

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF THE REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 531

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES	
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REGISTRATION UNIT BILLS AND INDEX SERVICE	

Introduced by HON. RODEL M. BATOCABE, HON. ALFREDO A. GARBIN, Jr. and
HON. CHRISTOPHER S. CO

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to impose mandatory warning labels on food products or processed food products containing sodium and to subject all processed foods for review on their sodium levels.

High sodium intake has been a leading cause of deaths due to cardiovascular and kidney diseases. Globalization has paved the way for the entry of imported products, which are mostly processed food preserved with copious amounts of sodium. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention in the United States, 89 to 90 percent of adults aged 19 and older eat too much sodium from the previous year. The Harvard School of Public Health has also indicated that worldwide, the amount of sodium excreted by humans was double than what is recommended (4,000 milligrams to 2,000 recommended milligrams).

The Department of Health has so far turned a blind eye to excessive sodium intake, as it cannot even warn against excessive sugar intake, another problem plaguing the food industry. Despite indicating that the leading cause of health-related diseases are cardiovascular diseases, the DOH has not campaigned or lobbied for food producers to inform the public about the deadly levels of sodium in their products.

This Act shall mandate food producers and manufacturers to indicate whether their products contain high amounts of sodium and whether the sodium content exceed standards set by the DOH and the BFAD.

In light of all these circumstances, the swift passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


RODEL M. BATOCABE


ALFREDO A. GARBIN, Jr.


CHRISTOPHER S. CO

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1 **AN ACT REGULATING THE PACKAGING, USE, SALE, DISTRIBUTION, AND**
2 **ADVERTISEMENTS OF PRODUCTS WITH HIGH SODIUM CONTENT**

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

5
6 Section 1. *Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "The Philippine Sodium Labels Act of
7 2016"

8
9 Section 2. *Declaration of Policies.* - Section 15 of Article II of the Constitution provides
10 that the State shall protect and promote the right of health of the people and instill health
11 consciousness among them.

12
13 The State recognizes that the increased intake of sodium through processed food is inimical to
14 the health of Filipinos, cardiovascular and kidney diseases, two of the top causes of death in the
15 Philippines. Food processing companies therefore shall have the responsibility of informing the
16 Filipino public of the sodium content to guide consumers as to the amount of sodium in the food
17 they consume and as to the excess sodium content in their food products. The State shall
18 mandate that these food companies indicate not only the sodium content but also if the sodium
19 levels are above the standards set by the Department of Health (DOH) and the Bureau of Food
20 and Drugs.

21
22 Section 3. *Definition of Terms.* - For purposes of this Act, the following terms shall mean:

23
24 (a) *BFAD* - the Bureau of Food and Drugs of the Department of Health.

25
26 (b) *DOH* - the Department of Health.

27
28 (c) *Manufacturer* - the refinery in case of refined sugar or cooking oil, the miller in case of
29 flour or rice, or the importer in case of imported processed foods or food products, or the
30 processor in case of other processed foods or food products.

31
32 (d) *NCC* - the Governing Board of the National Nutrition Council.

33
34 (e) *Nutrient* - any chemical substance needed by the body for one or more of these
35 functions; to provide heat or energy, to build and repair tissues, and to regulate life processes.
36 Although nutrients are found chiefly in foods, some can be synthesized in the laboratory like
37 vitamin and mineral supplements or in the body through biosynthesis.

38
39 (f) *Nutrition Facts* - a statement or information on food labels indicating the nutrient(s)
40 and the quantity of said nutrient found or added in the processed foods or food products.

41
42 (g) *Nutrition labeling* - a system of describing processed foods or food products on the
43 basis of their selected nutrient content. It aims to provide accurate nutrition information about
44 each food. This is printed in food labels as "Nutrition Facts."

45
46 (h) *Processed food or food products* - food that has been subjected to some degree of
47 processing like milling, drying, concentrating, canning, or addition of some ingredients which
48 changes partially or completely the physico-chemical and/or sensory characteristics of the
49 food's raw material.

(i) *Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDA)* - levels of nutrient intakes which are considered adequate to maintain health and provide reasonable levels or reserves in body tissues of nearly all health persons in the population.

(j) *Sodium* – a water-soluble chemical element used in food processing to give food its salty taste, an excess of which causes health problems

Section 4. *The Philippine Food Sodium Labels Act.* - The Philippine Sodium Labels Act shall cover all imported or locally processed foods or food products for sale or distribution in the Philippines; Provided, That, product for which established standards have already been prescribed by the DOH through the BFAD and which standards include specifications for sodium levels shall not be covered by this Act.

The Act shall consist of (1) Indicating Risks of High Sodium Consumption in the Advertisements ;and (2) Mandatory Warning Labels for Excessive Sodium Content.

Section 5. *Risks of High Sodium Levels in the Advertisement.* - The Department shall mandate that producers of all processed foods or food products shall indicate that their products have excessive amounts of salt as indicated by guidelines to be set by the BFAD. Such indications shall be in the nutrition facts of the product and in the front packaging, indicating the risks of high sodium intake.

Section 6. *Health Warning Labels.* – The Department shall also mandate that producers of all processed foods or food products to add warning labels to their packaging if the processed food or food product contains more than the recommended daily allowance set by the Department and the BFAD. The warning label shall indicate that the processed food or food product contains a high amount of sodium and shall be printed in a part of the packaging where it is likely to obscure or cover, in part or in whole, the health warning or where the internal revenue strip stamp is to be affixed as may be required by the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR).

Section 7. *Quality Assurance.* - The agencies charged with the implementation of this Act shall establish a quality assurance system. Likewise, the manufacturers and importers of processed foods or food products shall also establish their own quality assurance system in accordance with the quality assurance system of the implementing agencies.

Section 8. *Implementation, Monitoring and Review.* - The DOH through the BFAD shall be the lead agency responsible for the implementation and monitoring of this Act while the NNC, the policy-making and coordinating body of nutrition, shall serve as the advisory board on sodium levels.

The DOH shall also be responsible in the conduct of promotional and advocacy activities on the excessive sodium intake and/or other programs designed to reduce sodium intake.

The NCC shall conduct a periodic review of the sodium content added to food. This review will provide the basis for determining if the product shall require the health warning labels.. The review shall be done at least every five (5) years to coincide with the conduct of the Food and Nutrition Research Institute's (FNRI) national nutrition survey and/or the assessment of the Philippine Plan of Action for Nutrition (PPAN).

The local food industries shall report on the production, marketing and distribution of products with high sodium levels. They shall annual reports to the DOH, also indicating their industrial concerns and recommendations.

Section 9. *Support to Affected Manufacturers.* - The following government agencies shall support the implementation of this Act through their respective programs:

(a) The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) is hereby required to assist and support affected manufacturers in upgrading their technologies by helping them obtain soft loans and financial assistance for the procurement of technologies and machines to comply with the provision of this Act;

(b) The Department of Science and Technology (DOST) shall develop and implement comprehensive programs for the acquisition, design and manufacture of machines and technologies and transfer said machines and technologies to manufacturers;

(c) The various agencies/institutions with accredited analytical laboratories for nutrient analysis and other technology development generators shall provide the necessary services that may be required by the food industry in compliance with this Act.

Section 10. *Noncompliance with Labeling Requirement.* - The following shall be considered non compliance with the fortification process:

(a) if the sodium levels in the food exceed the DOH parameters and such was not indicated in the packaging;

(b) if the sodium levels in the food exceed the DOH parameters and such was not visibly indicated in the packaging; and

(c) The producer or manufacturer does not submit its products for review to the NCC.

Section 11. *Administrative Sanctions.* - The DOH through the BFAD, after notice and hearing, shall impose any or all of the following administrative sanctions in cases of noncompliance with the food fortification guidelines it has set:

(a) Denial of registration of the processed foods or food products by the DOH through the BFAD if the processed foods or food products do not comply with the labelling requirements. Said processed foods or food products shall not be allowed to be put in the market;

(b) Order the recall of the processed foods or food product(s); and

(c) Impose a fine or not less than Three Hundred Thousand Pesos (P300,000.00) and suspension of registration for the first violation; not more than Six hundred thousand pesos (P600,000.00) and suspension of registration for the second violation; and not more than one million pesos (P1,000,000.00) and cancellation of the registration of the product for the third violation of the provisions of this Act or its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

Section 12. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - The DOH through the BFAD and in consultation with other concerned government agencies, nongovernment organizations, private sectors and consumer groups involved in nutrition, shall formulate the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) necessary to implement the provisions of this Act within ninety (90) days from the approval of this Act. The IRR issued pursuant to this Section shall take effect thirty (30) days after publication in a national newspaper of general application.

Section 13. *International Commitments.* - Nothing in this Act is intended to violate provisions of Treaties and International Agreements to which the Philippines is a party.

Section 14. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, rules and regulations, executive orders inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Section 15. *Seperability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or unlawful, the remaining provisions shall remain legal and in full effect.

Section 16. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days from its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.