



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 4625



Introduced by Representative **GERALDINE B. ROMAN**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines has the notorious distinction of being among the world's top rice producers and being among the world's top rice importers. As of 2017, it was 8th largest rice producer.¹ Yet, of February 2019, it was also the 2nd largest rice importer.² This oddity is explained by the fact that local rice production has been unable to meet the increasing local demand for rice.³ Unfortunately, the inevitable result is competition between local and imported rice. Implementation of the Rice Tariffication Law⁴ has liberalized rice imports and exacerbated competition. As a result, rice prices are dropping to the detriment of local farmers. For example, the average farmgate price of palay, as of last mid-August, was Php 17.62 per kilo, down 21% from last year.⁵ The average wholesale price of well-milled rice decreased 8% to Php 39.14 per kilo toward the end of last July.⁶ The wholesale price of regular-milled rice fell 10% to Php 35.27 per kilo while the

¹ See FAOSTAT, <http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/QC/visualize> (last visited Sept. 6, 2019).

² See STATISTA, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/255948/top-rice-exporting-countries-worldwide-2011/> (last visited Sept. 6, 2019).

³ See Louise Maureen Simeon, "Philippines to import 1.2 MT of rice in 2019," *The Philippine Star* (Sept. 14, 2018), <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2018/09/14/1851412/philippines-import-12-mt-rice-2019#F4JygFgwyjETISLe.99> (last visited Sept. 6, 2019).

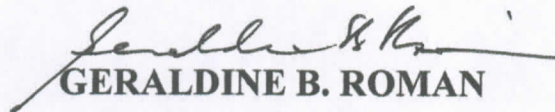
⁴ See R.A. No. 11203, "An Act Liberalizing the Importation, Exportation and Trading of Rice, Lifting for the Purpose the Quantitative Import Restriction on Rice, and For Other Purposes."

⁵ See J.C. Punongbayan, "Plummeting rice prices: How will out rice farmers cop?," *Rappler* (Sept. 5, 2019).

⁶ See Louise Maureen Simeon, "Palay production down 5% on Q2," *The Philippine Star*, 2019, <https://www.philstar.com/business/2019/08/17/1943999/palay-production-down-5-q2> (last visited Sept. 6, 2019).

average retail price also decreased by 7.7% to Php 38.38 per kilo.⁷ The drop in prices threatens the livelihood of local farmers, compelling them to seek alternative employment. This, in turn, would result in increased dependency on rice imports and threaten the Philippines's agriculture-based economy.

To encourage support for local rice farmers and boost demand for locally produced rice, this bill seeks to require retailers to label locally produced rice as produced by Filipino farmers. Hopefully, this labeling requirement shall awaken and grow the sense of patriotism and nationalism among Filipino consumers and encourage them to prefer locally produced rice. Immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


GERALDINE B. ROMAN

⁷ See Louise Maureen Simeon, "Palay production down 5% on Q2," The Philippine Star, 2019, <https://www.philstar.com/business/2019/08/17/1943999/palay-production-down-5-q2> (last visited Sept. 6, 2019).



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 4625

Introduced by Representative **GERALDINE B. ROMAN**

AN ACT
MANDATING RICE RETAILERS TO IDENTIFY LOCALLY
PRODUCED RICE AS PRODUCED BY FILIPINO FARMERS, AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Filipino Farmer First Act.”

Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to ensure the continued viability and competitiveness of the country’s agricultural sector by fostering patriotism and nationalism among local consumers and encouraging consumer preference for locally produced agricultural products. It is also a policy of the State to promote a rising standard of living and an improved quality of life for all farmers.

Sec. 3. *Coverage.* – All retailers of rice shall identify any locally produced rice as produced by Filipino farmers by attaching the label “*Taas Noo, Filipino!*” to the product.

Sec. 4. *Liabilities and Penalties.* — For violations of this Act, the following penalties shall apply to offending retailers:

- a. On the first offense, a fine of not more than Twenty thousand pesos (Php 20,000.00);
- b. On the second offense, a fine of not more than Fifty thousand pesos (Php 50,000.00);
- c. On the third offense, a fine of not more than One hundred thousand pesos (Php 100,000.00) or imprisonment of not less than six (6) months and one (1) day and

not more than six (6) years, or both, at the discretion of the court: *Provided*, That the business permits and licenses, in the case of a business entity or establishment shall be revoked or cancelled.

For business enterprises, the liability shall be borne by the owner or operator of the business enterprise. Any agreements to the contrary shall be void. The fine collected shall be remitted to the Department of Agriculture for use in the implementation of this Act.

Sec. 5. Appropriations. – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the appropriations for the Department of Agriculture. Thereafter, the required budget for continued implementation of this Act shall be submitted to the Department of Budget and Management for inclusion in the General Appropriations Act.

Sec. 11. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Agriculture shall, in coordination with the Department of Trade and Industry, issue the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act, including the advertisements and promotions intended to grow preference for locally produced rice and the production and dissemination of the required labels.

Sec. 12. Repealing Clause. – All laws, presidential decrees or issuances, executive orders, letters of instruction, administrative orders, rules or regulation inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Sec. 13. Separability Clause. – If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act or any provision not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

Sec. 14. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after the publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,