

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

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 1112



Introduced by Honorable Representatives
ARLENE D. BROSAS (Gabriela Women's Party),
FRANCE L. CASTRO (ACT Teachers Partylist),
and **RAOUL DANNIEL A. MANUEL (Kabataan Partylist)**

**AN ACT DECLARING JANUARY 22 OF EVERY YEAR A SPECIAL WORKING HOLIDAY TO
BE KNOWN AS NATIONAL FARMERS DAY**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

On January 15, 1987, the *Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP)*, a national peasant organization, held a camp-out in front of the office of the then Ministry of Agrarian Reform to assert their demand for genuine agrarian reform.

On January 20, 1987, a dialogue occurred between the peasant leaders and Minister of Agrarian Reform Heherson Alvarez but the government had no clear and substantial response to the farmers' demand.

On the morning of January 22, 1987, farmers led by *KMP* decided to march to Malacañang to air their demand for genuine agrarian reform. They were later joined by members of other sectoral organizations such as the *Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU)*, *Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN)*, League of Filipino Students (LFS) and *Kongreso ng Pagkakaisa ng Maralitang Lungsod (KPML)*. They arrived at *Liwasang Bonifacio* at about 1:00 PM. where they held a brief program. At around 4:30 PM, about 15,000 to 20,000 demonstrators reached C.M. Recto. During this mobilization, OPLAN YELLOW was put into effect by the Capital Regional Command (CAPCOM). Task Force *Nazareno* was deployed within the vicinity of Malacañang. The civil disturbance control units of the Western Police District (WPD) were also activated.

As the leaders of *KMP* were negotiating with the authorities to allow the body to proceed and reach the gates of Malacañang, police officers abruptly fired their guns indiscriminately, shooting directly at the crowd.

As a result of the pandemonium, thirteen (13) marchers died, namely Danilo Arjona; Leopoldo Alonzo; Adelfa Aribé; Dionisio Bautista; Roberto Caylao; Vicente Campomanes; Ronilo Dumunico; Dante Evangelio; Angelito Gutierrez; Rodrigo Grampan; Bernabe Laquindanum; Sonny Boy Perez; and Roberto Yumul. Thirty-nine (39) were wounded by gunshots and twelve (12) sustained minor injuries, all belonging to the group of the marchers.

In the aftermath of the fateful day, now known as the “*Mendiola Massacre*,” former President Corazon C. Aquino issued Administrative Order (AO) No. 11, dated January 22, 1987, which created the Citizens’ *Mendiola* Commission to investigate the incident.

As stated in G.R. No. 84607, among the findings of the Commission were:

- a. The crowd dispersal units of the police and the military were armed with .38 and .45 caliber handguns and M-16 armalites, which is a prohibited act under paragraph 4(g), Section 13, and punishable under paragraph (b), Section 14 of *Batas Pambansa (BP) Blg. 880*.
- b. The security men assigned to protect the WPD, INP Field Force, the Marines, and supporting military units, as well as the security officers of the police and military commanders, were in civilian attire in violation of paragraph (a), Section 10, BP *Blg. 880*.
- c. There was unnecessary firing by the police and military crowd dispersal control units in dispersing the marchers, a prohibited act under paragraph (e) Section 13, and punishable under paragraph (b), Section 14, BP *Blg. 880*.
- d. Tear gas was not used at the start of the disturbance to disperse the rioters. After the crowd had dispersed and the wounded and dead were being carried away, the MDTs of the police and the military, with their tear gas equipment and components, conducted dispersal operations in the *Mendiola* area and proceeded to *Liwasang Bonifacio* to disperse the remnants of the marchers.

Subsequently, this event served as a wake-up call to the Aquino administration to push for a legislated land reform program in the country.

After thirty-five (35) years, people may have forgotten what transpired on that day. Some journalists called it “Black Thursday,” but to many, it is known as the “*Mendiola Massacre*.”

This bill was originally formulated by the *Anakpawis* party-list to remind the nation of the tragic incident, which deserves a chapter in our country’s history, and to honor the heroism of the peasants whose lives were offered in the struggle for genuine agrarian reform. More importantly, this recognizes the historic and continuing role of farmers in the pursuit of a just, prosperous, and democratic society.

During the 13th Congress, this bill was approved by the Committee on Revision of Laws (Committee Report No. 1955) and was included in the Business for the Day on November 15, 2006.

This bill passed Third Reading in the 14th Congress and was transmitted to the Senate on January 28, 2010, one step closer to becoming a law.

Even though the legislation received approval from the Lower House on Second Reading on February 5, 2013, the 15th Congress failed to pass it.

This legislative measure was refiled in the 16th Congress, but it was never deliberated even at the committee level. It was again refiled in the 17th and 18th Congresses, where it was referred to the Committee on Agriculture and Food and Committee on Revision of Laws, respectively.

During the 18th Congress, the bill was approved on Third Reading and was transmitted to the Senate on June 3, 2020.

The Makabayan bloc is filing this measure in the 19th Congress to continue pushing for the much-deserved official national recognition of the Filipino peasantry's heroic struggle for land and justice.

In view of the foregoing, the early passage of this bill is earnestly requested.



ARLENE B. BROSAS
Gabriela Women's Party



FRANCE L. CASTRO
ACT Teachers Partylist



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BE KNOWN AS NATIONAL FARMERS DAY**

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title* – The twenty-second day of January of every year is hereby declared as a special working holiday to be known as “*National Farmers Day*”.

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy* – To ensure meaningful observance of the holiday as herein declared, all heads of government agencies and instrumentalities, including government-owned and controlled corporations, especially those that are dealing directly with farmers as well as local government units, and employers in the private sector shall encourage and afford sufficient time and opportunities for their employees to engage and participate in any activity conducted within the premises of their respective offices or establishments in support and sympathy to farmers across the country to celebrate “*National Farmers Day*”.

SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following its publication in the Official Gazette or in any newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,