

TITLE 4: ECONOMIC RESOURCES
DIVISION 5: BUSINESS REGULATION

§ 51901. Short Title.

This Act shall be known as “Betel Nut Control Act of 2015.”

Source: [PL 19-66](#) § 2 (Sept. 23, 2016).

Commission Comment: The Commission numbered this chapter and sections pursuant to [1 CMC § 3806\(a\)](#). In addition to savings and severability clauses, [PL 19-66](#) included the following Findings and Purpose section:

Section 1. Findings and Purpose. The Legislature finds that the Areca nut is the seed of the areca palm which grows in much of the tropical Pacific, Asia, and parts of east Africa. It is commonly referred to as betel nut, as it is often chewed wrapped in betel leaves and mixed with lime. Chewing the mixture of areca nut, betel leaf, and lime is a tradition, custom or ritual which dates back thousands of years in much of the geographical areas from South Asia eastward to the Pacific. It constitutes an important and popular cultural activity in many Asian and Oceanic countries, the Philippines, Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and many more other countries.

The Legislature finds that recent studies have shown that Areca nut (Betel Nut) is an addictive substance that is consumed in many parts of the world by people of all age groups. However, studies, reports, and presentations have been published over the years that focus on the dangers of Betel Nut chewing. In 2003, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), a World Health Organization sponsored group, reached the conclusion after reviewing published medical research that there is sufficient evidence that the habit of chewing betel nut, with or without tobacco, is carcinogenic to humans; October of 2009, 30 scientists from 10 countries met at IARC to reassess the carcinogenicity of various agents including areca nut, and mechanisms of carcinogenesis; 2012, the World Health Organization of the Western Pacific Region released a technical report “Review of Areca (Betel) Nut and Tobacco Use in the Pacific”; and April of 2015, Dr. Yvette C. Paulino an Assistant Professor of Health Sciences at the University of Guam presented the health risks of Betel Nut chewing at the Oral Cancer Health Forum held at the Pacific Island’s Club Saipan. All have confirmed that there is sufficient evidence that Betel Nut, with or without tobacco, can cause cancer most especially oral cancer. The evidence illustrated betel nut chewers as having increased risk of developing a range of serious diseases, including cancers of the mouth and esophagus.

Over the years betel nut chewing has become a significant public health problem. Oral cancer is alarmingly increasing within our society and sadly most cases result in death because of its aggressive nature. Thus, the Legislature finds the need to develop policies to protect our youth from the danger of developing oral cancer.