A RESOLUTION
DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE HOUSE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE COMPLIANCE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS (LGUs) WITH REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9003 ON SEGREGATION OF WASTES, WITH THE END VIEW OF ENACTING AMENDMENTS TO THE EXISTING LEGISLATION THAT WILL PROVIDE A COMPREHENSIVE PROTOCOL ON PROPER AND EFFECTIVE SEGREGATION AND DISPOSAL OF COVID-19-RELATED HEALTH CARE WASTES

WHEREAS, Healthcare wastes produced within healthcare facilities, research centers, and laboratories related to medical procedures as well as at homes (e.g., home dialysis, self-administration of insulin, recuperative care) have grown exponentially since onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. As of last June, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) reported that the Philippines has already generated 634 million metric tons of healthcare waste (including personal protective equipment and COVID-19 test kits) since the start of the lockdown in March 2020. As health care wastes are expected to surge along with the surge in COVID-19, the proper disposal of COVID-19 healthcare wastes becomes a pressing concern;

WHEREAS, Republic Act No. 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act provides for a systematic, comprehensive and ecological waste management program to ensure the protection of public health and the environment. Under the law, LGUs are primarily responsible for the effective and efficient solid waste management, particularly garbage segregation and disposal;

WHEREAS, while the DENR and the Department of Health has continually reminded Local Government Units and hospitals (who are already overwhelmed with COVID-19 cases and non-COVID cases) to comply to the provisions of the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act regarding the safe and environmentally sound disposal of health care wastes, the increased volume of healthcare wastes due to the surge in COVID-19 cases has made it more difficult for both to comply;
WHEREAS, the Department of the Interior and Local Government likewise released a memo circular instructing local government units to adopt the COVID-19 waste management plan which covers the segregation and treatment of COVID-19 and hazardous waste. It is unclear however whether LGUs have followed these protocols;

WHEREAS, DENR noted that with only 25 of the 47 treatment, storage, and disposal (TSD) facilities in the country catering to hazardous waste, the country simply does not have enough TSD facilities to handle the healthcare wastes generated amid the country’s fight against the coronavirus pandemic,

WHEREAS, the management of health care wastes is essential in a global health crisis as the absence of strong solid waste management during the pandemic might contribute to the rapid and more widespread transmission of COVID-19 in the country;

WHEREAS, at present there are disjointed efforts from DENR, DILG and DOH to address the healthcare waste management problem in the country;

WHEREAS, now more than ever there is a need for a comprehensive protocol on proper and effective segregation and disposal of COVID-19-related health care wastes especially since negligence can cost numerous Filipino lives;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the House of Representatives direct the appropriate House committee to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the compliance of Local Government Units (LGUs) with Republic Act No. 9003 on the segregation of wastes, with the end view of enacting amendments to the existing legislation that will provide a comprehensive protocol on proper and effective segregation and disposal of COVID-19-related health care wastes.

Adopted,

JOY MYRA R. SALVADOR-TAMBUNTING
2nd District, Parañaque City