

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



24 MAY -7 P5:12

SENATE

RECEIVED BY

S. No. 2661

Introduced by Senator Loren Legarda

**AN ACT
PROVIDING A POLLEN AND MIX MOLD DETECTION AND MANAGEMENT
PROGRAM, CREATING FOR THE PURPOSE THE POLLEN AND MIX MOLD
MONITORING SERVICE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The global climate crisis has rippled catastrophic effects not only on the environment but also on human health and well-being. There is a strain on the health system as health threats continue to intensify and new ones keep on emerging. Climate change has extended the growing season of plants and increased the quantity of pollen generated over each season. The changes in atmospheric conditions have altered the timing and magnitude of the release of pollen, leading to worsening allergy seasons.

During a plant's pollination or flowering period, pollen dispersal is a natural and fundamental component to guarantee the continuation of reproduction. Anemophilous or wind-pollinated plants produce enormous amounts of small, lightweight pollen. It is proven that plant pollen is one of the primary sources of allergens that cause respiratory disorders.

Pollinosis is defined as the onset of respiratory symptoms following inhalation of pollen. These disorders include allergic rhinitis and allergic rhinoconjunctivitis which have been reported at a 20% and 14% prevalence level, respectively. A higher number of incidences of pollinosis is accounted in urban environments compared to

rural ones due to traffic pollution, greenhouse emissions, and inappropriate green space development, among others.

The expanding tendency to sensitization to pollen due to air pollution has led to major economic implications, such as the costs related to the increased demand for health services and medication, and decreased workforce productivity.

This proposed measure aims to develop a pollen detection and management program for the prevention of pollen-induced respiratory illnesses and related health problems through the initial creation of an Ad-Hoc Committee and the continuing implementation of Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services (PAG-ASA). It encompasses forecasting and thorough analysis of pollination patterns to address the prevalence of these health issues among the general population. This bill further seeks to contribute to building resilient health systems through proactive climate-health action.

In view of the foregoing, the early passage of this bill is earnestly requested.



LOREN LEGARDA

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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 "*Pollen and Mix Mold*
2 *Detection and Management Act.*"

3 SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the declared policy of the State to protect
4 and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among
5 them. The State shall also protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced
6 and healthful ecology in accordance with the rhythm and harmony of nature. Towards
7 this end, the State shall endeavor to protect its citizens from threats to public health by
8 formulating a pollen detection and mix mold management program to prevent allergic
9 reactions, respiratory conditions, and other pollen-related respiratory diseases and
10 other health issues among the population.

11 SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act, the term:
12 a) "Pollen grain" means fine white to yellowish powder that is transported from
13 plant to plant by the wind, and by birds, insects, or other animals. They come
14 from blooming grasses, plants, trees, and weeds.
15 b) "Mix mold" means tiny fungi whose spores float through the air.
16 c) "Pollen and mix mold calendar" means the measure of the average number
17 of pollen grains and mix mold per month

- 1 d) "Pollen and mix mold forecast" means the result of the tracking, monitoring,
2 and predicting of pollen and mix mold levels across the Philippines.
- 3 e) "Pollen-related respiratory diseases" means IgE-mediated reaction causing
4 inflammation on both upper and lower airways, including, but not limited
5 to, rhinitis with or without conjunctivitis, bronchial asthma with or without
6 allergic rhinitis.
- 7 f) "Monitoring Service" means the National Pollen and Mix Mold Monitoring
8 Service.

9 SEC. 4. *Ad-Hoc Committee.* – There shall be created an Ad-Hoc Pollen Grains
10 and Mix Mold Services Committee composed of the following: (1) the
11 Undersecretary for Scientific and Technical Services of the DOST; (2) the
12 Administrator of Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services
13 (PAG-ASA); (3) the Undersecretary for Finance, Information Systems and Climate
14 Change of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources; (4) the Cluster
15 Lead of Universal Health Care Policy and Strategy Cluster (UHC-PSC) from the
16 Department of Health; (5) the President of Philippine Society of Allergy, Asthma
17 and Immunology (PSAAI), or any of their respective permanent representatives;
18 and (6) Palynologist and Mix Mold Expert from the academe. The Committee shall
19 be administratively attached to the DOST and chaired by the DOST Secretary or
20 his/her permanent representative. The Committee shall conduct public hearings
21 and consult concerned stakeholders from the proper private and non-governmental
22 sectors.

23 The Committee shall convene within thirty (30) days from the effectivity of
24 this Act and shall have one (1) year to design the National Pollen and Mix Mold
25 Services. Thereafter, the Committee shall be *functus officio* and the PAG-ASA shall
26 ensure the full and continuing implementation of this Act.

27 SEC. 5. *National Pollen and Mix Mold Monitoring Service* – There is hereby
28 created a division to be known as the National Pollen and Mix Mold Monitoring
29 Service, hereinafter referred to as the "Service," under PAGASA.

30 The Service shall be the technical authority on forecasting, analysis, collection,
31 and standards development for preventing pollen-related respiratory diseases.

32 SEC. 6. *Functions.* – The Service shall have the following functions:

- 1 (a) Conduct regular research on pollen and mix mold, and all related topics and
2 matters;
- 3 (b) Administer comprehensive tracking, monitoring, and prediction of pollen
4 grain density, mix mold levels, and air pollutants in the atmosphere across
5 the Philippines;
- 6 (c) Provide accurate and timely information to the public, healthcare,
7 professionals, and other relevant stakeholders, enabling them to make
8 informed decisions regarding allergies and respiratory illnesses;
- 9 (d) Collect, analyze, and interpret data on pollen grains, mix mold levels, and air
10 pollutants, including their sources, distribution patterns, and health impacts.
11 Data collection and analysis include, but not limited to, measuring monthly
12 major traffic airway-related pollutants at key selected sites and identifying the
13 aerial pollen grains and fungal spores at these sites, determining and
14 monitoring the number of visits and hospital admissions with allergic airway
15 diseases, assessing the relationships among air pollutants, pollen grains, and
16 fungal spores with the prevalence of allergic airway diseases, and
17 determining the percentage of mix molds, pollen grains, and air pollutants on
18 the atmosphere;
- 19 (e) Collaborate with national government agencies, academic institutions,
20 healthcare professionals, and other stakeholders to enhance the
21 understanding of pollen, mix mold, and air quality issues in the Philippines;
22 and
- 23 (f) Provide regular updates, forecasts, and alerts on pollen grains, mix mold
24 levels, and air quality conditions to the public through various
25 communication channels, including online platforms, social media, and
26 traditional media.

27 *SEC. 7. Coordination and Reporting.* – The Service shall coordinate with other
28 relevant national government agencies, including the Department of Health, and
29 the Department of Environment and National Resources to ensure the integration
30 of pollen, mix mold, and air quality information into relevant policies, programs,
31 and guidelines.

32 The Service shall regularly submit reports to the Department of Science and
33 Technology detailing its activities, findings, and recommendations. These reports
34 shall be made available to the public and relevant stakeholders.

1 SEC. 8. *Appropriation* – The amount necessary for the implementation of this
2 Act shall be charged against the current appropriation of the Department of Science
3 and Technology. Thereafter, such amount as may be necessary for the continued
4 operation of the program shall be included in the annual General Appropriations
5 Act.

6 SEC. 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations*. – Within sixty (60) days from the
7 effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of Science and Technology and the
8 Administrator of PAGASA shall, in coordination with the Secretaries of Health,
9 and of Environment and Natural Resources, promulgate the necessary rules and
10 regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

11 SEC. 10. *Separability Clause* – If any provision of this Act is declared
12 unconstitutional, or invalid, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall
13 remain in full force and effect.

14 SEC. 11. *Repealing Clause*. – All laws, decrees, orders, and issuances or parts
15 thereof inconsistent with or contrary to the provisions
16 of this Act are amended, modified or repealed accordingly.

17 SEC. 12. *Effectivity*. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
18 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,