



March 10, 2014

FISHERIES ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

No. 250

Series of 2014

SUBJECT: Prohibition on the Collection, Harvesting, Gathering, Selling, and/or Exporting of Brown Algae (*Sargassum spp.*), and Seagrass

WHEREAS, the mangroves, coral reefs, seagrass beds, and seaweed forests being parts of the marine ecosystems are important natural resources of the state, inter-dependent with each other, serve significant ecological functions where a balance in the over-all condition of each must be maintained to ensure the survival of diverse fish and aquatic species;

WHEREAS, seagrasses are highly productive ecosystems that provide shelter and serve as food base to diverse species of juvenile and adult fish, marine invertebrates and mammals hence, providing a life support system to most aquatic marine organisms;

WHEREAS, seaweeds also play an important ecological role in marine communities particularly large seaweeds form dense underwater forests that serve as underwater nurseries and shelter for many marine animals and mammals such as fish, invertebrates, crabs, worms and as a food base for sea urchins and other grazing invertebrates;

WHEREAS, seagrass and seaweed beds slow down water-currents, reduce sediment load in water for the benefit of adjacent coral reefs, provide wave protection to coastal zones, and stabilize the seabed thus preventing coastal erosion;

WHEREAS, the high commercial value and consequently the demand in the global market for seaweeds particularly the brown macroalgae of the genus *Sargassum spp.* and the seagrasses has resulted in uncontrolled harvesting of both resources in the wild;

WHEREAS, the loss of seagrass and *Sargassum* beds will consequently destroy the balance in the marine ecosystem and result to loss of shelter, and loss of food base to all aquatic organisms dependent on them, thus endangering their survival;

WHEREAS, natural re-colonization and recovery of damaged seagrass and *Sargassum* areas is a very slow process that will take decades;

WHEREAS, restoration of totally lost seagrass and *Sargassum* areas due to harvesting is nil;



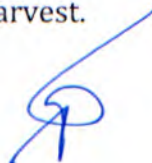
WHEREFORE, to arrest the further loss of the seagrass and *Sargassum* resources, and pursuant to Sections 2, 3, 86, 92, and 107 of Republic Act 8550, the following rules and regulations entitled, "Prohibition on the Collection, Harvesting, Gathering, Selling, and /or Exporting of Brown Algae, (*Sargassum spp.*) and Seagrass" are hereby promulgated for the information of all concerned:

Section 1. Definition of Terms. For purposes of this Order, the following terms as used herein shall mean and shall be construed as follows:

1. Brown algae - Algae belonging to a large group that includes many seaweeds typically olive brown or greenish.
2. *Sargassum* – A genus of brown (class Phaeophyceae) macroalgae (seaweeds) in the order of **Fucales** family **Sargassaceae**.
3. *Sargassum spp.* - Numerous species under genus *Sargassum* found in the Philippines.
4. Seagrass – Angiosperms or group of submerged flowering plants in the marine environment.
5. Brown algae and seagrass collecting, harvesting, and/or gathering – The taking or removing of brown algae and seagrass from the natural or wild growth areas.
6. Selling – The trade of brown algae and seagrass in the landing/ market places.
7. Export – Trading of brown algae and seagrass to another country.
8. Person – Natural or juridical entities such as individuals, associations, partnerships, cooperatives or corporations.

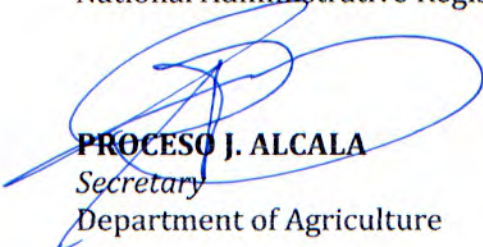
Section 2. Prohibition. It shall be unlawful for any person, association or corporation to collect, harvest, gather, sell, and/or export brown algae i.e. *Sargassum spp.* and seagrass. Provided however, that the Director of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) through the Secretary of Agriculture may grant a special permit to collect, harvest, gather, sell, and/or export *Sargassum spp.* and seagrass for scientific and/or educational purposes, subject to such conditions as the Director of BFAR may deem wise to impose. Provided Further that the Director of BFAR through the Secretary may grant research institutions limited collection, harvesting, and/or gathering of *Sargassum spp.* and seagrass to determine the ecological and socio-economic impact of the activity on the fisheries resources.

Section 3. Penalty. Any person or corporation who violates this Order shall suffer a penalty of two (2) years to ten (10) years imprisonment and a fine of not less than One hundred thousand pesos (P100,000.00) to Five hundred thousand pesos (P500,000.00) or both, such fine and imprisonment at the discretion of the court, and the confiscation of the harvest.



Section 4. Repealing Provision. All orders, rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Order are hereby revoked.

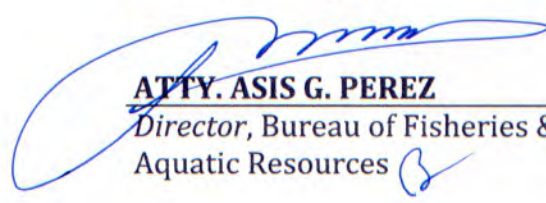
Section 5. Effectivity. This Order shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in any newspaper of general circulation and upon registration with the Office of the National Administrative Register.



PROCESO J. ALCALA
Secretary
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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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Recommending Approval:



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