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}

S E N A T E

S. No. 1317

INTRODUCED BY SENATORS VILLANUEVA, EJERCITO, GATCHALIAN,
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AN ACT STRENGTHENING COMPLIANCE WITH
OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH STANDARDS
AND PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS
THEREOF

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

1 CHAPTER I

2 DECLARATION OF POLICY

3 SECTION 1. *Declaration of Policy.* – The State affirms
4 labor as a primary social and economic force and that a safe
5 and healthy workforce is an integral aspect of nation building.

6 The State shall ensure a safe and healthful workplace
7 for all working people by affording them full protection

1 against all hazards in their work environment. It shall ensure
2 that the provisions of the Labor Code of the Philippines, all
3 domestic laws and internationally-recognized standards on
4 occupational safety and health are being fully enforced and
5 complied with by the employers, and it shall provide penalties
6 for any violation thereof.

7 The State shall protect every worker against injury,
8 sickness or death through safe and healthful working
9 conditions, thereby assuring the conservation of valuable
10 manpower resources and the prevention of loss or damage to
11 lives and properties, consistent with national development
12 goals and with the State's commitment to the total
13 development of every worker as a complete human being.

14 The State, in protecting the safety and health of the
15 workers, shall promote strict but dynamic, inclusive and gender-
16 sensitive measures in the formulation and implementation of
17 policies and programs related to occupational safety and health.

18 SEC. 2. *Coverage.* – This Act shall apply to
19 establishments, projects, sites, and other workplaces, based

1 on the number of employees, nature of operations and the risk
2 or hazard involved. The Secretary of Labor and Employment
3 shall issue the appropriate standards of occupational health
4 and safety for such purpose.

5 SEC. 3. *Applicability to Micro and Small Enterprises*
6 (MSEs). – Specific to micro and small enterprises (MSEs), the
7 Secretary of Labor and Employment, considering the risk or
8 hazard involved, shall develop appropriate OSH standards to
9 include housekeeping, materials handling and storage,
10 electrical and mechanical safety, chemical safety, emergency
11 preparedness, fire safety, and Personal Protective Equipment
12 (PPE).

13 SEC. 4. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act:

14 (a) “Certified first-aider” – refers to any person trained
15 and duly certified or qualified to administer first aid by any
16 organization authorized by the Secretary of Labor and
17 Employment;

18 (b) “Competency Standards” – refers to industry-
19 determined specification of proficiency required for effective

1 work performance. These are expressed as outcomes with
2 focus on workplace activity rather than training or personal
3 attributes, and the ability to apply new skills in new
4 situations or changing work organization;

5 (c) "Covered Workplaces" – refers to establishments, projects,
6 sites and all other places where work is being undertaken
7 wherein the number of employees, nature of operations and risk
8 or hazard involved in its business of which, as determined by the
9 Secretary of Labor and Employment, require compliance with the
10 provisions of Chapter III of this Act;

11 (d) "Employer" – refers to any person, natural or juridical,
12 including the contractor, subcontractor, and principal employer
13 who directly or indirectly benefit from the services of the employee;

14 (e) "Equipment" – refers to any machine with engine
15 or electric motor as prime mover;

16 (f) "General safety and health inspection" – refers to
17 an examination of the work environment, including the
18 location and operation of machinery other than those covered
19 by technical safety audits, adequacy of work space,

1 ventilation, lighting, conditions of work environment,
2 handling, storage or work procedures, protection facilities,
3 and other possible sources of safety and health hazards in the
4 workplace;

5 (g) "Imminent danger" – refers to a situation caused
6 by a condition or practice in any place of employment that
7 could reasonably be expected to lead to death or serious
8 physical harm;

9 (h) "Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs)" – refers to
10 establishments employing less than ten (10) and less than one
11 hundred (100) employees, respectively;

12 (i) "Occupational Health Personnel" – refers to a
13 qualified first aider, nurse, dentist or physician engaged by
14 the employer to provide occupational health services in the
15 establishment, project, site or workplace;

16 (i) "Occupational Safety and Health Standards (OSHS)"
17 – refers to the Occupational Safety and Health Standards issued
18 by the Secretary of Labor and Employment pursuant to
19 Articles 168 and 175, Chapter 2, Title I of Book Four of the

1 Labor Code of the Philippines, as amended and such other
2 standards as may be issued pursuant to this Act;

3 (k) "Safety and Health Audit" – refers to a regular and
4 critical examination of project sites, safety programs, records,
5 and management performance on program standards on
6 safety and health;

7 (l) "Safety and Health Committee" – refers to a body
8 created within the workplace tasked with the authority to
9 monitor, inspect, and investigate all aspects of the work
10 pertaining to safety and health of workers;

11 (m) "Safety and Health Program" – refers to a set of
12 detailed rules to govern the processes and practices in all
13 economic activities to conform with the OSHS, including the
14 personnel responsible and penalties for any violations thereof;

15 (n) "Safety officer" – refers to any employee or officer
16 of the company trained or accredited by the Department of
17 Labor and Employment (DOLE) and tasked by the employer
18 to implement an occupational safety and health program, and

1 ensure that it is in accordance with the provisions of the
2 OSHS;

3 (o) "Safety signage" – refers to any emergency,
4 warning or danger signpost or any safety instruction using
5 the standard colors and sizes for safety instructions and
6 warnings in the workplace prescribed by the DOLE; and

7 (p) "Workplace" – refers to any site or location where
8 workers need to be or to go to by reason of their work.

9 CHAPTER II

10 CORE STANDARDS APPLICABLE TO ALL ESTABLISHMENTS

11 SEC. 5. *Duties of Employers, Workers, and Other 12 Persons.* –

13 (a) Every employer and any person who manages,
14 controls, or supervises the work being undertaken shall:

15 (1) Furnish the workers a place of employment free
16 from hazardous conditions that are causing or are likely to
17 cause death, illness, or physical harm to the workers;

18 (2) Give complete job safety instructions or orientation
19 to all the workers, especially to those entering the job for the

1 first time, including those relating to familiarization with
2 their work environment;

3 (3) Inform the workers of the hazards associated with
4 their work, health risks involved or to which they are exposed
5 to, preventive measures to eliminate or minimize the risks,
6 and steps to be taken in case of emergency;

7 (4) Use only approved devices and equipment for the
8 workplace;

9 (5) Comply with OSHS including training, medical
10 examination, and where necessary provision of protective and
11 safety devices such as personal protective equipment (PPE)
12 and machine guards;

13 (6) Allow workers and their safety and health
14 representatives to participate actively in the process of
15 organizing, planning, implementing and evaluating to
16 improve the safety and health in the workplace; and

17 (7) Provide, where necessary, for measures to deal
18 with emergencies and accidents, including first-aid
19 arrangements.

1 (b) Every worker shall participate in ensuring
2 compliance with OSHS in the workplace. The worker shall
3 make proper use of all safeguards and safety devices
4 furnished for the protection and that of others, and shall
5 observe instructions to prevent accidents or imminent danger
6 situation in the workplace. They shall observe the prescribed
7 steps to be taken in case of emergency.

8 The worker shall report to the supervisor any work
9 hazard that may be discovered in the workplace.

10 (c) It shall be the duty of any person, including the
11 builder or contractor who visits, builds, renovates, or installs
12 devices, or conducts business in any establishment or
13 workplace, to comply with the provisions of this Act and all
14 other regulations issued by the Secretary of Labor and
15 Employment.

16 (d) Whenever two or more undertakings are engaged in
17 activities simultaneously in one workplace, it shall be the
18 duty of all engaged to collaborate in the application of OSH
19 Standards and Regulations.

1 SEC. 6. *Workers' Right to Know.* – The right to safety
2 and health at work shall be guaranteed. All workers shall be
3 appropriately informed by the employer about all types of
4 hazards in the workplace, and provided access to training and
5 education on chemical safety and to orientation on data sheet
6 of chemical safety, electrical safety, mechanical safety, and
7 ergonomical safety.

8 SEC. 7. *Workers' Right to Report Accidents.* – Workers
9 and their representatives shall have the right to report
10 accidents, dangerous occurrences, and hazards to the
11 employer, to the DOLE, and to other concerned government
12 agencies exercising jurisdiction as the competent authority in
13 the specific industry or economic activity.

14 SEC. 8. *Safety Signage and Devices.* – All establishments,
15 projects, sites and all other places where work is being
16 undertaken shall have safety signage and devices to warn the
17 workers and the public of the hazards in the workplace.
18 Safety signage and devices shall be posted in prominent

1 positions at strategic locations in a language understandable
2 to all and in accordance with the standards set by the DOLE.

3 *SEC. 9. Safety in the Use of Equipment.* – In relation to
4 the use of equipment, the employer must comply with the
5 DOLE requirements in the different phases of the company or
6 project operation, including the transport to and from the
7 establishment, project, site or place where work is being
8 undertaken.

9 *SEC. 10. Occupational Safety and Health Information.*
10 – Workers in all establishments, projects, sites and all other
11 places where work is being undertaken shall be provided
12 adequate and suitable information by the employer on safety
13 and health hazards, and the appropriate measures, including
14 the probable location of workers for the prevention, control,
15 and protection against those hazards.

16 *SEC. 11. Workers Welfare Facilities.* – All establishments,
17 projects, sites, and all other places where work is being
18 undertaken shall have welfare facilities in order to ensure

1 humane working conditions including, but not limited, to the
2 following:

- (a) Adequate supply of safe drinking water;
 - (b) Adequate sanitary and washing facilities;
 - (c) Suitable living accommodation for workers, as may be applicable; and
 - (d) Separate sanitary, washing, and sleeping facilities for men and women workers, as may be applicable.

CHAPTER III

COVERED WORKPLACES

11 SEC. 12. *Occupational Safety and Health (OSH)*
12 *Program.* – Covered workplaces shall have a safety and health
13 program including, but not limited to the following policies,
14 guidelines or information:

- 15 (a) Statement of commitment to comply with OSH
 - 16 requirements;
 - 17 (b) General safety and health, including a drug-free
 - 18 workplace;

- 1 (c) Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired
2 Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)/tuberculosis/hepatitis
3 prevention and control;
- 4 (d) Company or project details;
- 5 (e) Composition and duties of the Safety and Health
6 Committee;
- 7 (f) Occupational safety and health personnel and
8 facilities;
- 9 (g) Safety and health promotion, training and
10 education;
- 11 (h) Conduct of toolbox meetings;
- 12 (i) Accident/incident/illness investigation, recording
13 and reporting;
- 14 (j) Provision and use of PPE;
- 15 (k) Provision of safety signage;
- 16 (l) Dust control and management, and regulations on
17 activities such as building of temporary structures, and lifting
18 and operation of electrical, mechanical, communication
19 systems and other equipment;

- 1 (m) Provision of workers welfare facilities;
- 2 (n) Emergency preparedness and response plan;
- 3 (o) Waste management system; and
- 4 (p) Prohibited acts, and penalties for violations.

5 The safety and health program shall be prepared and
6 executed by the employer in consultation with the workers
7 and their representatives and shall be submitted to the DOLE
8 which shall approve, disapprove or modify the same according
9 to existing laws, rules and regulations, and other issuances.

10 The approved safety and health program shall be
11 communicated and be made readily available to all persons in
12 the workplace.

13 SEC. 13. *Workers' Right to Personal Protective*
14 *Equipment (PPE)*. – Every employer shall provide their
15 workers, free of charge, protective equipment for their eyes,
16 face, hands and feet, and lifeline, safety belt or harness, gas or
17 dust respirators or masks, and protective shields whenever
18 necessary by reason of the hazardous work process or
19 environment, chemical, radiological, mechanical and other

1 irritants or hazards capable of causing injury or impairment
2 in the function of any part of the body through absorption,
3 inhalation or physical contact. The cost of the PPE shall be
4 part of the safety and health program which is a separate pay
5 item pursuant to Section 20 of this Act.

6 All PPE shall be of the appropriate type as tested and
7 approved by the DOLE based on its standards. The usage of
8 PPE in all establishments, projects, sites and all other places
9 where work is being undertaken shall be based on the
10 evaluation and recommendation of the safety officer.

11 SEC. 14. *Occupational Safety and Health Committee.* –
12 To ensure that the safety and health program is observed and
13 enforced, covered workplaces shall organize a Safety and
14 Health Committee composed of the following:

15 (a) Employer or a representative as the Chairperson,
16 *ex officio;*
17 (b) Safety officer of the company or project as the
18 Secretary;

1 (c) Safety officers representing the contractor or
2 subcontractor, as the case may be, as members;

3 (d) Physicians, nurses, certified first-aiders, and
4 dentists as members, *ex officio*, if applicable; and

5 (e) Workers' representatives who shall come from the
6 union if the establishment is organized or elected by the
7 workers through a simple majority vote if they are
8 unorganized.

9 The Committee shall effectively plan, develop, oversee,
10 and monitor the implementation of the safety and health
11 program.

12 SEC. 15. *Safety Officer.* – To ensure that a safety and
13 health program is duly followed and enforced, covered
14 workplaces shall have safety officers who shall:

15 (a) Oversee the overall management of the safety and
16 health program;

17 (b) Frequently monitor and inspect any health or
18 safety aspect of the operation being undertaken;

1 (c) Assist government inspectors in the conduct of
2 safety and health inspection at any time whenever work is
3 being performed or during the conduct of an accident
4 investigation; and

5 (d) Issue work stoppage order when necessary.

6 The number and requirement of safety officers shall be
7 proportionate to the total number of workers and equipment,
8 the size of the work area, and such other criteria as may be
9 prescribed by the DOLE.

10 In the case of contractor or subcontractor, a safety
11 officer must be deployed at each specific area of operations to
12 oversee the management of the safety and health program for
13 its own workforce.

14 All safety officers must be accredited by the DOLE.

15 SEC. 16. *Occupational Health Personnel and Facilities.*
16 – Covered workplaces shall have qualified occupational health
17 personnel such as physicians, nurses, certified first-aiders,
18 and dentists duly complemented with the required medical
19 supplies, equipment, and facilities. The number of health

1 personnel, equipment, and facilities, and the amount of
2 supplies shall be proportionate to the total number of workers
3 and the risk or hazard involved, the ideal ratio of which shall
4 be prescribed by the DOLE.

5 SEC. 17. *Safety and Health Training.* –

6 (a) All safety personnel shall undergo the mandatory
7 training on basic occupational safety and health for safety
8 officers as prescribed by the DOLE.

9 (b) All workers shall undergo the mandatory eight
10 (8) hours safety and health seminar as required by the DOLE
11 which shall include a portion on joint employer-employee
12 orientation.

13 (c) All personnel engaged in the operation, erection,
14 and dismantling of equipment and scaffolds, structural
15 erections, excavations, blasting operations, demolition,
16 confined spaces, hazardous chemicals, welding, and flame
17 cutting shall undergo specialized instruction and training on
18 the said activities.

1 SEC. 18. *Workers Competency Certification.* – In order to
2 professionalize, upgrade, and update the level of competence of
3 workers, the Technical Education and Skills Development
4 Authority (TESDA) or the Professional Regulatory Commission,
5 as the case may be shall establish national competency
6 standards and prepare guidelines on competency assessment
7 and certification for critical occupations. In this regard, all
8 critical occupations shall undergo the mandatory competency
9 assessment and certification by the TESDA.

10 An occupation shall be considered critical when:

11 (a) The performance of a job affects the people's lives
12 and safety;

13 (b) The job involves the handling of tools, equipment,
14 and supplies;

15 (c) The job requires a relatively long period of
16 education and training; and

17 (d) The performance of a job may compromise the
18 safety, health, and environmental concerns within the
19 immediate vicinity of the establishment.

1 SEC. 19. *Cost of Safety and Health Program.* – The
2 total cost of implementing a duly approved safety and health
3 program shall be an integral part of the operations cost. It
4 shall be a separate pay item in construction and in all
5 contracting or subcontracting arrangement.

CHAPTER IV

JOINT AND SOLIDARY LIABILITY

8 SEC. 20. *Employer's Responsibility and Liability.* – The
9 employer, project owner, general contractor and any person
10 who manages, controls or supervises the work being
11 undertaken shall be jointly and solidarily liable for
12 compliance with this Act.

CHAPTER V

ENFORCEMENT OF OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH

STANDARDS

16 SEC. 21. *Visitorial Power of the Secretary of Labor and*
17 *Employment.* – Pursuant to Article 128 of the Labor Code of
18 the Philippines, as amended, and other applicable laws, the
19 Secretary of Labor and Employment or the Secretary's

1 authorized representatives shall enforce the mandatory
2 occupational safety and health standards and conduct,
3 together with representatives from the labor and employer
4 sectors, an annual spot audit on compliance with OSH
5 standards. The Secretary or the Secretary's duly authorized
6 representatives can enter workplaces at any time of the day or
7 night where work is being performed, to examine records and
8 investigate facts, conditions or matters necessary to
9 determine compliance with the provisions of this Act.

10 No person or entity shall obstruct, impede, delay or
11 otherwise render ineffective the orders of the Secretary of
12 Labor and Employment or the Secretary's duly authorized
13 representatives, issued pursuant to the authority granted
14 under Article 128 of the Labor Code of the Philippines, as
15 amended, and no inferior court or entity shall issue temporary
16 or permanent injunction or restraining order or otherwise
17 assume jurisdiction over any case involving the enforcement
18 orders.

1 The Secretary of Labor and Employment may
2 likewise order stoppage of work or suspension of operations
3 of any unit or department of an establishment when
4 non-compliance with law or implementing rules and
5 regulations poses grave and imminent danger to the health
6 and safety of workers in the workplace.

7 The procedure for inspecting work premises, notifying
8 employers of violations, and issuing compliance or stoppage
9 orders shall be pursuant to the procedure laid down in Article
10 128 of the Labor Code of the Philippines, as amended, as
11 implemented by relevant regulations issued by the DOLE on
12 administration and enforcement of labor laws. The inspector
13 or person authorized by the DOLE to enforce compliance with
14 OSH Standards shall present proper identification upon
15 request and such inspector or person shall only act within the
16 authority or direction given to him/her by the Secretary of
17 Labor and Employment.

18 The Secretary of Labor and Employment shall disallow
19 any form of employer discretion-based compliance with

1 occupational safety and health laws. Chartered cities may be
2 allowed to conduct industrial safety inspections of
3 establishments within their jurisdiction in coordination with
4 the DOLE: *Provided*, That they have adequate facilities and
5 competent personnel for the purpose as determined by the
6 DOLE and subject to national standards established by the
7 latter.

8 SEC. 22. *Payment of Workers Income During Work*
9 *Stoppage Due to Imminent Danger.* – If stoppage of work due
10 to imminent danger occurs as a result of the employer's
11 violation or fault, the employer shall pay the affected workers
12 concerned their wages during the period of such stoppage of
13 work or suspension of operation. For purposes of payment of
14 wages and any other liabilities arising from a work stoppage
15 order (WSO), the employer is presumed a party at fault if the
16 WSO is issued secondary to an imminent danger situation
17 which would imperil the lives of the workers.

18 SEC. 23. *Delegation of Authority* – The authority to
19 enforce mandatory OSH standards may be delegated by the

1 Secretary of Labor and Employment to a competent government
2 authority.

3 *SEC. 24. Standards Setting Power of the Secretary of*
4 *Labor and Employment.* – The Secretary of Labor and
5 Employment shall, in consultation with the other concerned
6 government agencies and relevant stakeholders, by
7 appropriate orders, set and enforce mandatory OSH
8 standards to eliminate or reduce occupational safety and
9 health hazards, depending on the number of employees of the
10 establishment, the nature of its business operations and the
11 risk or hazard involved. The Secretary shall also institute
12 new, and update existing programs to ensure safe and healthy
13 working conditions in all workplaces especially in hazardous
14 industries such as mining, fishing, construction, and maritime
15 industry.

16 *SEC. 25. Employee's Compensation Claim.* – A worker
17 may file claims for compensation benefit arising out of work-
18 related disability or death. Such claims shall be processed
19 independently of the finding of fault, gross negligence or bad

1 faith of the employer in a proceeding instituted for the
2 purpose.

3 SEC. 26. *Incentives to Employers.* – There shall be an
4 established package of incentives under such rules and
5 regulations as may be promulgated by DOLE to qualified
6 employers to recognize their incentives toward ensuring
7 compliance of OSH and general labor standards, such as OSH
8 training packages, additional protective equipment, technical
9 guidance, recognition, awards and other similar incentives.

10 SEC. 27. *Prohibited Acts.* – The following are considered
11 as prohibited acts:

12 (a) Willful failure or refusal of an employer, contractor
13 or sub-contractor, to comply with the required OSH standards
14 or with a compliance order issued by the Secretary of Labor
15 and Employment or by the Secretary's authorized
16 representative shall make such employer, contractor or sub-
17 contractor, liable for an administrative fine not exceeding One
18 hundred thousand pesos (P100,000.00) per day until the
19 violation is corrected, counted from the date the employer or

1 contractor is notified of the violation or the date the
2 compliance order is duly served on the employer. The amount
3 of fine imposed shall depend on the frequency or gravity of the
4 violation committed or the damage caused: *Provided, however,*
5 That the maximum amount shall be imposed only when the
6 violation exposes the workers to a risk of death, serious injury
7 or serious illness.

8 (b) An employer, contractor or sub-contractor, who
9 wilfully fails or refuses to comply with the required OSH
10 standards, or with a duly issued compliance order, and
11 engages in any of the following acts to aid, conceal, or
12 facilitate such non-compliance shall be liable for a maximum
13 of One hundred thousand pesos (P100,000.00) administrative
14 fine separate from the daily fine imposed above:

15 (i) Repeated obstruction, delay or refusal to provide the
16 Secretary of Labor and Employment or any of its authorized
17 representatives access to the covered workplace, or refusal to
18 provide or allow access to relevant records and documents, or

1 obstruct the conduct of investigation of any fact necessary in
2 determining compliance with OSH standards;

3 (ii) Misrepresentation in relation to adherence to OSH
4 standards knowing such statement, report or record
5 submitted to the DOLE to be false in any material aspect;

6 (iii) Making retaliatory measures, such as termination of
7 employment, refusal to pay, reducing wages and benefits or in
8 any manner discriminates against any worker who has given
9 information relative to the inspection being conducted.

10 For this purpose, the Secretary of Labor and
11 Employment, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, shall
12 issue a list of offenses with corresponding reasonable
13 administrative fines depending on the severity, frequency,
14 and damage caused without prejudice to the filing of a
15 criminal or a civil case in the regular courts, as the case may
16 be.

17 The fine collected shall be used for the operation of
18 occupational safety and health initiatives including

1 occupational safety and health training and education, and
2 other occupational safety and health programs.

3 CHAPTER VI

4 MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

5 SEC. 28. *Inter-Governmental Coordination and*
6 *Cooperation.* – The DOLE shall institute a mechanism for
7 coordination with the Department of Environment and
8 Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Energy (DOE),
9 Department of Transportation (DOTr), Department of Agriculture
10 (DA), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH),
11 Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of the
12 Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Health
13 (DOH), Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA), Department
14 of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) and all
15 other government agencies, including local government units,
16 within sixty (60) days from the issuance of the implementing
17 rules and regulations of this Act. They shall regularly
18 convene to monitor the effective implementation of this Act as
19 well as related programs and projects that are established to

1 prevent and eliminate the incidence of injury, sickness or
2 death in all workplaces.

3 SEC. 29. *Updated DOLE Computerized Labor Law*
4 *Compliance System.* – The Secretary of Labor and
5 Employment shall maintain an updated system of
6 computerized gathering and generation of real time data on
7 compliances, monitoring of enforcement and a system of
8 notification on workplace accidents and injuries.

9 SEC. 30. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The
10 DOLE, in coordination with agencies concerned, shall formulate
11 its rules and regulations within ninety (90) days after the
12 effectivity of this Act.

13 SEC. 31. *Separability Clause.* – If any part, section or
14 provision of this Act shall be held invalid or unconstitutional,
15 the other provisions not affected by such declaration shall
16 remain in full force and effect.

17 SEC. 32. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, acts, decrees,
18 executive orders, rules and regulations or other issuances or

1 parts thereof, which are inconsistent with this Act, are hereby
2 modified and repealed.

3 SEC. 33. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen
4 (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in at
5 least two (2) newspapers of national circulation.

Approved,