Some Difficulties to Protect Agricultural Land from Conversion

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Abstract
One of the most worrying global issues facing agricultural interests today is the rapid conversion of productive agricultural land to non-agricultural uses. Indonesia has enacted the Sustainable Agriculture Land Protection Law (Lahan Pertanian Pangan Berkelanjutan / LP2B) as a crucial section of the Spatial Planning Regulations. Furthermore, several provincial, municipal, and regency governments have ratified the law into regional regulations. However, there are still misconceptions about LP2B among stakeholders, which can magnify the difficulty of implementing the regulation. By employing the historical method, this descriptive paper elaborates difficulties in protecting agricultural land due to misconceptions of stakeholders within the case study in Tasikmalaya Regency, West Java Province, Indonesia. Misconceptions of stakeholders encompass three aspects: (1) land-ownership (2) determination process and (3) implementation of LP2B protection. Difficulties did not automatically cease when the regulations had just enacted, but they continue into the application stage and become discourses in various cross-institutional forums. Furthermore this paper synthesizes the author's conceptions to rectify the misconceptions based on academic references and relevant statutory arguments. Stakeholders referred to in this paper were bureaucrats in agricultural and other institutions related to LP2B, including the Regional Development Planning Agency and the Ministry of Spatial Planning / National Land Agency. They were represented by officials, bureaucrats, or personnel who, together with the author, attended various coordination meetings, dissemination, workshops, focus group discussions, and similar forums that discussing LP2B and or other related topics from 2014 through 2019. Policy implications are discussed.

Keywords: Regional Regulation; Spatial Planning; Sustainable Agricultural Land (LP2B).

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I. Introduction

One of the principles of sustainable development is political sustainability, denoted by respect for human rights, democracy, and the assurance of food, housing, and water provision (Pearce and Warford, 1993). In dealing with food sustainability, Indonesia has enacted law number 41 of 2009 on Sustainable Agricultural Land (Lahan Pertanian Pangan Berkelanjutan / LP2B). The law is a constitutional reprisal to the fast conversion of productive agricultural land on non-agricultural use, which presumed as the most disconcerting phenomenon facing the agricultural sector today.

The law has statutorily expounded into four Government Regulations (Peraturan Pemerintah / PP) and a several Minister of Agriculture Ordinances (Peraturan Menteri Pertanian / Permentan). Regionally, several governments of provincial, municipality, and regency have ratified the law into a regional regulation (Peraturan Daerah / Perda). For example, the West Java Province has enacted Perda Number 27 of 2010, and the Tasikmalaya Regency has enacted Perda Number 4 of 2016 concerning the same subject matter—Perda on LP2B. When legal drafting of Perda on LP2B in the Tasikmalaya Regency processed, we found many obstacles and difficulties caused by misconceptions of stakeholders. The difficulties did not necessarily immediately end when the Perda on LP2B and other related local regulations had been enacted, but rather continue into the technical stage of implementation that arouse on discussions in cross-institutional coordination forums.

This paper elaborates on the misconceptions of stakeholders upon LP2B within the case study in Tasikmalaya Regency during the Perda L2B legal drafting and implementation in 2014-2019. To augment the reference, it covers as well as LP2B regulation in some other regions for comparison. Furthermore, it outlines the author’s conception to rectify the misconceptions based on academic references and relevant statutory arguments.

Discussions and conclusions in this paper were synthesized from the author’s note on the legal drafting of Perda on LP2B in Tasikmalaya Regency. Written down as objectively as possible, this policy paper is a personal reflection so that it is open for further correction and discussion. Although the scope of this policy paper is limited to issues or problems that figure in the regency, I hope that the proposed policy recommendations can be contextual for other regions and can evolve at the provincial and national context.

II. Methods

The purpose of this paper is to describe the difficulties of LP2B protection due to misconceptions of stakeholders that occur in three aspects: (1) aspects of land-ownership, (2) aspects of the determination process, and (3) aspects of the implementation of LP2B protection. This descriptive paper uses the historical method extracting the writer's notes in the process of drafting regional regulations relating to LP2B protection.

Stakeholders referred to in this paper were bureaucrats in agricultural institutions and other institutions related to LP2B, including the Regional Development Planning Agency, Spatial Planning Agency, and the Ministry of Spatial Planning/National Land Agency. They were represented by officials, bureaucrats, or personnel who, together with the author, attended various coordination meetings, dissemination, workshops, focus group discussions, and similar forums that discussed LP2B and or other related topics in the 2014-2019 period.

This paper starts with a historical review of the process of Perda LP2B legal drafting in
the Tasikmalaya Regency. Then it discusses issues on stakeholders' misconceptions upon LP2B protection. Afterward, it rectifies the misconception based on academic references and relevant statutory arguments. Ultimately, it synthesizes the answers to the research question: why is it difficult to protect agricultural land from conversion?

III. Literature Review

Historically, the LP2B Law is a derivation of Law number 26/2007 on Spatial Planning. Article 48, paragraph 2 of the law states that "Further provisions regarding the protection of the zone of eternal land for food corp are regulated by law." In implementing the mandate of the law, the House of Representatives initiated to conduct the LP2B Law. As the results, the law number 41 of the year 2009 on Sustainable Agricultural Land was enacted in 2009. With such a juridical background, the LP2B has two development perspectives: 1) spatial perspective because relating to space and 2) sectoral perspectives due to the agricultural sector domain.

Sectorally, the law has statutorily expounded into four PPs: (1) PP Number 1/2011 on the Determination and Conversion policy of LP2B; (2) PP Number 12/2012 on LP2B Protection Incentives; (3) PP Number 25/2012 on LP2B Information Systems, and (4) PP Number 30/2012 on Financing on LP2B Protection. In the operational level has been issued the Permentan number 07/Permentan/Or.140/2/2012 on Technical Guidelines for Criteria and Requirements for Sustainable Agricultural Land (LP2B), the Area of Sustainable Agricultural Land (Kawasan Pertanian Pangan Berkelanjutan/KP2B) and Sustainable Agricultural Land Reserves (Cadangan Pertanian Pangan Berkelanjututan / CP2B).

Regionally, LP2B has to be ratified into Perda on Spatial Plans (RTRW and RDTR). It also has to be manifested sectorally in Regional Regulations including Perda on Regional Long-Term Development Planning (Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Panjang Daerah / RPJPD), Perda on Regional Mid-Term Development Planning (Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Daerah / RPJMD), Document of Local Agency's Strategtic Development Planning (Rencana Strategis/ Renstra SKPD) and Document of Local Agency Annual Development Planning (Rencana Kerja Perangkat Daerah / RKPD).

In Tasikmalaya Regency, LP2B protection efforts were started in 2014 by a paddy field mapping project. It was identified 45.153 hectares of rice field scattered in 47.542 spots. Based on the Permentan criteria, it obtained 19.669 hectares of rice field prospective as LP2B that located in 1.778 spots. These results then proposed to the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) to be determined as KP2B and CP2B in Perda on RTRW as well as to the Department of Public Works and Spatial Planning (Dinas PUPR) to be determined as LP2B in Perda on RDTR.

In 2015, was conducted a study to compile an academic script as well as to compose a legal draft of Perda on LP2B. The Academic Script was used for assessing whether or not Perda LP2B is needed in Tasikmalaya as the PP number 1/2011 explicitly saying that the LP2B regulation needs to incorporate with Perda on Spatial Plan. The script concluded that Perda on LP2B would be necessarily needed as legal standing for LP2B protection and as legal guidance for the local government on how to actuate the LP2B zone determined in the Perda on Spatial Plan. So at the end of 2015, the Department of Agriculture proposed LP2B to be the agenda of discussion in the 2016
Regional Legislation Program (Program Legislasi Daerah / Prolegda).

In parallel, in 2015 were conducted studies to compile technical material of detailed spatial plan (RDTR) for eight urban areas covering: Singaparna as the regency capital, Ciawi, Rajapolah, Manonjaya, Cineam, Taraju, Cibalong, and Karangnunggal. In this process, the prospective locations for LP2B proposed to incorporated with each Spatial Plan regulation.

In 2016, the local parliament examined the draft of Perda on LP2B by conducting a series of assembly meetings, public hearings, focus group discussions, consultation meetings with vertical institutions at provincial and national levels, and comparative study to Sukabumi Regency. Through those lengthy process at the and 2016, the local government with the local parliament of Tasikmalaya Regency enacted the Local Regulation Number 4 of 2016 on Sustainable Agricultural Land (Perda on LP2B).

In 2017, the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) reviewed the Perda number 2/2012 on RTRW of Tasikmalaya Regency of the year 2011-2031. One of the new legal objects that should be augmented was the KP2B stipulation. Simultaneously, in the same year, Tasikmalaya Regency has enacted Perda Number 9 of 2017 on RDTR of Singaparna Urban Area in the year 2017-2037. In article 29 of the Perda, it determined the 923.84 hectares of land as LP2B zones that spread over 16 spots. Compare to the total urban area of 4,138.74 hectares; the LP2B proportion is 22.32% indicating a conservative vision of the city development spatial plan. As stated in article 3, the ultimate of the RDTR Singaparna is “to establish Singaparna as regency’s capital and sustainable agro-polytan areas”.

As an incentive for the issuance of Perda number 4/2016 on LP2B, in 2017, the Ministry of Agriculture allocates a budget to Tasikmalaya Regency for a pre-certification project for prospective LP2B land covering 200 plots. This project of certification preparation was followed up with the certification process by the National Land Agency (Badan Pertanahan Nasional / BPN) in 2018.

In 2018, was conducted the publication of Perda on RDTR of Singaparna urban area as the first stage of the law implementation while the legal drafting of RDTR in other urban areas remains on the process. In the same year, the Department of Agriculture drew up the roadmap of the LP2B protection policy.

In 2019, the Department of Agriculture conducted a census of land-owners of rice field that designated as LP2B by Perda on RDTR Singaparna. This project comprehended as the publication of the Perda as well as the identification of the best type of incentives for the land-owners.

The chronology of LP2B protection efforts in the Tasikmalaya Regency described above records the discourses, pros and cons, and misconceptions about the research problems in this paper. These problems did not necessarily end when the Perda on LP2B and other related Perda had enacted. The process and stages of LP2B protection in the West Java province and other regions that are different from those in the Tasikmalaya Regency, accompanied by differences in legal paradigms used by regions and particular agencies, have caused the issues to reappear repeatedly in various forums. Nevertheless, the lengthy process of LP2B protection in the Tasikmalaya Regency extracted to become answers to the three main issues, as described in the next sub-chapter.

IV. Results, Analysis, and Discussions

4.1. Misconception on Land-ownership

The first typical thing that comes to stakeholders’ minds when discussing LP2B is
the protection will become practical if only the government acquires the agricultural land. There is a Sundanese adage that says “sawah dewek kumaha dewek” which means “that my rice field is up to me.” This proverb was often raised in LP2B discussion meetings by stakeholders as both the opinion of the meeting participants and the prologue of the meeting chairman. This conception implies the pessimism of the government's capabilities on conserving agricultural land, which identically is individual property.

This perception seems to be confirmed by the policies of several local governments. The Bandung municipality has acquired a plot of paddy field on the suburb in the Cibiru Subdistrict, which then designated as “The Eternal Paddy Field of Bandung.” This valuable policy tried to be adopted by other local governments that have similar characteristics, such as Cimahi Municipality. In line with that, The West Java Provincial Government has identified whether the regencies/municipalities in its area implement a similar policy to evaluate LP2B protection in West Java. A monitoring team from the Agriculture Division of the West Java Provincial Secretariat in 2018 visited the Regencies/ Municipalities by distributing questionnaires, one of the points asked whether they implemented a policy of land acquisition in the context of LP2B protection.

Agricultural land acquisition is a favorable policy to show the symbol of the (local) government's support for food security by preserving paddy land as a "storefront" of the agricultural sector. However, the perception that preventing the conversion of rice fields or protecting LP2B is only forceful if done with the land acquisition by the government does not offer a rational solution. Statistical calculations of the total food demand are converted to the area of land needed for food production associated with alignments, and government budget constraints illustrate how difficult (not to say impossible) to protect LP2B with land acquisition mechanisms.

Moreover, the concept of land acquisition is misleading for three reasons. Firstly, this conception violates the principles of government as a public sector. The government theoretically acts as an economic regulator oriented towards social benefits rather than as an economic actor (private sector) oriented to profit. In this perspective, except for the dissemination of technology and the production of pilot projects on a laboratory scale, it is irrelevant and inefficient if the government directly manages agricultural land to ensure food production.

Secondly, as the state regulator, the government comprehends agriculture from a holistic perspective as one of the economic sub-sectors, among others (like industry, trade, and services) that must govern fairly and proportionally. Its role is to make sure that all sectors interact in market mechanisms on a fair general equilibrium. Resources allocated according to the forces of supply and demand. Government interference in the market mechanism, such as land acquisition, leads to economic inefficiency.

Lastly, precisely because individuals own agricultural land, then the existence of the government is required to govern its use control. As the essence of any other laws and regulations governing citizens, including property rights, the government has the constitutional right to regulate it for the social benefit in the long run. The Adage is saying "sawah dewek kumaha dewek" which reflects the personal property rights is can still harmonize with the government's development rights through incentive and disincentive mechanisms.
4.2. Misconception on Determination Process

There were five stakeholders' misconceptions about the process of determining LP2B. The first was the confusion over the determination of LP2B in the Regional Regulation (Perda), whether LP2B needs to be regulated explicitly in Perda on LP2B, or governed sufficiently enough in the Perda on Spatial Planning. Government Regulation (PP) Number 1 of 2011 explicitly obligates local governments to determine LP2B in Perda on Spatial Plan. Nevertheless, some of the local governments have specifically enacted Perda on LP2B with a wide range of specific content of statutory.

Some regions inclose spatial locations in Perda on LP2B (such as Garut Regency and Temanggung Regency), in contrast, other regions regulate simply the legal norms for LP2B protection without specifying LP2B locations spatially (As in West Java Province and Tasikmalaya Regency). The first perspective understands the Perda on LP2B as a spatial regulation, and the latter considers the Perda on LP2B as sectoral regulation. This different perspective in regulation becomes a particular discourse in the regional government world. By assuming that Perda as a legal product has been reviewed in depth by experts from multi-disciplines, including jurists, both perspectives can be accepted. However, both have their advantages and disadvantages.

Perda LP2B, with spatial perspective, has the potential to overlap with Spatial Plan regulations. For example, in Temanggung Regency, Central Java Province, Perda Number 2/2014 on LP2B was not following a clause in Perda Number 1/2012 on Spatial Plan of Temanggung Regency (Rencana Tata Ruang Wilayah / RTRW). As reported in a mass media in February 2015, Special Committee of the Local Parliament (Pansus DPRD) found three villages in Kranggan Subdistrict, namely Nguwet, Badran, and Bengkal designated as LP2B in the Perda. Whereas, according to the Perda on RTRW, the intended zone is an industrial area (Suaramerdeka.com). Muryono (2016) calculated that there was still a discrepancy of 10.55% between the RTRW and LP2B in the Temanggung Regency. Because of these findings, the Temanggung Regency revised the Perda by issuing Perda No.4 2017 on the amendment of Perda No. 2/2014 concerning LP2B.

On the other hand, Perda on LP2B with sectoral perspective, as Tasikmalaya Regency’s Perda, seems impossible to overlap with Perda on Spatial Plan as LP2B location is determined solely in Perda on Spatial Plan. It answers the question only “How” to protect LP2B from conversion, without answer “Where” and “how much area” the LP2B zone is. The disadvantage of the Perda without attaching a map in the statute seems to be less substantive. Generally, stakeholders conceive Perda on LP2B as a spatial plan. In various forums, they frequently asked the author a typical question: "how many hectares of LP2B in Tasikmalaya Regency based on the Perda on LP2B?"

The second issue of LP2B determination was the question of who has the authority to determine the vast of LP2B in a regency or municipality? There was a discourse on whether the determination of LP2B in the regencies/municipalities must follow the target area calculated by the provincial government or whether the regencies/municipalities determine the LP2B area in their region.
relevant economic indicators, including total population, population growth, per capita annual staple food consumption, to calculate the ideal needs of agricultural land sustainability in each region. However, this concept has become a discourse in various forums accompanied by pros and cons without producing a conclusion.

In this quarrel, Tasikmalaya Regency sticks in the concept that regencies/municipalities have to determine the vast of LP2B in their region. According to PP No.1/2011, LP2B located in a specific regency/municipal region. While provincial government determines the Provincial Zone of KP2B in rice fields that cross the border between regencies/municipalities, further, national KP2B is determined by the national government in rice fields that cross the border between provinces. The calculation of economies of scale that are prerequisites for LP2B has been comprehensively calculated in Minister of Agriculture Ordinance Number 07 / Permentan / Ot.140 / 2/2012 on Technical Guidelines for Criteria and Requirements for LP2B. In this Ordinances, it resolved the LP2B is an area of at least 5 hectares, while the KP2B is at least an area of 20 hectares.

The third problem is a conception that LP2B determination should be preceded by a detailed data collection of the land-owners (by name by address). This procedure had been performed by Karawang Regency in 2014 when they collaborate with the Ministry of Agriculture in the rice field mapping census. The activity was suddenly conceived as a prerequisite for LP2B determination by some stakeholders. This issue led to the fourth issue of the conceive that LP2B determination must go through the agreement of the land-owners marked by a statement or contract. Both of these conceptions cast complicated difficulties in LP2B planning.

The altercation used to answer these two conceptions is that LP2B zone planning must be positioned equally and on par with any other zone. In spatial planning, LP2B is a derivative hierarchy of the food crop cultivation zone. The designation of an area as a particular zone in spatial planning employs technical and professional judgment as justification. For example, protected zones determined in areas of river borders, sea borders, areas prone to land movements, areas prone to volcanoes, water catchment areas, and forest areas. Another example of residential zones and industrial zone is designated by relevant technical deliberation to justify that the areas are suitable for the particular zone regardless of the ownership status.

In other words, spatial planning is a technocratic planning rather than participatory planning. In Tasikmalaya Regency, LP2B zone designation based on Permentan Number No. 07 / Permentan / Ot.140 / 2/2012 On Technical Guidelines for Criteria and Requirements for LP2B KP2B, and CP2B. The detailed census of land-owners (by name by address) is not apart of spatial planning, but it is the first activity of spatial plan actuating.

The results of the census used in order to determine the most suitable incentives for land-owners after Perda on LP2B approved. When incentives given to land-owners, the government can provide prerequisites in the form of land-owners' willingness not to convert their agricultural land in a certain period. If the land-owners violate the agreement, the government can withdraw the incentives provided and penalize additional disincentives as a consequence under statutory regulations. In this context, LP2B regulations needed. Local governments need an adequate legal umbrella to carry out the function of LP2B incentives and disincentives. Besides, the Perda on LP2B is used as contextualization of the Law Number.
41/2009 on LP2B based on the local wisdom and utilized as guidance in “How to protect LP2B?” rather than simply determine “Where and How vast LP2B is?”.  

Last but not least was the conception that local governments are obligated to determine LP2B as vast as possible as a symbol of the regional government’s support for food security. This conception has become a protagonist idea in the agricultural sector forums but became pros and cons in cross-sectoral forums. Limited land resources faced with the need for land use by various sectors, which continues to increase from time to time as population growth, created an endless dialogue between ideal expectations and objective reality colored by ego-sectoral.  

This conception is, at a glance, ideal and heroic but can be a blunder for the government itself. Perda on LP2B or Perda on Spatial Plan is not the ultimate of sustainable agricultural development. The Regional Regulations enactment is not automatically mean that land conversion controlled. However, LP2B zone determination is the beginning of all efforts to control land-use change. The determination of LP2B in the spatial planning regulation referred to as a plan (it needs to be underlined just as a plan). The spatial planning should be continued into spatial plan actuating.  

When an area designated as LP2B zone, the first thing that should come into the minds of government officials is not a statement: "this area is forbidden to convert if so it violates the law". Nevertheless, it should be a question "what incentives given so that this agricultural land will not convert?". The question should then be transliterated into plan documents covering the Strategic Plan (Renstra), Regional Mid-Term Development Plan (Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Daerah/RPJMD), and Local Agency Annual Plan (Rencana Kerja Perangka Daerah / RKPD) that associated with local government budget. When discussing the budget, it is closely related to the fiscal capacity of a local government defined in APBD. As an analogy, if Tasikmalaya Regency should improve irrigation networks for 19,669 hectares of land as an LP2B incentive, then it would not be completed within the five fiscal years. In other words, the conception of local government must determine LP2B as broadly as possible is a misconception at the level of implementation.  

4.3. Misconception on The Implementation  

Technical guidance on the implementation of the law number 41/2009 on LP2B has deciphered on PPs and Permentan. However, a discourse that arises was the agricultural development plan in a region should be prioritized or even limited to the LP2B Zones. This concept understood by stakeholders from agricultural agencies as an aspiration to propose the LP2B area as vast as possible on their Perda. They assume that the national and provincial budget for agricultural development in a region will be proportional sized by the LP2B zone determined in the Perda. The vaster the LP2B zone, the bigger the agricultural development budget and vice versa. For example, in many LP2B coordination forums, there were signals from the Ministry of Agriculture’s bureaucrats that subsidized fertilization policy would be adjusted by the vast LP2B in each region.  

Because of such misconception, concerns have arisen from the local agricultural development planners regarding the stipulation of LP2B in their regions. They tend to compel that, if possible, all of the agricultural areas determined as LP2B through the Perda. Their vigor based on sectoral ego has raised dilemmas in both spatial and sectoral development planning. Theoretically, the LP2B map is an
instrument for spatial licensing, so that it is not a suitable instrument for a sectoral development planning for three reasons.

Firstly, in fact, many paddy fields designated as protected zones because it located in river borders, coastal borders, volcanic disaster-prone areas, ground movement prone areas, and even in forest areas. In this context, those of such agricultural lands are naturally protected by law, although they were not designated as the LP2B zone. Even the legal protection for protected zone status is more durable than the LP2B status as a part of the cultivation zone. In the spatial regulation, LP2B is still allowed to convert for the public interest with certain disincentives. While the protected zone forbidden for functions change.

Secondly, in spatial plan documents, it is not impossible in some areas to have been designated as a residential zone, commercial zone, industrial zone, and other cultivation zones, but in fact, are paddy fields. It because a spatial planning map is not a land-use map, but a perspective plan for the next 20 years. So that the agricultural development planning, which has four monthly intervals (for rice plants), is irrelevant using a spatial map that has a 20-year interval. In this case, the rice field, which has designated as other land use (such as for industrial zone and residential zone) in the spatial plan map, still can be the location of the annual agricultural development program as long as not converted yet. Likewise, it should still be counted in the annual agricultural production statistic. Thus agricultural development planning is more relevant to remain based on the land-use map released annually by the Indonesian Statistics Agency (BPS).

Lastly, assuming that the LP2B zone preserved by law depicted in a spatial planning map, agricultural development planners can estimate the land conversion rate in a two-decades period by overlaying the spatial plan map with annual land-use maps. By the estimation, they further can mitigate food production decreasing in upcoming years by proposing an agricultural land extensification program or agricultural product intensification program. In short, LP2B location in spatial planning map is suitably used as an instrument for spatial licensing policy, but not suitable for agricultural development planning policy instrument.

V. Conclusion and Recommendation

The case study in the Tasikmalaya Regency upon regulations on the Protection of Sustainable Agricultural Land illustrates that due to misconceptions, the legal drafting was complicately ambiguous even starting at the level of the concept and perception of the bureaucrats. The problems did not end per se end as soon as consensus had been reached for the establishment of local regulations, but rather continues at the level of implementation and became discourses in coordination across agencies. Nevertheless, the legal drafting process of the Perda can be synthesized into the argumentative conceptions to answer or correct misconceptions among stakeholders.

Policy implications recommended based on this study are:

1. In protecting agricultural land from conversion, stakeholders are encouraged to be optimistic. Personal property rights upon agricultural land expressed by a Sundanese adage “Sawah Dewek Kumaha Dewek” still can be harmonized with the government’s development rights by incentive and disincentive mechanism.

2. In determining LP2B location, stakeholders are encouraged to use the technocratic approach rather than a participatory approach. As the
determination as of any other zones in a spatial plan, LP2B location should be determined by technical judgment regardless of the ownership status.

3. In utilizing the LP2B map as a part of spatial plan maps, stakeholders are encouraged to use it for spatial land-use licensing rather than for agricultural development planning. It is crucial to keep in mind that a spatial plan map is not a land-use map, meaning that many paddy fields in the protected area naturally preserved without designated as LP2B.

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