

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC)
OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



Senate
Office of the Secretary

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SENATE
P.S.R. No. 508

RECEIVED BY: *Par*

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE REPORTED NEED TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE PREVIOUSLY DECLARED WILDLIFE SANCTUARIES IN THE COUNTRY

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 2, Section 16 states, "The State shall protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature";

WHEREAS, the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, in its 30 Many 2011 issue, reported that a P14-B land project involving the reclamation of the Las Piñas-Parañaque Coastal Lagoon may lead to more flooding in Metro Manila;

WHEREAS, environmentalists reportedly claimed that the national government, through the Philippine Reclamation Authority, plans to reclaim 635 hectares in front of the sanctuary; environmentalists oppose the P14-billion project, saying the lagoon would be cut off from Manila Bay, and the lack of saltwater would destroy mangroves and lead to the breakdown of the ecosystem there;

WHEREAS, according to the report, the 175-hectare lagoon, which serves as home to endangered Philippine ducks and a stopover for Chinese egrets, was declared a sanctuary four years ago by then President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo;

WHEREAS, the lagoon reportedly also provides livelihood to families in the area and gives protection against flooding;

WHEREAS, Parañaque agriculture officer Fe Ferolino allegedly said that the Parañaque government has kept a close watch on its portion of the lagoon with constant monitoring for illegal activities and periodic planting of mangrove seedlings;

WHEREAS, it was reported that the Parañaque council has passed a resolution regulating fishing in the area, allowing only city-accredited fisherfolk to operate;

WHEREAS, according to former Las Piñas Rep. Cynthia Villar, for residents of Las Piñas, the lagoon serves as an outlet for its two major waterways ensuring that any heavy downpour in the city makes its way to the sea quickly than spill to its streets; she claimed that if the reclamation would be done wrongly, it could affect the natural flow of the rivers and water might spill to the city streets during rains;

WHEREAS, to support her position, Rep. Villar reportedly pointed to perennial flooding in the cities of Malabon and Navotas, where reclamation had been carried out;

WHEREAS, it was reported however that the Philippine Reclamation Authority, has insisted that the development project, which the government agency will carry out with local authorities and a private investor, would maintain the integrity of the habitat; officials of the authority claim the expansion is seaward and no mangroves would be cut;

WHEREAS, environmentalists reportedly claimed that the reclamation, if pushed through, would deprive water birds of other viable alternatives, pointing out that more than 95 percent of natural wetlands had been converted into fishponds;

WHEREAS, it was reported that ornithologists had counted up to 28,000 birds in Manila Bay in a single day in the 1970s, before the fishpond industry exploded and land reclamation began; the number of birds in the bay is allegedly down to no more than 5,000 today;

WHEREAS, despite efforts of the local government to protect the area, the legislature should ensure that previously declared sanctuaries by former presidents should remain preserved;

WHEREFORE, be it hereby resolved by the Philippine Senate, to direct the proper Senate committee to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the reported need to protect and preserve previously declared wildlife sanctuaries in the country.

Adopted,

Miriam Defensor Santiago
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO
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