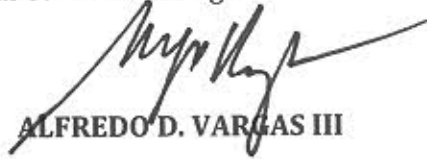


This piece of legislation is a response to this need. By requiring the use of safe cleaning products in school, it aims to protect the health of students, custodial staff and all other workers in our school buildings.



ALFREDO D. VARGAS III

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

House of Representatives

Quezon City

16th Congress

3rd Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 6481

Introduced by Congressman Alfredo D. Vargas III

AN ACT

MANDATING THE USE OF SAFE CLEANING PRODUCTS IN SCHOOLS TO PROTECT THE HEALTH OF STUDENTS

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 “Safe Cleaning Products in School Act.”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to promote and protect the physical well-being of the youth recognizing their vital role in nation-building.

SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act, the term:

(1) “Air freshener” means an aerosol spray, liquid deodorizer, plug-in product, parade-chlorobenzene block, scented urinal screen, or other products used to mask odors or freshen the air in a room.

(2) “Antimicrobial pesticides” means a pesticide that is intended to:

(A) Disinfect, sanitize, reduce, or mitigate growth or development of a microbiological organism; or

(B) Protect inanimate objects, industrial processes or systems, surfaces, water, or other chemical substances from contamination, fouling, or deterioration caused by bacteria, viruses, fungi, protozon, algae or slime.

(3) “Cleaning product” means an institutional compound intended for routine cleaning, including antimicrobial pesticides, general purpose cleaners, bathroom cleaners, glass cleaners, carpet cleaners, floor care products, and hand soaps.

(4) "Property manager" shall refer to the employee of a school who has supervisory and decision making authority with regard to the sanitary and physical conditions of school property, including authority over cleaning product purchases.

(5) "Disinfectant" means substances or mixtures of substances used on inanimate surfaces and objects to destroy or irreversibly inactivate infectious fungi and bacteria but not necessarily their spores.

(6) "Environmentally preferable cleaning products" means a cleaning product that has a less negative effect on human health and the environment when compared to competing products serving the same purpose.

(7) "Green cleaning" means a practice that includes the use of a cleaning product certified as environmentally preferable by an independent third party entity, has best practices that follow accepted management standards and improve indoor air quality, and has equipment that facilitate effective cleaning.

(8) (A) "Independent third party" refers to a nationally recognized organization that has developed a program for the purpose of certifying environmentally preferable cleaning products.

The certification program shall:

- (i) Define a manufacturer's certification fees;
- (ii) Identify any potential conflicts of interest;
- (iii) Base certification on considerations of human health and safety, ecological toxicity, other environmental impacts, and resource conservation as appropriate products and their packaging on a life-cycle basis;
- (iv) Develop certification standards in an open, public and transparent manner that involves the public and key stakeholders;
- (v) Periodically revise and update the standards to remain consistent with the current research about the impacts of chemicals on human health;
- (vi) Monitor and enforce the standards for the purpose of certification, and have the authority to inspect the manufacturing facility and periodically to do so, and have a registered or legally protected certification mark; and

- (vii) Make the standards easily accessible to purchasers and manufacturers; or

(B) In the alternative, "Independent third party" means any organization otherwise deemed by the DENR to satisfactorily assess and certify environmentally preferable cleaning products. In the absence of an independent third party, the certification shall be undertaken by the Environmental Management Bureau of the DENR.

(9) "School" shall refer to pre-schools, primary and secondary schools both public and private.

SECTION 4. *Environmentally preferable cleaning product.* – A school shall ensure that only environmentally preferable cleaning products are used to clean their premises. The property manager shall use cleaning products certified as environmentally preferable by an independent third party as defined in Section 4 of this Act.

SECTION 5. *Exceptions.* – A school may temporarily use non-environmentally preferable disinfectant in the following cases:

- (1) Blood, body fluids, or fecal soiling is present on any surface; or
- (2) The Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources makes a case-specific determination that failure to use environmentally preferable disinfectants would create a risk to public health and safety.

SECTION 6. *Air fresheners.* – A school shall not purchase or allow the use of air fresheners in its premises.

SECTION 7. *Creation of a school environmental health website.* – The Secretaries of Environment and Natural Resources, Health, and Education shall jointly create and jointly update as necessary an electronic school environmental health clearinghouse site on the website of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), including diagnostic checklists and searchable databases. This website shall include:

- (1) Information on materials and practices in common use in school operations and construction that may compromise indoor air quality or negatively impact human health;
- (2) Information on potential health problems associated with these materials, with specific reference to children's vulnerability;
- (3) Information on integrated pest management and alternatives to chemical pest control;

(4) Information on methods to reduce or eliminate exposure to potentially hazardous substances in schools, including the following:

(A) A list of preventive management options, such as supplies, building equipment, and materials and finishing; and

(B) A list of nontoxic or least toxic office and classroom supplies, building equipment, and materials and furnishings; and

(C) A list of environment health criteria that schools may use as a decision-making tool when determining what materials to purchase or use in school construction or operations.

(D) Information on environmentally preferable cleaning products certified by an independent third party including a list of these products and procedures for using them.

SECTION 8. Review. – The Secretaries of Environment and Natural Resources, Education, and Health shall:

(1) Review the information on the school environmental health information clearinghouse at least twice yearly, and update it whenever significant developments occur.

(2) At the request of school officials, assist school environmental health coordinators to identify potential sources of environmental pollution in the school, and make recommendations on how to alleviate any problems.

(3) Annually, organize a school environmental workshop for school environment health coordinators and school administrators, and an annual training for school maintenance and property staff. Each workshop and training shall include instructions on green cleaning practices. The department shall issue certificates of training to participants who successfully complete the workshops.

(4) Publicize the availability of information through the school environmental health clearinghouse.

(5) Provide information and referrals to members of school communities who contact the school environmental health clearinghouse with hazardous exposure and indoor air concerns.

(6) Assist elementary and secondary schools to establish school environment health programs to address indoor air and hazardous issues.

(7) Report annually to the House and the Senate Committee on Education, Arts and Culture the extent of indoor air and hazardous exposure problems in schools and the

percentage of schools that have established a school environmental health program or qualified for environmental health certification.

SECTION 9. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity of the other provisions hereof.

SECTION 10. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, and issuances, or portions thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SECTION 11. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,