

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

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 955



Introduced by Representative Ron P. Salo

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In 1995, Republic Act No. 1072, shortly known as "An Act for Salt Iodization Nationwide (ASIN)" was enacted, providing for mandatory iodization of food-grade salt for human and animal consumption. It also mandated the use of iodized salt in processing of foods and in food establishments.

The law aimed to contribute to the elimination of iron deficiency, which was found to be a leading cause of preventable brain damage and reduced IQ among children worldwide. Iodine Deficiency Disorder (IDD) during pregnancy may also result in stillbirth, miscarriage, and congenital abnormalities such as cretinism. Iodine plays a vital role in the proper functioning of the thyroid and in the growth and development of the brain.

The law was enacted consistent with the World Health Organization's recommendations that universal salt iodization is the principal public health measure to combat IDD. Universal Salt Iodization, the fortification of iodine in all salt, was launched in 1993, through the joint efforts of WHO, UNICEF, salt producers, governments, the International Council for the Control of Iodine Deficiency Disorders (ICCIDD), the World Bank, and advocates from around the world.

More than twenty years after its implementation, several issues have arisen on some of the provisions of the law as well as its implementation, necessitating its review and consequent amendment.

The Philippines being a coastal country, a significant number of small-scale salt producers have been adversely affected by the implementation of the law. The Department of Trade and Industry has pointed out that the local salt industry is finding it hard to compete with the global market of salt and food products with salt "due to the restriction for salt producers to offer a wide array of different salt types even in the domestic market." ASIN Law is also seen to limit innovations on the type of salt that will fit the needs of a product, as well as leads to the loss of some nutrients during processing. With this, small local salt farmers are unable to compete with large salt producers especially in the global market.

This proposed amendment seeks to exempt sea salt from mandatory iodization. Notwithstanding the Philippines' richness in all-natural sea salt, the law

has effectively discouraged the sale of natural sea salt, thereby inhibiting the development of local sea salt farming. Sea salt, which is produced by the process of evaporation of salt water bodies, undergoes very little processing and retains moisture and mineral treasure, including vital minerals such as sodium, potassium, calcium, magnesium, bromide, chloride, iron, copper, and zinc, among others. Studies have shown benefits of sea salt in maintaining balanced levels of blood sugar and blood pressure, treatment of rheumatoid arthritis, skin and dental care, and other health benefits.

While reiterating the importance of food fortification and salt iodization as necessary measures to combat nutrition deficiencies, especially for the segments of the population prone to iodine deficiency, this should not place a burden on small producers with the effect of stifling their growth and development.

Philippine salt industry is fast shrinking. Due to lack of government support and failure to compete with large-scale producers and salt importers, as well as occasional harassment from law enforcers in the guise of checking compliance with the iodization requirement, many salt farms started closing one after the other, and hundreds of families dependent on the salt industry lost their sole source of income.

Heavy importation of salt has also taken its toll on local producers. From being largely a self-sufficient salt producer in the 1990's, with more than 70% of the annual national salt requirement coming from Bulacan, Pangasinan, Mindoro, Cavite, Parañaque, and other areas, we have become reliant on imported salt. By 2009, we were already importing almost 70% of our annual national salt requirement from Australia alone. From supplying 33% of the nation's salt needs, Bulacan's share declined to only 1%. As early as 2003, of the 52 salt farms in Bulacan, 32 have closed. Some salt farmers, such as those in Pangasinan, Mindoro and other coastal areas, are struggling to keep their business.

This proposed measure aims, on the one hand, to promote salt iodization as an effective strategy for the prevention and control of iodine deficiency disorders, while at the same time ensuring that small-scale and subsistence producers are not adversely affected, thereby protecting and supporting a legitimate source of livelihood by poor Filipinos.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is earnestly sought.


RON P. SALO
KABAYAN Party List

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AN ACT
EXEMPTING PHILIPPINE SEA SALT FROM MANDATORY IODIZATION,
AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8172, OTHERWISE
KNOWN AS AN ACT FOR SALT IODIZATION NATIONWIDE (ASIN), AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES

SECTION 1. The following provisions of Republic Act No. 8172, otherwise known as "An Act for Salt Iodization Nationwide (ASIN), are hereby amended as follows:

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as "**REVISED** Act for Salt Iodization Nationwide (ASIN)."

xxx

SECTION 3. *Purposes.* The purposes of this Act are to:

xxx

- b) require all producers/manufacturers of food-grade salt to iodize the salt that they produce, manufacture, import, trade or distribute, **EXCEPT IN INSTANCES PROVIDED IN SEC. 6 OF THIS ACT;**

xxx

SECTION 4. *Definition of Terms.* — For purposes of this Act the following terms shall mean:

xxx

- m) **PHILIPPINE SEA SALT – SALT PRODUCED FROM THE EVAPORATION OF SEAWATER IN ANY OF THE SALT FARMS WITHIN THE PHILIPPINES, AND THE PREPARATION OF WHICH INVOLVES VERY LITTLE PROCESSING.**

SECTION 5. *Applicability.*

- a) This Act shall apply to the entire salt industry, including salt producers/manufacturers, importers, traders, and distributors, **EXCEPT IN INSTANCES PROVIDED IN SEC. 6 OF THIS ACT**, as well as government and non-government agencies involved in salt iodization activities.

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SEC. 2. A new Section 6 is hereby added to read as follows:

SECTION 6. EXEMPTIONS. — PHILIPPINE SEA SALT, AS DEFINED UNDER SEC.3 (F) OF THIS ACT, IS HEREBY EXEMPTED FROM MANDATORY IODIZATION. PRODUCERS OF SEA SALT SHALL REGISTER WITH THE FDA, WHICH SHALL INSPECT AND ASSESS SAMPLES OF THEIR PRODUCTS FOR THE PURPOSE OF DETERMINING WHETHER IT FALLS WITHIN THE DEFINITION OF SEA SALT.

THE FDA SHALL ISSUE GUIDELINES AND STANDARDS IN IDENTIFYING PHILIPPINE SEA SALTS, MAINTAIN A REGISTRY OF SEA SALT PRODUCERS, AND ISSUE THE APPROPRIATE CERTIFICATE OR AUTHORIZATION FOR THE PRODUCERS' CONTINUED OPERATION. THIS CERTIFICATE OR AUTHORIZATION SHALL SERVE TO PROTECT SEA SALT PRODUCERS FROM HARASSMENT OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND ALLEGATIONS OF NON-COMPLIANCE WITH IODIZATION REQUIREMENTS UNDER THIS ACT. LGUs SHALL ENACT MEASURES TO ENSURE THAT SEA SALT PRODUCERS ARE FREE FROM HARASSMENT ON THE BASIS OF ALLEGED NON-COMPLIANCE WITH IODIZATION REQUIREMENTS UNDER THIS ACT.

CONSISTENT WITH THE EXEMPTION PROVIDED SECTION 5 (E) ABOVE, FOOD MANUFACTURERS THAT USE PHILIPPINE SEA SALT TO MAINTAIN OR ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF A SPECIFIED FOOD PRODUCT SHALL LIKEWISE BE EXEMPT FROM THE MANDATORY USE OF IODIZED SALT. PROVIDED, THAT THE BURDEN OF PROVING THAT THE USE OF SEA SALT ENHANCES THE QUALITY OF THE PRODUCT LIES ON THE SAID FOOD MANUFACTURERS.

SEC. 3. The succeeding sections are hereby re-numbered accordingly: Sections 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 are hereby re-numbered as Sections 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11, respectively.

SEC. 4. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* — The DOH in cooperation with the agencies concerned shall formulate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of the amendment of this Act within sixty (60) days from its approval.

SEC. 5. Separability Clause. — If any portion of this Act is declared invalid, the remainder of this Act shall not be affected by such declaration and shall remain valid and enforceable.

SEC. 6. Effectivity Clause. — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) national newspapers of general circulation, whichever is earlier.

Approved.