

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City
THIRTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 5482

Introduced by **REPRESENTATIVE EDUARDO C. ZIALCITA**

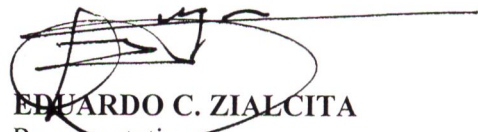
EXPLANATORY NOTE

Mercury is an extremely toxic substance that can harm human health and wildlife even at very low levels. People exposed to mercury can suffer mental problems and impaired vision, speech, hearing, and coordination. High levels can damage the brain, kidney, lungs, and can be fatal. Fetuses and young children are especially at risk because of their developing nervous systems.

This bill prohibits the use, purchase and storage of mercury substance and mercury instruments in all private and public schools and institutions. Mercury instruments may continued to be used if no reasonably acceptable mercury-free alternative is available. Likewise, this bill directs the Departments of Health and Environment and Natural Resources to compile, produce and distribute material advising schools of the hazards of elemental mercury and how to reduce such hazards. The recent mercury spill which occurred last February 2006 in St. Andrews School in Parañaque City has resulted to the temporary closure of the school for several months and has cost several hundred of thousands to clean up. Moreover, students were reportedly exposed to these toxic substance and are now undergoing chelation therapy.

Another unfortunate incident may happen in the future if no legislation is carried out to ban the use of this substance in all schools. This legislation is an important step to protect our children's health from the dangers of mercury pollution and contamination in schools.

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


EDUARDO C. ZIALCITA
Representative
1st District, Parañaque City

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AN ACT
BANNING AND PROHIBITING THE USE, PURCHASE AND STORAGE OF
ELEMENTAL MERCURY BY ALL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS AND
INSTITUTIONS ; AND TO DIRECT THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO
COMPILE AND DISTRIBUTE MATERIALS FOR SCHOOLS ON THE
HAZARDS OF MERCURY AND ACTIONS WHICH MAY BE TAKEN TO
REDUCE SUCH HAZARDS

Section 1. Short Title.

This Act may be otherwise called as the "Safe Schools Mercury Reduction Act of 2006".

Section 3. Elimination Of The Use Of Elemental Mercury.

Except as otherwise provided in this section, no public or private school or educational institution in this state shall purchase, use or store any quantity of free flowing elemental mercury for any purpose, nor purchase, use or store any instrument which contains mercury including, but not limited to, thermometers, barometers, sphygmomanometers and manometers. If no reasonably acceptable, mercury-free alternative exists for any instrument prohibited by this section, a school or educational institution may use such type of instrument as long as it contains the lowest mercury content readily available on the market.

Section 2. Implementing Authority

The Secretary of the Department of Health, in consultation with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, shall promulgate rules and regulations requiring public and private schools and educational institutions in this state to dispose of or recycle any quantity of elemental mercury and instruments containing mercury in a manner which is least harmful to the environment and in accordance with prescribed international standards. The said Departments shall compile, produce and



distribute to all public and private schools and educational schools in this state, materials explaining the hazards created by elemental mercury and actions that may be taken to reduce such hazards.

Section 3. Separability Clause

If for any reason, any part of or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, such parts not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 4. Repealing Clause

Any law, executive order, letter of instruction, rules and regulations, circulars, issuances or any part thereof inconsistent with any of the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

Section 5. Effectivity

This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette and in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized, cursive script that appears to be the initials 'JST' followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.