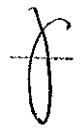


SIXTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC)
OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Third Regular Session)

Office of the Secretary

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SENATE
S. No. 2978

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

AN ACT
MANDATING THE USE OF SAFE CLEANING PRODUCTS IN SCHOOLS TO
PROTECT THE HEALTH OF STUDENTS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Constitution, Article 2, Section 13 provides:

The State recognizes the vital role of the youth in nation-building and shall promote and protect their physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being. It shall inculcate in the youth patriotism and nationalism, and encourage their involvement in public and civic affairs.

According to the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), indoor air pollution is one of the most pressing personal health concerns of their country. Residues of more than 400 toxic chemicals - some found in household products and food - have been identified in human blood and fat tissue.¹ EPA's Office of Research and Development's "Total Exposure Assessment Methodology (TEAM) Study" found levels of about a dozen common organic pollutants to be two to five times higher indoors than outside, regardless of whether the homes were located in rural or highly industrial areas. TEAM studies indicated that while people are using products containing organic chemicals, they can expose themselves and others to very high pollutant levels, and elevated concentrations can persist in the air long after the activity is completed.²

Many common household cleaning products contain dangerous ingredients such as caustics or solvents, which when used, stored or disposed of improperly are health

¹ <http://www.healthy-communications.com/factsoncarcinogensathome.html>.
² <http://www.epa.gov/iaq/voc.html>.

hazards. Caustic chemicals such as those found in oven cleaners (lye, sodium hydroxide), drain cleaners, scouring powders, or bleach can cause burns and severe damage to the skin and eyes. Solvents are fast-drying substances that dissolve another substance. Inhalation of these vapors or accidental drinking can be harmful or even fatal. Long-term exposure to some solvents may cause liver and kidney problems, birth defects, central nervous system disorders, and cancer. Furniture polish, silver cleaner, paint remover and wood floor wax contain solvents.³ Consumer cleaning products like laundry detergents, all-purpose sprays, dish soaps, and scrub sponges often smell like pleasant things found in nature, but their ingredients pose dangers to health. According to a new study conducted by the University of Washington, many scented cleaning products contain mystery chemicals not listed on their labels that are toxic to health. A team of researchers from the university tested a variety of consumer cleaning products and found that 25 of the most frequently used scented products contained an average of 17 hazardous chemicals.⁴

Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) are emitted as gases from certain solids or liquids. VOCs include a variety of chemicals, some of which may have short- and long-term adverse health effects. Concentrations of many VOCs are consistently higher indoors than outdoors. VOCs are emitted by a wide array of products numbering in the thousands. This includes cleaning supplies. Organic chemicals are widely used as ingredients in household products. Many cleaning, disinfecting, cosmetic, degreasing, and hobby products contain organic solvents. All of these products can release organic compounds while you are using them, and, to some degree, when they are stored.

Children are more sensitive because they are still developing their basic body systems. The brain, internal organs, respiratory, and immune systems are not fully developed until adolescence. In Canada, respiratory illness is now the leading cause of

³ University of Florida website, <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/he791>.

⁴ http://www.naturalnews.com/030570_cleaning_products_toxins.html.

admission to the hospital for children. Childhood asthma has jumped by 400 percent. After injuries, cancer is now the leading cause of death in children between the ages of five and nine.⁵

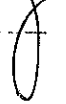
This bill proposes to protect the health of students, custodial staff, and other building occupants by requiring the use of safe cleaning products in schools.⁶


MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO
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⁵ http://www.health-report.co.uk/toxic_household.htm.

⁶ This bill was originally filed in the Fifteenth Congress, Second Regular session.

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

1 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the "Safe Cleaning
2 Products in Schools Act."

3 SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to promote and
4 protect the physical well-being of the youth recognizing their vital role in nation-
5 building.

6 SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act, the term:

7 (1) "Air freshener" means an aerosol spray, liquid deodorizer, plug-in product,
8 paradi-chlorobenzene block, scented urinal screen, or other product used to mask odors or
9 freshen the air in a room.

10 (2) "Antimicrobial pesticides" means a pesticide that is intended to:

11 (A) disinfect, sanitize, reduce, or mitigate growth or development of a
12 microbiological organism; or

13 (B) protect inanimate objects, industrial processes or systems,
14 surfaces, water, or other chemical substances from contamination, fouling, or
15 deterioration caused by bacteria, viruses, fungi, protozoa, algae or slime.

1 (3) "Cleaning product" means an institutional compound intended for
2 routine cleaning, including antimicrobial pesticides, general purpose cleaners, bathroom
3 cleaners, glass cleaners, carpet cleaners, floor care products, and hand soaps.

4 (4) "Property manager" shall refer to the employee of a school who has
5 supervisory and decision making authority with regard to the sanitary and physical
6 condition of school property, including authority over cleaning product purchases.

7 (5) "Disinfectant" means substances or mixtures of substances used on
8 hard inanimate surfaces and objects to destroy or irreversibly inactivate infectious fungi
9 and bacteria but not necessarily their spores.

10 (6) "Environmentally preferable cleaning product" means a cleaning product
11 that has a less negative effect on human health and the environment when
12 compared to competing products serving the same purpose.

13 (7) "Green cleaning" means a practice that includes the use of a cleaning
14 product certified as environmentally preferable by an independent third party entity,
15 best practices that follow accepted management standards and improve indoor air
16 quality, and equipment that facilitates effective cleaning.

17 (8) (A) "Independent third party" refers to a nationally recognized organization
18 that has developed a program for the purpose of certifying environmentally preferable
19 cleaning products.

20 The certification program shall:

- 21 (i) define a manufacturer's certification fees;
- 22 (ii) identify any potential conflicts of interest;
- 23 (iii) base certification on considerations of human health and
24 safety, ecological toxicity, other environmental impacts, and resource
25 conservation as appropriate product and its packaging on a life-cycle basis;

1 (iv) develop certification standards in an open, public and
2 transparent manner that involves the public and key stakeholders;

3 (v) periodically revise and update the standards to remain
4 consistent with the current research about the impacts of chemicals on
5 human health;

6 (vi) monitor and enforce the standards for the purpose of
7 certification, and have the authority to inspect the manufacturing facility
8 and periodically to do so, and have a registered or legally protected
9 certification mark; and

10 (vii) make the standards easily accessible to purchasers and
11 manufacturers; or

12 (B) In the alternative, "independent third party" means any organization
13 otherwise deemed by the DENR to satisfactorily assess and certify environmentally
14 preferable cleaning products. In the absence of an independent third party, the
15 certification shall be undertaken by the Environmental Management Bureau of the
16 DENR.

17 (9) "School" shall refer to preschools, primary and secondary schools both
18 public and private.

19 SECTION 4. *Environmentally preferable cleaning product.* – A school shall
20 ensure that only environmentally preferable cleaning products are used to clean their
21 premises. The property manager shall use cleaning products certified as environmentally
22 preferable by an independent third party as defined in Section 4 of this Act.

23 SECTION 5. *Exceptions.* – A school may temporarily use non-environmentally
24 preferable disinfectant in the following cases:

25 (1) Blood, body fluids, or fecal soiling is present on any surface; or

1 (2) The Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources makes a case-
2 specific determination that failure to use non-environmentally preferable disinfectants
3 would create a risk to public health and safety.

4 SECTION 6. *Air fresheners.* – A school shall not purchase or allow the use of air
5 fresheners in its premises.

6 SECTION 7. *Creation of a school environmental health website.* – The Secretaries
7 of Environment and Natural Resources, Health, and Education shall jointly create
8 and jointly update as necessary an electronic school environmental health clearinghouse
9 site on the website of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources
10 (DENR), including diagnostic checklists and searchable databases. This website shall
11 include:

12 (1) Information on materials and practices in common use in school
13 operations and construction that may compromise indoor air quality or negatively impact
14 human health;

15 (2) Information on potential health problems associated with these
16 materials, with specific reference to children's vulnerability;

17 (3) Information on integrated pest management and alternatives to
18 chemical pest control;

19 (4) Information on methods to reduce or eliminate exposure to potentially
20 hazardous substances in schools, including the following:

21 (A) A list of preventive management options, such as ventilation,
22 equipment upkeep, design strategies, and performance standards;

23 (B) A list of nontoxic or least-toxic office and classroom supplies,
24 building equipment, and materials and furnishings; and

1 (C) A list of environmental health criteria that schools may use as a
2 decision making tool when determining what materials to purchase or use in
3 school construction or operations.

4 (5) Information on environmentally preferable cleaning products certified by
5 an independent third party including a list of these products and procedures for using
6 them.

7 SECTION 8. *Review.* – The Secretaries of Environment and Natural Resources,
8 Education, and Health shall:

9 (1) Review the information on the school environmental health
10 information clearinghouse at least twice yearly, and update it whenever significant
11 developments occur.

12 (2) At the request of school officials, assist school environmental health
13 coordinators to identify potential sources of environmental pollution in the school, and
14 make recommendations on how to alleviate any problems.

15 (3) Annually, organize a school environmental workshop for school
16 environment health coordinators and school administrators, and an annual training for
17 school maintenance and property staff. Each workshop and training shall include
18 instruction on green cleaning practices. The department shall issue certificates of training
19 to participants who successfully complete the workshops.

20 (4) Publicize the availability of information through the school environmental
21 health clearinghouse.

22 (5) Provide information and referrals to members of school communities who
23 contact the school environmental health clearinghouse with hazardous exposure and
24 indoor air concerns.

25 (6) Assist elementary and secondary schools to establish school environment
26 health programs to address indoor air and hazardous exposure issues.

1 (7) Report annually to the house and the Senate Committee on Education, Arts,
2 and Culture the extent of indoor air and hazardous exposure problems in schools and the
3 percentage of schools that have established a school environmental health program
4 or qualified for environmental health certification.

5 SECTION 9. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is held invalid or
6 unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity and effectivity of the other
7 provisions hereof.

8 SECTION 10. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, and issuances, or
9 portions thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, are hereby
10 repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

11 SECTION 11. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days
12 after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in two (2) newspapers of general
13 circulation.

Approved,

/dpm11September2015