

Very truly yours,



PETRONILO "Pete" L. ILAGAN
Chairman and President

CC:

Hon. Art Salazar, Regional Executive Director
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Region VIII

Hon. Karen S. Tiopes, Regional Director
Department of Tourism
Region VIII

Hon. Andrew Rodolfo T. Orais, Regional Executive Director
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Dr. Dennis de Paz
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Dr. Gil Nicetas Villarino
President, Leyte Normal University, Tacloban City

Barangay Chairmen
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