

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

Seventeenth Congress
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 6279



Introduced by Representative Sharon S. Garin

EXPLANATORY NOTE

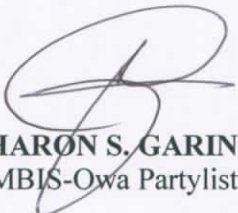
Pesticide use is still prevalent among the agricultural sector in the Philippines. However, pesticide poisoning is also still one of the global health problems. In a study published in the Journal of Rural Medicine of the Japanese Association of Rural Medicine, it is estimated that about 5 million people die every year as a result of intentional, accidental, and occupational exposures worldwide. And it is the lowly farm workers who are of great risk of exposure as they handle the pesticides directly, often without the proper safety gear and post clean-up facilities.

In addition to regular agricultural workers, of particular concern is the exposure of young children, who are often employed in vegetable growing from an early age. In one study in north-east Luzon, the children reported health symptoms such as headaches, skin irritation and abdominal pain after the use of chemicals.

The most common types of pesticides used in the country are *organophosphate insecticides*, *carbamates* and *synthetic pyrethroids* – each providing distinct hazards to pesticide handlers. *Organophosphates* can be absorbed by humans through skin or inhalation, resulting in nausea, diarrhea and other adverse effects on the nervous system. Many *carbamates* are known carcinogens (cancer-causing), while *pyrethroids* may also cause users to experience dizziness, headache, nausea and diarrhea. Exposure to immense doses leads to acute poisoning and can even be fatal.

This bill ensures that our agricultural workers are sufficiently protected and properly educated when handling these dangerous chemicals. Farm owners and operators should provide adequate methods in ensuring a safe farming environment for their workers.

For the foregoing reasons, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


SHARON S. GARIN
AAMBIS-Owa Partylist

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13 AN ACT
14 TO PROTECT WORKERS AND THEIR FAMILIES FROM THE HAZARDS OF
15 WORKING IN AGRICULTURAL SITES
16

17 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress*
18 *assembled:*
19

20 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the “Farm Workers’
21 Protection Act of 2016.”

22 SEC. 2. *Requirements.* - The following requirements shall be met at any agricultural
23 site to which pesticides have or will be applied. Farm owners or operators shall:

- 24 a) Conduct or cause to have conducted mandatory testing for the presence of
25 organophosphate pesticides for all handlers of pesticides, including applicators
26 and mixers of pesticides. This testing shall be conducted within one week of the
27 arrival of such workers at the agricultural site and within one week of the
28 departure of such workers from the site;
- 29 b) Provide personal protection equipment which has been fit-tested to all individuals
30 who are required or may be required to Wear such equipment in the course of
31 their work, and which is readily available to any worker needing to wear or use
32 such equipment;

- 1 c) Provide education and information to farm workers and their families about the
2 hazards of exposure to pesticides, how to avoid such exposures to children,
3 personal clothing and possessions, and what to do if pesticide exposure or
4 contamination occurs;
- 5 d) Report to the Department of Agriculture every incident of pesticide exposure to
6 farm workers or their families, whether by direct exposure to pesticide
7 applications or from drift of pesticides from the application site. Such reporting
8 shall occur within the twenty-four hours of such pesticide exposure and shall
9 include the day and time of the day the exposure occurred and the pesticides to
10 which the individuals were exposed;
- 11 e) Provide on-site washing machines for Workers to clean pesticide contaminated
12 clothing, which are separate from clothes washing facilities used by families. The
13 farm owner or operator shall be responsible to provide instruction in the proper
14 care of clothing contaminated with or exposed to pesticides;
- 15 f) Provide one shower facility for every five (5) workers, with separate facilities for
16 males and females, for the removal of pesticide residues and other contaminants;
- 17 g) Provide one or more public telephones for workers to report medical emergencies,
18 including pesticide exposures of contamination; and
- 19 h) Ensure that all new housing for farm workers is located at least fifty (50) feet from
20 any field or site, except for enclosed facilities such as greenhouses, which may be
21 treated with pesticides. Existing housing which does not comply with this
22 paragraph shall be replaced within five years or cease to be used after that time.

23 **SEC. 3. *Penalty.*** - The Department of Agriculture is hereby empowered to establish
24 and assess penalties or fines against farm owners and operators for violations of this Act. In

1 no circumstance will any penalty or fine to exceed One Hundred Thousand Pesos
2 (P100,000.00).

3 **SEC. 4. *Annual Report*** - The Department of Agriculture shall issue an annual report
4 of all farm inspections to the legislature for the previous calendar year, including Compliance
5 with the requirements contained in this Act; enforcement actions, fines and penalties for non-
6 compliance resulting from such inspections; and pesticide exposure or contamination reports.

7 **SEC. 5. *Separability Clause***. - If any provisions, or part hereof, is held invalid or
8 unconstitutional, the remainder of the law of the provision not otherwise affected shall remain
9 valid and subsisting.

10 **SEC.6. *Repealing Clause***. - All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations
11 inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

12 **SEC. 7. *Effectivity Clause***. - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its
13 complete publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

14 *Approved,*