

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 5537



Introduced by **Pangasinan Fifth District Representative**
HON. RAMON N. GUICO JR.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Salt is integral to human life in general. Aside from its essential nutrient value when consumed moderately, it is also one of the oldest and most ubiquitous food seasoning and is also an important element in food preservation.

Knowing the importance of salt in the human diet and its viability as an economic industry, one would think that in the Philippines, with a coastline of 36,289 km, where majority of salt production can be derived, salt-making would be a lucrative business. The reality of the situation, however, presents a dire circumstance; one that threatens the very existence of the salt farming industry if the government does nothing to intervene.

In the 1990s, the salt-making industry was once a vibrant undertaking in the Philippines. The provinces of Bulacan, Cavite, Mindoro, and Pangasinan once produced 85% of the country's annual salt requirement. However, the industry has long since been crippled by climate change, urbanization, and the lack of modern salt-making techniques and technology. Salt flats or beds had been converted to more profitable industries such as fishponds, residential, or commercial properties. As a consequence, the country now only produces 20% of Filipinos' annual salt requirements and we have come to rely on importing the remaining 80% from big salt-producing countries like Australia and China. Moreover, as cheap imports flooded the market, small-scale salt makers found it increasingly difficult to keep up with the competition and had therefore decided to give up salt making as a profession.

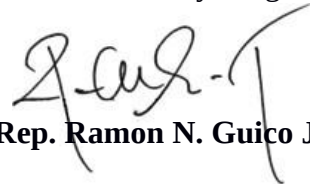
These developments simply cannot be. Salt-making is not only a potentially lucrative business, but more importantly a way of life for many Filipinos. It is part of our proud heritage and tradition. In this representation's home province of Pangasinan, the etymology of the province's name literally means "place of salt" or "place of salt-making." Famous local products such as *bagoong* or *alamang*, *longganisa*, *cornik*, among others are reliant on cheap, but good quality salt. Salt farms are also becoming a tourist boon in Pangasinan, therefore providing a learning opportunity for people interested in learning the art of salt-making. Suffice it to say that it is an integral part of Pangasinan culture.

Recognizing the precarious situation that the salt industry is in; the administration of Pres. Ferdinand Marcos Jr. vowed to revive and modernize the Philippine salt industry. As such, in

fulfillment of the President's policy directive to save this ages-old art and hopefully transform it to a major industrial powerhouse, this bill is proposed. Under this Act, Advanced Salt Innovation (ASIN) Centers shall initially be established in the major salt-producing provinces of Bulacan, Cavite, Mindoro, and Pangasinan with the prospect of establishing more should the need arise. These ASIN Centers will be responsible for reviving, promoting, developing, and preserving the salt-making industry in the country through various activities, programs, and projects intended to train salt makers in the modern techniques of salt-making; transfer vital technologies in the pursuit of the same; and conduct researches integral to improving salt production in the country. The goal of this Act is twofold, first is to achieve self-sufficiency in meeting the country's salt requirements and second, to develop an export-oriented salt-making industry.

Finally, aware of the need for a more integrated governmental approach to any government undertaking, the ASIN centers under the supervision and control of the Department of Agriculture shall coordinate with the appropriate government agencies to foster market linkages, both domestic and international; to develop salt-making techniques capable of withstanding the effects of climate change; to ensure that salt-making is environmentally safe and sustainable; and to promote the industry via farm tourism.

For the reasons abovementioned, the immediate approval of this bill is earnestly sought.



Rep. Ramon N. Guico Jr.

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AN ACT
ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE ADVANCED SALT INNOVATION (ASIN)
CENTER TO PROMOTE AND ENHANCE THE SALT-MAKING INDUSTRY IN THE
PHILIPPINES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

1 **SECTION 1. Short Title.** – This act shall be known as the “**Advanced Salt Innovation**
2 **Act.**”
3

4 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** – The Constitution provides that the State shall develop a
5 self-reliant and independent national economy effectively controlled by Filipinos. It also provides
6 that the State shall support indigenous, appropriate, and self-reliant scientific and technological
7 capabilities, and their application to the country’s productive systems and national life. Towards
8 this end, the State shall establish various programs to enhance, promote, and preserve the salt-
9 making industry in the Philippines.
10

11 **SEC. 3. Definition of Terms.** – For the purposes of this Act, the following terms shall
12 mean:
13

- 14 a. **Philippine Advanced Salt Innovation Center (PAC) or ASIN Center** shall
15 refer to the Advanced Salt Innovation (ASIN) Centers to be established in the
16 University of Pangasinan in Lingayen, Pangasinan; Bulacan State University in
17 Malolos, Bulacan; Cavite State University in Indang, Cavite; and the Mindoro
18 State College of Agriculture and Technology in Victoria, Oriental Mindoro
19 among other prospective ASIN Centers that shall be established pursuant to the
20 provisions of this Act.
21
- 22 b. **Smallholder/s** shall refer to salt makers producing salt from no more than five
23 (5) hectares of salt beds/salt flats.
24

1 **SEC. 4. *Establishment of the Philippine ASIN Center (PAC).*** – There is hereby created
2 a Philippine Advanced Salt Innovation (ASIN) Center, hereinafter referred to as PAC, which shall
3 be under the supervision and control of the Department of Agriculture.
4

5 **SEC. 5. *Powers and Functions of the PAC.*** – The PAC shall have the following powers
6 and functions:
7

- 8 a. Enhance, promote, and preserve the salt-making industry with the goal of
9 achieving self-sufficiency with respect to the country's annual salt requirements
10 and exportation of the same;
- 11 b. Enable salt farmers, particularly smallholders to avail themselves of state-of-
12 the-art salt-making equipment and technologies through an organized salt-
13 making innovation program;
- 14 c. Undertake training programs for salt makers, particularly smallholders,
15 designed to develop their capacities to undertake modern salt-making
16 techniques and operate modern salt-making equipment and technology.
- 17 d. Conduct research activities in all disciplines that lead to the improvement of
18 salt-making in the country;
- 19 e. Encourage coastal local government units to develop their own local salt-
20 making industries and contribute to the goal of meeting the country's annual
21 salt requirements; and
- 22 f. Enter into memoranda of agreement and received donations through the
23 Department of Agriculture from local and foreign sources. Upon the
24 recommendation of the PAC Advisory Board, the individual ASIN centers may
25 enter into agreements directly with funding agencies through their respective
26 board of regents or head of agency.
27

28 **SEC. 6. *Priorities.*** – The PAC shall give priority to the following activities:
29

- 30 a. Sustained increase in domestic salt production three (3) years after the
31 effectivity of this Act;
- 32 b. Development of effective salt –making strategies and techniques;
- 33 c. Socio-economic researches to ensure the viability and acceptance of technology
34 by salt makers;
- 35 d. Development of appropriate technologies that are cost-effective, simple, and
36 practical;
- 37 e. Enhancing salt farming capabilities of existing and potentially major salt-
38 making regions;
- 39 f. Coordinate with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and other
40 appropriate government agencies, to foster linkages between domestic and
41 international markets and salt makers to promote trade;
- 42 g. Coordinate with the Department of Science and Technology to develop
43 innovative salt-making techniques and technologies with emphasis on
44 preventing climate change from adversely affecting salt production;
- 45 h. Coordinate with the Department of Tourism to include and promote salt farms
46 in the farm tourism program of the department; and

- 1 i. Coordinate with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to
2 promote and develop a sustainable salt-making strategy.
3

4 **SEC. 7. PAC Advisory Board.** – The PAC Advisory Board shall be composed of the:
5

- 6 a. Secretary of Agriculture or his duly authorized representative, as Chairperson;
7 b. Undersecretary for Agri-Industrialization and for Fisheries, as Vice
8 Chairperson;
9 c. Secretary of Science and Technology or his duly authorized representative;
10 d. Secretary of Trade and Industry or his duly authorized representative;
11 e. Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources or his duly authorized
12 representative.
13 f. Presidents of the Pangasinan State University, Bulacan State University, Cavite
14 State University, and Mindoro State College of Agriculture and Technology
15 and the presidents of the state colleges or universities where an ASIN center
16 may be established pursuant to this Act;
17 g. Executive Director of the Philippine Council for Agriculture and Fisheries;
18 h. Executive Director of the PAC; and
19 i. Salt farmers' representative to be appointed by the Board.
20

21 **SEC. 8. Functions of the PAC Advisory Board.** – The PAC Advisory Board shall perform
22 the following functions:
23

- 24 a. Formulate policies, programs, and projects for the development of the salt-
25 making industry in the country;
26 b. Review and recommend the annual budget of the PAC;
27 c. Evaluate the implementation, efficiency, and effectiveness of the program and
28 projects of the PAC; and
29 d. Recommend the establishment or abolition of ASIN centers as may be deemed
30 necessary.
31

32 **SEC. 9. Executive Director of the PAC.** – The Executive Director of the PAC shall be
33 appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture. The Executive Director of the PAC shall perform the
34 following functions:
35

- 36 a. Oversee the implementation of the policies, programs, and projects of the PAC;
37 b. Assist the PAC Advisory Board in the review, evaluation, and monitoring of
38 the ASIN program; and
39 c. Perform such other functions as may be assigned by the PAC Board.
40

41 **SEC. 10. Appointment of Directors or Project Leaders of Other ASIN Centers.** – The
42 Directors or Project Leaders of the ASIN centers shall be appointed by the respective board of
43 regents or head of agency.
44

1 **SEC. 11. *Functions of the Directors or Project Leaders of Other ASIN Centers.*** - Subject
2 to the policies of the PAC, the Directors or Project Leaders of other ASIN centers shall perform
3 the following functions:
4

- 5 a. Administer the policies, program and projects of the PAC in their respective
6 centers;
 - 7 b. Recommend the creation of divisions and sections including the staffing pattern
8 of the centers;
 - 9 c. Prepare the budget of their centers;
 - 10 d. Approve the expenditures of their respective budgets;
 - 11 e. Recommend to their respective head of agency the appointment of personnel or
12 consultants;
 - 13 f. Recommend policies, programs and projects to the Executive Director of the
14 PAC; and
 - 15 g. Perform such other functions as may be assigned by the Executive Director of
16 the PAC.
- 17

18 **SEC. 12. *Implementation and Coordination of the Program.*** — The PAC Advisory
19 Board through the Executive Director shall coordinate, monitor and evaluate the implementation
20 of the ASIN Centers. It shall identify, through the Directors of ASIN centers and Project Leaders
21 from the various implementing stations, the programs and projects in the areas of production,
22 processing, and marketing of salt. It shall formulate strategies relative to increasing annual national
23 salt production. The centers shall be located in Pangasinan State University in Lingayen,
24 Pangasinan; Bulacan State University in Malolos, Bulacan; Cavite State University in Indang,
25 Cavite; and the Mindoro State College of Agriculture and Technology in Victoria, Oriental
26 Mindoro. These centers shall specialize in the development of salt farming strategies, techniques,
27 and requisite technologies to improve salt production with the goal of attaining self-sufficiency.
28

29 **SEC. 13. *Salt Farmers' Participation.*** – The salt farmer-participants shall be encouraged
30 to establish strong farmers associations or cooperatives to serve as focal point for government
31 assistance in the revival, development, and dissemination of technology on salt-farming.
32

33 **SEC. 14. *Participation of the Department of Agriculture and Local Government Units***
34 **(LGUs).** — The ASIN centers, the regional and provincial offices of the Department of Agriculture
35 and the local government units where salt farming is viable shall implement a salt farming
36 development program within their respective areas in accordance with the national policy and
37 program of the PAC.
38

39 **SEC. 15. *Use of Funds.*** – Not more than thirty percent (30%) of funds allocated under this
40 Act and in subsequent annual appropriations shall be used for personal services, and maintenance
41 and operating expenses, fifteen percent (15%) for research and development, and fifty-five percent
42 (55%) for salt farmers' assistance, training, technology transfers, and other such activities,
43 programs, and projects necessary to improve the salt industry pursuant to the provisions of this
44 Act.
45

1 **SEC. 16. *Annual Report.*** – The PAC submit an annual report to the Office of the President,
2 the Senate, and the House of Representatives indicating among others recommendations to further
3 improve salt production.
4

5 **SEC. 17. *Transfer of Salt Farming Programs to the PAC.*** — Upon approval of this Act,
6 any existing salt farming programs and projects implemented by various agencies shall be
7 transferred to the PAC.
8

9 **SEC. 18. *Sunset Review.*** – Within six (6) years after the effectivity of this Act, or as the
10 need arises, the appropriate committees from the Senate and the House of Representatives shall
11 jointly conduct a sunset review. This review shall take into account the accomplishments and
12 impact of this Act, as well as the performance and organizational structure of its implementing
13 agencies, for purposes of determining remedial legislation.
14

15 **SEC. 19. *Appropriations.*** – The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act
16 shall be included in the General Appropriations Act of the year following its enactment into law
17 and thereafter.
18

19 **SEC. 20. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, executive orders, rules and regulations, or parts
20 thereof which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly:
21 Provided; however, That nothing in this Act shall amend, modify or repeal the provisions of
22 Republic Act No. 7160, otherwise known as the Local Government Code.

23 **SEC. 21. *Separability Clause.*** – If any part or provision of this Act is declared invalid or
24 unconstitutional, the other parts not otherwise affected shall remain in full effect and force.

25 **SEC. 22. *Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days from the date of its
26 publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,