

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 283

Introduced by

REP. ARLENE D. BROSAS (Gabriela Women's Party);
REPS. CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE, FERDINAND R. GAITE, and EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT (Bayan
Muna Partylist); REP. FRANCE L. CASTRO (ACT Teachers Partylist);
REP. SARAH JANE I. ELAGO (Kabataan Partylist); REP. ED CHRISTOPHER GO (2nd District,
Isabela); REP. FAUSTINO MICHAEL DY (5th District, Isabela); REP. FAUSTINO "INNO" A. DY V (6th
District, Isabela); and REP. ARGEL CABATBAT (Magsasaka Partylist)

A RESOLUTION

**DIRECTING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD AND HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
FOOD SECURITY TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE DIRE IMPACTS OF
THE RICE LIBERALIZATION AND TARIFFICATION LAW (RA 11203) ON RICE FARMERS, RICE
MILLERS, RETAILERS, CONSUMERS AND ON THE FINANCIAL SECTOR**

WHEREAS, in line with the Philippine government's compliance to the neoliberal policy prescription of the World Trade Organization (WTO) to shift from quantitative restrictions to tariffs, President Rodrigo Duterte signed into law on February 14, 2019 Republic Act No. 11203 otherwise known as "An Act Liberalizing the Importation, Exportation and Trading of Rice, Lifting for the Purpose the Quantitative Restriction on Rice, and for Other Purposes" or the Rice Liberalization and Tariffication Act;

WHEREAS, RA 11203 opened the floodgates for the massive importation of rice, leading to a sharp decline in palay prices and consequently into huge losses in the income of farmers. Data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) indicate that farmgate prices have declined by 23 percent to around P17.85 per kilo from their peak in September 2018 at P23.15 per kilo;

WHEREAS, estimates from farmers' groups point to a much dismal crash in palay prices, with some regions such as Central Luzon reporting farmgate price levels at P11 per kilo or even P7 in some areas; Farmgate price of palay is seen to further drop during the coming main harvest season next month;

WHEREAS, Filipino farmers have lost around P40 billion in just the first half of the 2019 due to the huge drop in the price of palay, according to the Federation of Free Farmers (FFF);

WHEREAS, the P10-billion Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) provided under the Rice Liberalization and Tariffication Law will not directly and genuinely benefit ordinary farmers, as bulk of it is allocated for research while the rest will be disbursed in the form of loans;

WHEREAS, the retail price of rice only went down by only P1 to P2 per kilo based on the government data, lower than the projected price drop of P7 to P10 per kilo which will supposedly take effect under the Rice Tariffication Act;

WHEREAS, RA 11203 also sets forth the phaseout in local markets of the cheaper National Food Authority (NFA) rice previously priced at P27 to P30 kilo, leaving poor Filipino families with no choice but to buy the more expensive imported commercial rice;

WHEREAS, the NFA is stripped of its regulatory function under RA 11203, leading to job losses estimated at over 1,000 and closure of several divisions and regional offices;

WHEREAS, around 20,000 NFA-accredited retailers and their 60,000 workers are also affected by the Rice Liberalization and Tariffication Law;

WHEREAS, the rice milling industry is also heavily affected with the massive importation of commercial rice, with around 40 percent of the country's 10,000 rice mills halting operations due to the decline in palay prices;


WHEREAS, the underutilization and halt in operations of rice mill facilities could lead to eventual closures and to the default of around P300 billion worth of loans sourced by rice millers from local banks;

WHEREAS, advocacy group Bantay Bigas has warned that the rice industry's decline will push the conversion of productive rice lands into real estate and other corporate uses;

WHEREAS, several lawmakers and groups of rice farmers and millers are already ringing the alarm bells on the disastrous impacts of RA 11203, with some groups calling for the review, suspension and even repeal of such measure;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the House Committee on Agriculture and Food and House Committee on Food Security conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the dire impacts of the Rice Liberalization and Tariffication Law (RA 11203) on rice farmers, rice millers, retailers, consumers and on the financial sector.

Adopted,



ARLENE D. BROSAS
Gabriela Women's Party



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