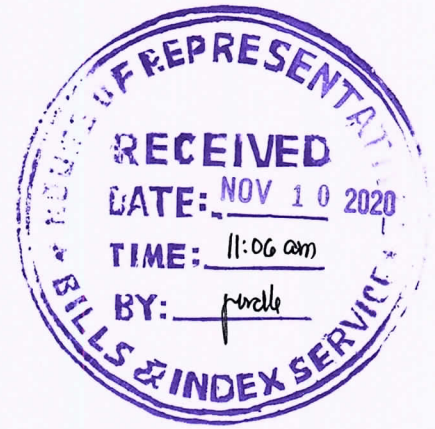


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 8000



Introduced by the Honorable Precious Hipolito Castelo

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Our country has been in some form of community quarantine since March 2020. Eight months later, thousands of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases everyday seemed to have been the norm already. While this is not the “new normal” initially sought for, this is the reality that the society must face.

In the global fight against COVID-19, scientists around the world are racing to create a viable vaccine for mass distribution. Big pharmaceutical firms have been conducting clinical trials which are carefully handled and supervised by experts. Every minute detail of the vaccine being developed is reviewed and tested. The rigorous and thorough process of vaccine development makes the news of a successful trial sound more pleasing. Every successful clinical trial springs hope for everyone who has been praying for a COVID-free world. While we are far from the ideal situation, history shows that vaccines work.

This pandemic has taught us many things, one of which is the importance of preparation. While this pandemic is something that caught many countries and governments off guard, this is not sufficient excuse not to prepare.

In a press briefing of the Department of Health, the Food and Drug Administration noted that there is a specific temperature that should be maintained in order for a vaccine not to lose its efficacy.¹ Countries around the world, such as India, the second most populous nation, have been preparing to ramp up its cold chain facilities for effective delivery of the vaccines when they become available.²

It is thus the intent of this bill to provide sufficient and appropriate cold storage equipment for storage and safekeeping of the much-anticipated COVID-19 vaccines prior to their arrival in the country. Considering that the Philippines is also a relatively populous nation, a safe and effective mass distribution of the vaccines require ample planning and preparation.

Thus, the immediate passage of this bill is most earnestly sought.


PRECIOUS HIPOLITO CASTELO

¹ Analou De Vera, “DOH preps cold storage facilities for storing COVID vaccines,” *Manila Bulletin*. October 27, 2020, <https://mb.com.ph/2020/10/27/doh-preps-cold-storage-facilities-for-storing-covid-vaccines/> (Accessed November 9, 2020)

² Shakoor Rather, “Ramping up cold storage facilities critical as India preps for COVID-19 vaccine: experts,” *Economic Times Healthworld.com*. October 8, 2020, <https://health.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/pharma/ramping-up-cold-storage-facilities-critical-as-india-preps-for-covid-19-vaccine-experts/78550153> (Accessed November 9, 2020)

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AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR COLD STORAGE FACILITIES FOR STORING AND
SAFEKEEPING OF CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19) VACCINES

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be referred to as the “Vaccine-Ready Philippines Act of 2020”.

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development which shall endeavor to make essential goods, health and other social services available to all people at affordable cost. Towards this end, the State shall amply prepare cold storage facilities for storing and safekeeping of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) vaccines in anticipation of their arrival and mass distribution to the Filipino people.

SEC. 3. *Cold Storage Facilities for COVID-19 Vaccines.* – To carry out the above policy, the Department of Health (DOH) shall determine the specifications of the cold storage facility necessary for the anticipated COVID-19 vaccines. DOH shall urgently prepare for the provision of cold storage facilities in accordance with the specifications that are suitable for safekeeping of the anticipated COVID-19 vaccines.

SEC. 4. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within thirty (30) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DOH, in coordination with the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF), shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to effectively implement the provisions of this Act.

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

SEC. 6. *Repealing Clause.* – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with, the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

SEC. 7. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,