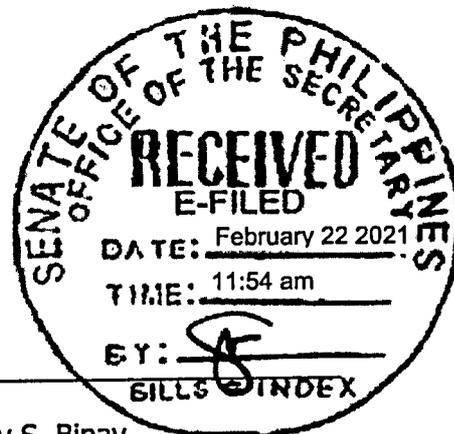


EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Second Regular Session)

SENATE
P. S. Res No. 656



Introduced by Senator Maria Lourdes Nancy S. Binay

RESOLUTION
URGING THE INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCE FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF EMERGING INFECTIOUS DISEASES, IN CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS, TO COME UP WITH A CONCRETE PLAN ON THE PROPER HANDLING AND MANAGEMENT OF COVID-19 VACCINATION MEDICAL WASTES IN ORDER TO PREVENT HARMFUL HEALTH RISKS

1 WHEREAS, the Philippines has been responding to mitigate the impact of
2 COVID-19 pandemic and has been implementing numerous interventions since March
3 2020 when the World Health Organization declared it as a public health emergency of
4 international concern. However, it appears that the surge in infectious medical wastes
5 brought about by COVID-19 is not given much attention;
6

7 WHEREAS, as COVID-19 cases continue to increase, medical facilities are also
8 seeing a surge in the volume of infectious medical wastes they produce. According to
9 the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), hospitals, healthcare facilities
10 and individuals are producing more waste than usual, including masks, gloves, gowns
11 and other protective equipment that could be infected with the virus¹;
12

13 WHEREAS, according to the UNEP, when not managed soundly, infected
14 medical waste could be subject to uncontrolled dumping, leading to public health risks,
15 and to open burning or uncontrolled incineration, leading to the release of toxins in
16 the environment and to secondary transmission of diseases to humans. Other wastes
17 can reach water sources and add to riverine and marine pollution²;
18

19 WHEREAS, in April 2020, the Asian Development Bank estimated that hospitals
20 in Metro Manila—the region that accounts for at least 55% of the nation's cases—
21 would generate 280 metric tons of medical waste in a single day³;

¹ United Nations Environment Programme website, COVID-19 Waste management Factsheets,
<https://www.unep.org/resources/factsheet/covid-19-waste-management-factsheets>.

² Ibid.

³ Philstar, 'Earth not healing': Medical waste piles up as COVID-19 cases rise, August 15, 2020,
<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/08/15/2034986/earth-not-healing-medical-waste-piles-covid-19-cases-rise>.

1 WHEREAS, data from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources
2 (DENR) showed that the country has so far generated 19,187.7 metric tons of
3 infectious healthcare waste from April to July. The figure, which refers to the waste
4 service providers intend to transport and treat, was based on the special permit to
5 transport submitted by treaters. Of the said figure, only 29% has been treated and
6 disposed of, although the waste has already been pulled out from medical facilities.
7 The cause of delay is partly due to the lack of capacity that waste treatment and
8 disposal facilities have and partly because waste haulers need permits so the DENR
9 can keep track of where hospital waste goes⁴;

10
11 WHEREAS, medical waste in the country is typically disinfected through steam
12 sterilization, also called autoclave, which subjects the waste to intense heat and
13 pressure to kill pathogens—prior to disposal in a landfill. Autoclaves can process
14 between 100 kilograms to as much as 3,000 kilograms per cycle⁵;

15
16 WHEREAS, based on the Philippine National Development and Vaccination Plan
17 for COVID-19 Vaccines (Interim Plan, January 2021), waste generated at the health
18 care facilities after vaccination may pose harm and risks to the health care workers
19 and communities if not properly managed. Thus, proper planning and implementation
20 of managing wastes generated in the nationwide COVID-19 vaccination is required,
21 considering the complexity of the nature of the vaccines. Proper handling, storage,
22 collection and disposal of the wastes shall be followed to ensure protection of the
23 environment and the general public⁶;

24
25 WHEREAS, according to vaccine czar, Carlito Galvez Jr., the country is expected
26 to receive the initial vaccine this February. A total of 5.6 million doses produced by
27 Pfizer-BioNTech and AstraZeneca are expected to be delivered through the COVAX
28 facility⁷ and as such, the government aims to vaccinate around 60 million to 70 million
29 of its citizens in 3 to 5 years, projecting to immunize 200,000 Filipinos every day;

30
31 WHEREAS, there might be no evidence that unprotected human contact during
32 the handling of health care wastes has resulted in the transmission of the COVID-19
33 disease⁸, it is much safer that the country's handling and management of COVID-19
34 vaccination medical wastes is pro-active;

35
36 WHEREAS, the proper handling and management of COVID-19 vaccination
37 medical wastes in far-flung areas or geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas
38 must also be considered and included in the government's overall plan;

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

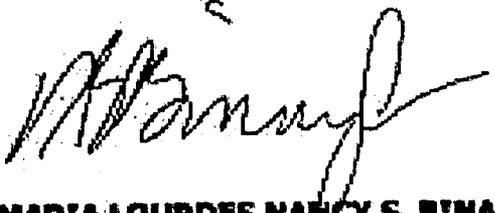
⁶ Department of Health website, The Philippine National Deployment and Vaccination Plan for COVID-19 Vaccines, <https://doh.gov.ph/sites/default/files/basic-page/The%20Philippine%20National%20COVID-19%20Vaccination%20Deployment%20Plan.pdf>.

⁷ CNN Philippines, PH expects at least 5.6M COVID-19 vaccine doses from Pfizer, AstraZeneca in Q1, January 31, 2021, <https://www.cnnphilippines.com/news/2021/1/31/5.6-million-vaccine-doses-pfizer-aztrazeneca-ph.html>.

⁸ World Health Organization website, Water, sanitation, hygiene, and waste management for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-IPC-WASH-2020.4>.

1 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE, AS IT IS HEREBY
2 RESOLVED, to urge the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging
3 Infectious Diseases, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, to come up with a
4 concrete plan on the proper handling and management of COVID-19 vaccination
5 medical wastes in order to prevent harmful health risks.

Adopted,



MARIA LOURDES NANCY S. BINAY