

NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)

First Regular Session

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HOUSE BILL NO. 2623



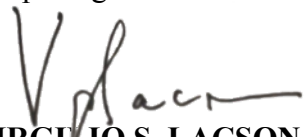
Introduced by **REPRESENTATIVE VIRGILIO S. LACSON**

Charcoal is made from the burning of wood by controlling oxygen which slows down the combustion process until a black substance is produced. It is a carbon residue which has been used to produce heat energy by humans perhaps since the beginning of civilization. Generally, it is used for industrial production and as a home fuel. Charcoal is used by an average of 35% of all households in the Philippines based on the Household Energy Consumption Survey (HCES). Charcoal consumption by households in the Philippines grows at an average annual rate of 4.43%.

Because of the high demand for this cheap energy source, production of this substance has been rampant throughout the country. While charcoal harvesting and production is banned in most areas, there are many people who manage to keep up production, transportation, and sale, without much interference from the authorities. This occurrence poses a lot of issues - not just in the health of those involved in the production, but also the environmental hazards it brings. Production of raw wood charcoal remains one of the top contributors of deforestation in the country.

While charcoal can be produced by using coconut shells, and other more sustainable options, the cost of producing charcoal from raw wood remains cheaper by 50%. For that reason, many producers opt to use raw wood instead to maximize profit. The desire to gain more profit leaves our forests at risk of destruction. This destruction eventually leads to tragedies that claim the innocent lives of Filipinos. Without the immediate intervention of the Government, these practices will continue until our forest lands become depleted.

This Bill seeks the total prohibition on the production, transportation, and sale of raw wood charcoal. This Bill likewise provides for penalties to those who will be found guilty of violating its provisions, to protect our forests from unregulated activities, and prevent further degradation of our resources. In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this Bill is sought.


VIRGILIO S. LACSON
Manila Teachers Partylist

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AN ACT

BANNING THE PRODUCTION, TRANSPORTATION, AND SALE OF RAW WOOD CHARCOAL PRODUCTS AND PRESCRIBING PENALTIES THEREFOR

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

Section 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the “*Ban on Raw Wood Charcoal Act*”.

Section 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote the conservation of our forest lands for the protection of the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology. It shall be the duty of the State to regulate activities that substantially affect the environment and its other natural resources. To this end, it shall be unlawful to cause the production, transportation, and sale of raw wood charcoal in the Philippines.

Section 3. Definition. – As used in this Act, the following terms shall be defined as –

“**Charcoal**” means wood fuel product derived from carbonization of raw wood or other plant materials.

Section 4. Regulatory agency. – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) shall be the competent authority responsible for the monitoring of production, transportation, and sale of raw wood charcoal.

Section 5. Prohibited Acts. – The following shall be prohibited under this Act:

- (a) It shall be unlawful for any person to cut, uproot, or destroy any tree standing on any forest, timber land, forest reserve or watershed for the purpose of producing raw wood charcoal.

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(b) It shall be unlawful to transport raw wood for the purpose of producing and/or selling charcoal products.

(c) It shall be unlawful to sell or offer to sell raw wood charcoal.

In case of trees in private lands, a license to cut, uproot, destroy any tree shall be necessary. The purpose for the removal of the tree shall be indicated in the application before the DENR. Provided that, the timber resulting from the cutting, uprooting, or destruction of the tree shall not be used to cause the production of raw wood charcoal.

Section 6. Duty of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. – The DENR shall undertake the responsibility to educate the public and promote the use of sustainable charcoal options, such as, but not limited to banana skin, maize, sugarcane, and coconut. The DENR shall identify key areas where raw wood charcoal production is extensive, and prioritize information dissemination and training in said areas.

Section 7. Penalties. Any person who willfully or knowingly does or who shall aid, permit, or cause to be done any of the acts declared to be unlawful in Section 5 of this Act, or who violates the provisions thereof, or of any order issued thereunder, or aids, permits, or causes such violation shall, upon conviction thereof, be penalized with the imprisonment of not less six (6) months but not more than one (1) one year, and a fine of not less than two hundred thousand pesos (P200,000.00). Provided that, if the production, transportation, and sale involve a tree belonging to an endangered species as identified by the DENR, the fine shall not be less than five hundred thousand pesos (P500,000.00).

Section 8. Separability Clause. – If any provision or part of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 9. Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations and other issuances or parts thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

Section 10. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in any newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,

