

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

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 1976



Introduced by Representative Ron P. Salo

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines imports much of the salt that Filipinos consume. For the last 11 years, (2009 to 2020), salt import, which also covered table salt and denatured salt, was valued at USD 303 million, coming from Australia (72%), China (18.7%), Thailand (4.2%) and New Zealand (2.39%). In contrast, export of the same item in the same period was at a measly USD 1.3 million.

Salt import is estimated at around 550,000 metric tons every year which constitutes around 93% of the salt requirement of the country. Such an irony considering that the Philippines has 36,000 kilometers of shoreline – the fifth longest shoreline in the world – which can be utilized for massive salt production. Indeed, challenges exist in the local salt industry, and the government must undertake immediate steps to address them, lest the country be completely dependent on imported salt.

This was not always the case though as the Philippines was previously self-sufficient in salt. A myriad of factors contributed to its decline, including an outdated policy regime, low quality control and product improvement, limited sourcing/development of new production areas, unattractive business environment for small enterprises and lack of new investments. The lack of innovation, focused interventions, and priorities to develop local industries led to its further deterioration and eroded the opportunities of local producers who had to face direct competition from imports over the last 30 years.

The salt industry also failed to adapt to the changes brought by climate change, increased food safety standards and product quality requirements, tariff reduction, and mandatory iodization as directed by Republic Act No. 8172, otherwise known as an Act for Salt Iodization Nationwide (ASIN). Unfortunately, the success of the ASIN law in combatting the country's iodine deficiency came with a price; local salt farmers were marginalized in the massive shift to iodization that required use of additional machinery and technology.

Salt is a basic commodity and an essential ingredient for home cooking, food processing, water treatment, feed ingredients, and natural fertilizers for the coconut industry, among others. Salt has over 14,000 uses and is an important raw material for the production of many high value products and chemicals, making it a key product

for agro-industries and an essential element in the development of the country's chemical industry.

Developed countries, such as the United States, emphasize industrial production of sea salt to help food manufacturers enhance their products through innovative ingredient technology. On the other hand, ASEAN-member States, such as Indonesia and Vietnam, have included salt self-sufficiency as part of their priorities for food, agricultural, and industrial development.

The Philippines, given its natural resource endowments and comparative advantage, is unable to keep pace with these developments. Its failure to effectively orchestrate the production of locally farmed or harvested salt has resulted in additional dollars lost to imports which could have been used to create more opportunities for local enterprises.

Institutionalizing an orchestrated approach to develop innovative specialty salt farms and increasing the local production of pure and authentic Philippine salt will support not only the food processing subsector, but will also increase organic chemical production to benefit agriculture and livestock.

The government must lead the way in stimulating the local salt industry by supporting artisanal salt farmers to mainstream their products in local and export markets; access needed technology to ensure authenticity, traceability and food safety; avail of new production areas and appropriate technologies to scale-up local production that can lower importations; and effectively engage the private sector to leverage investments to ensure sustainability.

A Comprehensive Salt Industry Development Program is needed to serve as an overarching policy to address policy gaps and technological challenges; identify and pursue strategic priority areas for social innovation and rural enterprise development; mobilize resources to reduce import dependence and achieve food sufficiency; leverage public funding and private sector investments from cooperatives, local enterprises and small businesses; and create a level playing field for local industries to grow and prosper. It will utilize the agriculture and fisheries innovation hubs and technology business incubators (TBIs) nationwide to ensure an inclusive, market-oriented, resilient, and vibrant local economies.

Compared to other agricultural commodities, the country's local salt farming and artisanal salt-making technology is relatively classic and innovative, thus making the revitalization of the salt industry more manageable to plan and execute, to finance and scale, and to build opportunities for value-creation. With enough will and commitment, these can be achieved.

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



RON P. SALO
KABAYAN Party List

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AN ACT
REVITALIZING THE SALT INDUSTRY, CREATING A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
FOR ITS DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDING INCENTIVES TO SALT FARMERS AND
EXPORTERS, PROVIDING FUND THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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 “Philippine Salt Industry Development Act”.

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is the policy of the State to promote industrialization and full employment based on sound agricultural development through industries that make full and efficient use of human and natural resources, and which are competitive in both domestic and foreign markets. For this purpose, the State shall provide support through appropriate technology and research, and adequate financial, production, marketing, and other support services to revitalize the salt industry, attain increased income for salt farmers and salt producers, achieve salt self-sufficiency, and become a net exporter of salt.

I. DEFINITION OF TERMS

SEC. 3. Definition of Terms. – For the purposes of this Act, the following terms are hereby defined as follows:

- a) *Artisanal Sea Salt* refers to unrefined sea salt, derived directly from a living sea or ocean, harvested and cooked through natural evaporation processes; it retains natural traces of minerals depending on the source and the manner of production is solar-evaporated, evaporated, cooked or smoked. Local artisanal salts include *Duldul* from Guimaras, *Asin-Tibuok* from Bohol, *Sugpo Asin* from Pangasinan.
- b) *Association* refers to a group of individuals or companies involved in common activities or endeavor towards the development of the salt industry.
- c) *Cooperative* refers to a cooperative engaged in salt production.

d) *Fleur de Sel* also known as “flower of salt”, refers to a rare, delicate and highest standard of finishing salt given its aroma and profile, and is often referred to as the caviar of salts by chefs worldwide.

e) *Food fortification* refers to the addition of nutrients to processed food at levels above the natural state.

f) *Gourmet dish* refers to food or drink that takes extra care to make or acquire, found or made only in certain locations, and ingredients of which may be unusual, hard to find in regular grocery stores, only available in limited amounts, rarely exported outside of their place of origin, or available only for short times of the year.

g) *Iodized Salt* refers to salt artificially spray-coated with iodine.

h) *Large-scale Salt Farmer/Operator/Producer* shall refer to:

(1) An individual owner or leaseholder of a salt farm that is more than fifty (50) but not more than five hundred (500) hectares; or

(2) An association, cooperative or corporation that owns or is a leaseholder of a salt farm that is more than fifty (50) but not more than one thousand (1,000) hectares.

i) *Local gourmet outlet* refers to a store, grocery or supermarket located in the Philippines that stocks and sells high-quality, unique, or hard-to-find ingredients needed to prepare gourmet dishes.

j) *Medium-scale Salt Farmer/ Operator/ Producer* shall refer to an individual, association, cooperative or corporation that owns or is a leaseholder of more than three (3) hectares but not more than fifty (50) hectares of salt farms.

k) *Philippine sea salt* refers to salt produced from the evaporation of seawater, brine, or concentrated brine in any salt farm or refinery within the Philippines.

l) *Salt Farm* refers to areas of land, shorelines, or coastal areas, including its buildings, machineries, and equipment used for salt production.

m) *Salt Producer* refers to an individual, corporation, cooperative, or association involved in the production of sea salt.

n) *Salt Project* refers to the construction, development, maintenance, and improvement of salt farms.

o) *Salt Technology Demonstration Centers* refers to training facilities where salt farming, harvesting, cooking and packaging is done for purposes of conducting hands-on training, skills enhancement, and capacity-building.

p) *Small-scale salt farmer/operator/producer* refers to an individual, association, cooperative or corporation that owns or is a leaseholder of a salt farm of not more three (3) hectares.

q) *Strategic Agri/Fisheries Enterprise (SAFE) Innovation Hubs and Technology Business Incubators* refers to a brick-and-mortar or physical presence of an organization or business facilitation service, other than infrastructure and offers products and services to its customers face-to-face in an office, or through off-wall services provided to entrepreneurs including but not limited to administrative/technical services, market facilitation and business linkages, initial seed funds and access to growth capital, lab facilities, and testing services to ensure compliance to accepted product/service standards.

SEC. 4. Salt as Aquatic Resource. – For purposes of this Act, the following provisions of Republic Act No. 8550, otherwise known as “The Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998,” are hereby amended to read as follows:

(a) Section 4 is hereby amended to read as follows:

SEC. 4. Definition of Terms. - As used in this Code, the following terms and phrases shall mean as follows:

x x x

11. Commercial Scale – A scheme of producing a minimum amount per year of SALT or harvest of Milkfish or other species including those raised in pens, cages, and tanks to be determined by the Department in consultation with the concerned sectors;

x x x

22. Fish and Fishery Aquatic Products – include not only finfish but also mollusks, crustaceans, echinoderms, marine, mammals, and all other species of aquatic flora and fauna and all other products of aquatic living resources in any form, AND SALT.

x x x

28. Fisherfolk – people directly or personally and physically engaged in taking and/or culturing and processing fishery and aquatic resources INCLUDING SEA SALT PRODUCED BY SALT FARMERS. According to House Resolution 1032 and 1046.

x x x

32. Fishpond – a land-based facility enclosed with earthen or stone material to impound water for growing fish AND/OR PRODUCING SALT.

x x x

47. Fully developed Fishpond Area – a clean leveled area enclosed by dikes, at least one foot higher than the highest floodwater level in the locality and strong enough to resist pressure at the highest flood tide; consists of at least a nursery, a transition pond, a rearing pond, RESERVOIR POND, EVAPORATING POND, SALT CRYSTALIZER POND, or a combination of any or all said classes of ponds, and a functional water control system and producing in a commercial scale.

(b) Section 46 is hereby amended to read as follows:

SEC. 46. Lease of Fishponds / “FISHPOND WITH SALT FARMS” – Fishpond leased to qualified persons and fisherfolk organizations/cooperatives shall be subject to the following conditions... x x x

- a. Areas leased for Fishpond with Salt Farms shall be subject to Section 3 (h), 3 (j), 3 (p)

(b) Section 54 is hereby amended to read as follows:

SEC. 54. Insurance for Fishponds, “FISHPOND WITH SALT FARMS”, Fish Cages, and Fish Pens – Inland Fishponds, INLAND FISHPOND WITH SALT FARMS, Fish Cages, Fish Pens shall be covered under the insurance program of the Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation for losses caused by force majeure and fortuitous events.

II. SALT INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

SEC. 5. Creation of Administration for Salt Industry Development, Revitalization and Optimization (ASInDeRO) and Mandate. – There is hereby created the Administration for Salt Industry Development, Revitalization and Optimization (ASInDeRO) which shall be mandated to ensure that the objectives of this Act are realized. It shall be composed of the following:

- (a) Secretary of the Department of Agriculture (DA) as Chair;
- (b) Secretary of the Trade and Industry as Co-Chair;
- (c) Director of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) as Vice-Chair;

Members:

- (d) Department of Science and Technology (DOST) Secretary or representative;
- (e) Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary or representative;
- (f) Department of Health Secretary or representative;
- (g) Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Secretary or representative;
- (h) Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Director General or representative;

- (i) Chief Executive Officer of the Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) or representative; and
- (j) Two (2) representatives – one (1) from salt farmers and one (1) from salt producers, from each salt producing provinces. The Secretary of the Department of Agriculture shall choose or appoint from a list of salt producers and salt farmers that will be endorsed by the Cooperative or Association, for a term of two (2) years, and may be reappointed; Provided that the representatives on the first two (2) terms shall be from Pangasinan and Mindoro Occidental.

SEC. 6. Functions. – The ASInDeRO shall have the following functions:

1. Formulate and adopt policy directions, strategic action points, and guidelines for the effective implementation of this Act;
2. Develop and approve short term, medium term and long term development plans, or a ten (10) year industry roadmap for the revitalization of the Philippine salt industry and pursue effective export strategies and developmental mechanisms to achieve competitiveness of Philippine sea salts, artisanal salt and/or specialty salts for gourmet and other industrial applications;
3. Provide strategic directions and guidance to the various departments and agencies that play a vital role in the realization of the objectives of this Act;
4. Oversee the implementation by the various departments and agencies mandated under this Act of their assigned tasks;
5. Oversee the identification of new areas suitable for government-funded salt projects and the registration, construction and lease of salt farms;
6. Provide needed support and determine the required investments both in the government and the private sector to achieve the objectives of this Act;
7. Serve as a one-stop-shop for the processing of all permits required for the approval of a salt farm project;
8. Ensure the harmonization of the rules and guidelines of various departments and agencies concerning salt;
9. Approve the lease of newly constructed salt farms to qualified individuals, associations, cooperatives or corporations pursuant to Section 10 of this Act;
10. Recommend to the Department of Budget and Management the required yearly appropriations for the identification and construction of salt farms, which shall be lodged with the Department of Agriculture; and
11. Perform other functions necessary for the efficient and effective implementation of this Act.

SEC 7. Program Management Office and Secretariat. – A Program Management Office (PMO) is hereby created which shall be headed by the Undersecretary of Fisheries under the Department of Agriculture, to oversee the overall implementation of the salt industry development plan as well as conduct regular monitoring of its execution by the implementing agencies and/or partners. The Secretariat is also hereby created under the supervision of the PMO and shall perform functions such as to coordinate and manage the regular meetings of the ASInDeRO, prepare and/or consolidate reports for the PMO, monitor the implementation of policy

decisions that the ASInDeRO has adopted and liaise with all the member departments and relevant agencies of the government, as needed.

SEC. 8. Jurisdiction over Salt Farms and Fish Ponds with Salt Farms. – The administrative jurisdiction and management of salt farms and fish ponds with salt farms shall be lodged with the Department of Agriculture – Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR).

SEC. 9. Identification of New Areas Suitable for Government-Funded Salt Projects. – The DA, through the BFAR and the National Fisheries Research and Development Institute (NFRDI), in coordination with the DENR shall spearhead in the identification of appropriate areas for Philippine salt production, orchestrate partnerships with the DOST and State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in providing technical and laboratory services, and engage local government units (LGUs), mature cooperatives and local enterprises operating in the provinces where small-scale artisanal salt production is operational and/or large-scale salt farming is in need of expansion.

The DA-BFAR and DENR shall identify suitable areas for salt production including abandoned fishponds and the NFRDI and/or SUCs shall provide technical services through the Agri/fisheries innovation hub or Technology Business Incubators in these provinces, taking into account the number of potential salt farmers and their families who shall benefit therefrom and address food traceability requirements including the type of salt produced (artisanal/gourmet salt, table salt, iodized salt), the salt farmer/consolidator/trader, volume and value generated and end-market to determine importance of salt production in the area: *Provided*, That this shall not prevent private individuals, associations, cooperatives, and corporations from identifying, investing in, and developing present and future salt farms, apart from government-funded salt projects.

SEC. 10. Registration, Construction, and Lease of Salt Farms. – The DA-BFAR shall facilitate the prompt registration of salt farms as well as assist in the design, construction, and development of small-scale artisanal salt farms, either on its own or through partnership with the private sector, while the DOST shall provide the necessary technology in the construction of large-scale salt farms employing modern technologies to increase production efficiency and environmentally-sound practices.

Whenever applicable and necessary, the DENR shall promptly act on the processing and issuance of permits and clearances, such as Environmental Compliance Certificates, prior to the construction of salt farms to ensure that such projects will not cause a significant negative impact on the environment.

The DA-BFAR shall identify suitable areas for lease, assist in the construction, rehabilitation, and/or expansion of small-scale artisanal salt farms, and provide technical assistance for new investors or to salt farm operators undergoing expansion. The DA-BFAR shall recommend to ASInDeRO the approval of the application for lease of Government-Funded Salt projects--newly constructed salt farms to investors, applying the prevailing BFAR fishpond rental rates: *Provided*, That this shall not in any way affect privately-owned salt farms or existing leases, such as those covered by Fishpond Lease Agreements (FLAs), with actual occupants.

For purposes of eligibility and priority for the lease of the newly-constructed salt farms, the DA shall come up with equitable criteria thereon for approval by ASInDeRO, taking into consideration and priority to small salt farmers and artisanal salt farmers.

The DA-NFRDI, DOST and SUCs shall likewise showcase best practices, harness indigenous knowledge, and promote innovative technologies to effectively realize the Salt Industry Development Program. These agencies shall exert their best efforts, with the end-goal of increasing the number of food safety compliant salt farmers and producers through their SAFE Innovation Hubs or Salt Technology Demonstration Centers in the maintenance and development of the leased salt farms.

SEC 11. Fishpond Lease Agreements to Include Salt Production. – Fishpond Lease Agreements (FLAs) shall automatically include salt farming or production as among the valid activities that may be undertaken by the leaseholder. FLA holders who intend to venture into salt farming shall be given the same support, training, and financing given to salt farmers, as provided under this Act.

SEC 12. Construction of Salt Farm Roads, to be known as Daan Asinan. – Consistent with the development plans on the revitalization of salt industry, the DA, in coordination with the LGUs and the resident-salt farmers, shall identify priority locations of roads linking the salt farms to the market, to be known as *Daan Asinan*. The DA shall take into account the investment for salt farm to be undertaken in the area, the number of salt farmers and their families who shall benefit therefrom and the amount of salt produced or potentially produced in the salt farms. Thereafter, the DA shall undertake the construction, improvement, and maintenance of the *Daan Asinan*.

SEC 13. Funding for Development of Salt Farms, Lease of Government-Developed Salt Farms, and Equipment. – The DA-BFAR, in consultation with individuals, corporations, associations, and cooperatives from the salt industry, will allocate and provide funding and technical support needed for the maintenance, repair, and upgrading of existing salt farms and newly constructed government-funded salt projects. The funds will cover materials, dike and canal repairs, equipment, and other items specified by industry stakeholders, ensuring the continued productivity and competitiveness of the salt industry.

Government financial institutions such as, but not limited to, the Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) and the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP), shall extend financial assistance to viable projects of eligible and credit worthy salt farmers, cooperatives and micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) for the development, operation, and improvement of salt farms, lease of government-developed salt farms, and purchase of salt farming equipment.

SEC. 14. Exemption from Public Bidding Requirements. – Salt farm projects undertaken by farmers, farmers' organizations, and other private entities whose funding is partly or wholly subsidized by the government or acquired by way of loan from government financial institutions are not covered by laws on procurement.

SEC. 15. Training. – The DA, together with the DOST, DTI, FDA, and TESDA, shall provide complementary training programs to develop/upgrade the skills and

competencies of Philippine salt farmers and producers, ensure product traceability and compliance to food safety, technology acquisition including product labelling and packaging, conduct continuous training on market positioning for Philippine artisanal/specialty and industrial salts and such other skills necessary in the maintenance and development of the local salt industry. These agencies shall also assist the farmers to be able to effectively comply with the requirements of Republic Act No. 8172, otherwise known as “An Act for Salt Iodization Nationwide (ASIN)”.

SEC. 16. Institution of SAFE Innovation Hubs and Salt Technology Demonstration Centers and Funding for SUCs. – The DA, through the NFRDI and DOST shall establish SAFE Innovation Hubs and Salt Technology Demonstration Centers, as defined under Secs. 3(o) and 3(q) of this Act.

SEC. 17. Salt Farmers Cooperatives. – The Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) shall assist in the formation, organizational strengthening and financial literacy of cooperatives and their local salt farmers-members and producers in order that they can leverage their resources and provide sustainable operations and increase the number of successful cooperative-managed salt farms in the country.

SEC. 18. Trade and Export Assistance. – The DTI and DA shall assist and support local salt farmers in the trade and exportation of Philippine sea salt. It shall enhance the capabilities and global competitiveness of potential and existing producers and exporters of sea salt through export financing; business matching; provision of trade and market information; organization of trade fairs and business missions; conduct of seminars, workshops, conferences and symposium on export-related subjects, including export documentation and procedures; product design and development; market consultancy; and product consultancy.

The government will give preference to locally produced salt in government purchases.

SEC. 19. Incentives. – The DTI, through the Board of Investments (BOI) shall give the highest priority in its grant of incentives to businesses and industries with linkages to salt farming. It shall include in its Strategic Investment Priorities Plan the fiscal and non-fiscal incentives for Philippine sea salt farming, artisanal/specialty salt farming, commercial-scale salt production, refining and processing, and salt farm modernization. It shall likewise grant Pioneering Status to investments in the said activities.

The DA-BFAR and NFRDI, DENR, DOST, DTI, DILG, LGUs and the CDA shall provide to salt producers the same benefits and livelihood programs that are provided to the fisherfolk sector.

SEC. 20. Import Duties. – To cushion the impacts of imports on the local producers of traditional, artisanal, or non-iodized salt in the country, the import duty/ies for these specific products shall be increased to a maximum (100) percent *ad valorem*, subject to the ceiling commitment to the WTO, ATIGA, AANZFTA, and RCEP, where applicable, subject to successful negotiations under these international agreements. However, the Executive Branch may apply duty/ies lower than 100 per cent, as the need arises, following the process prescribed in the Tariff and Customs Code of the

Philippines (TCCP), but in no case shall the applied import duty/ies be lower than the existing rate/s before the implementation of this Act or thirty (30) per cent, whichever is higher. However, the existing tariff commitments for non-iodized salt under the abovementioned international agreements shall be maintained for the import duty/ies being applied before the implementation of this Act.

To effectively operationalize and implement the above provisions, the Tariff Commission (TC), DA, DTI, and Bureau of Customs (BOC) shall facilitate the establishment of separate and dedicated tariff nomenclatures for all traditional, artisanal, and non-iodized salt within six (6) months from the effectivity of this Act.

SEC. 21. Research. – The DA-NFRDI shall conduct research, either on its own or in collaboration with SUCs, to enhance the technological development, provide applicable policy direction, and develop innovative project-based interventions that may be adopted and implemented to achieve the objectives of this Act. The DA shall collaborate with DOST and DTI to provide a common fund and financial resources to the cooperatives and local enterprises for this purpose.

SUCs shall also be awarded funding, grants, and subsidies to engage in research and development, extension training, and other related activities to upgrade the salt industry.

The research conducted shall also support the operation of the Salt Technology Demonstration Centers and the SAFE Innovation Hubs and Technology Business Incubators created under this Act.

SEC. 22. Human Resources Development. – All stakeholders in the salt industry shall contribute to the development of a sustainable human resource for the industry. Towards this end, the DOLE, in collaboration with the duly recognized salt associations and salt cooperatives, the Commission on Higher Education, the TESDA, the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) and the private sector, shall formulate and implement a Human Resources Development (HRD) Master Plan for the salt industry which shall include, but not limited to, the following:

- a) Capacity building, skills trainings, institutional strengthening of the salt farm workers, salt farmers and their organizations to actively contribute in productivity and competitiveness;
- b) Scholarship program for the underprivileged but deserving college and post graduate students who are taking up courses in relevant fields of discipline in SUCs which have programs in agriculture, agricultural engineering and mechanics, and chemical engineering/salt technology; and for vocational courses and skills development for farmers and farm technicians, and skilled workers in salt farms; and
- c) Conduct of capability training or attendance to local or international trainings and seminars by salt farmers and workers.

SEC. 23. Priority Commodity. – The DA shall ensure that salt is a priority commodity to be produced locally in areas or regions identified in the development

plan for the revitalization of the salt industry. The required resources shall be allocated by the DA for this purpose.

SEC. 24. Classification of Salt Farms. – For purposes of determining the current market values, applicable lease rentals, and tax rates to be imposed by both the national government and the local government units, salt farms shall be classified as fishponds.

SEC. 25. Exemption of exported salt and salt sold in local gourmet outlets from mandatory iodization. – Philippine sea salt exported to other countries, those to be sold to local gourmet outlets, and those to be used for other commercial applications not related to food fortification such as, but not limited to, water treatment, feeds, and chemical processing, shall be exempt from mandatory iodization provided under the provisions of Republic Act No. 8172 or ASIN Law.

Food manufacturers, restaurants and chefs may also be exempted in the mandatory use of iodized salt on their specific products under guidelines to be issued by the FDA when the taste or quality of the product will be significantly altered with the use of iodized salt.

SEC. 26. VAT Exemption of Locally-produced Iodized salt. – The sale of locally-produced iodized salt shall be exempt from the value-added tax.

SEC. 27. Control Measures. – Salt farmers or producers of salt shall register with the BFAR.

The BFAR shall adopt measures to ensure compliance with food safety guidelines of salt intended for human consumption; Provided that, salt which are not intended for food consumption shall not be subjected to food safety laws and guidelines.

The BFAR, through its regional offices, shall ensure that pure, un-iodized salt shall be promptly issued with necessary transport permits and certification documents for exportation purposes or sale to local gourmet stores.

Only small-scale salt farmers shall be allowed to sell food grade un-iodized salt to local gourmet stores. Local gourmet stores shall be allowed to sell registered Philippine un-iodized sea salt.

Small, medium or large-scale salt farmers shall be allowed to export un-iodized salt. Food grade salt, whether iodized or un-iodized, shall be registered with the FDA.

SEC. 28. LGUs Assistance. – LGUs shall enact local ordinances to support the development of Philippine sea salt/artisanal/gourmet/specialty salt produced in their respective municipalities/cities, implement appropriate measures to ensure the ease-of-doing business and ensure that salt farmers or producers and local gourmet outlet owners are free from harassment on alleged non-compliance with iodization requirements for those exempted under Sec. 25 of this Act. Law enforcement units, including members of the Philippine National Police, shall ensure that those exempted from mandatory salt iodization are not unduly burdened.

III. FINAL PROVISIONS

SEC. 29. Agencies' Regular Programs. – The mandates, functions and activities of the various departments and agencies identified in this Act shall be considered regular programs and shall be included in their annual budgets.

SEC. 30. Reporting. – The various departments and agencies specified in this Act shall provide regular updates to the ASInDeRO on the progress of their programs and activities toward the realization of the objectives of this Act.

SEC. 31. Congressional Oversight. – There shall be a Congressional Oversight on the implementation of this Act composed of 5 representatives each coming from the Senate and the House of Representatives to be appointed by the Senate President and Speaker of the House of Representatives, respectively.

SEC. 32. Appropriations. – The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act shall initially be charged to the appropriations of the agencies concerned as may be appropriated, under the current General Appropriations Act. Thereafter, such amount as may be necessary for its implementation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act from their respective budgets.

A Salt Development Fund shall be created and funded from the tariffs on salt imports. This fund shall be used to partially fund the identification, construction and development of government-funded salt farms as specified in this Act.

SEC. 33. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – The ASInDeRO created under Section 5 of this Act shall be created and convened within sixty (60) days from the approval of this Act. Thereafter, it shall issue the Implementing Rules and Regulations of this Act within one hundred twenty (120) days from approval of this Act.

SEC. 34. Separability Clause. – Any portion or provision of this Act that may be declared unconstitutional or invalid shall not have the effect of nullifying the other portions or provisions hereof as long as such remaining portion or provision can still subsist and be given effect.

SEC. 35. Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, orders, rules, and regulations or other issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 36. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or any two (2) newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines.

Approved.