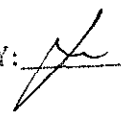




FIFTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)

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SENATE

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P. S. Res. No. 348

INTRODUCED BY SENATOR VILLAR

RESOLUTION
URGING THE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE STATE AND EXTENT OF DEFORESTATION IN THE PHILIPPINES AND FORMULATE POLICIES AND PROGRAMS TO CURB ITS EFFECTS WHILE INITIATING REFORESTATION EFFORTS

Whereas, Section 16 Article II of the 1987 Constitution states that, “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, about 50 percent of 15 million hectares in the Philippines’ total land area is considered forest land¹;

Whereas, while many of the mountain regions and some of the lowlands remain heavily forested, the Philippines’ forests have been shrinking rapidly for decades²;

Whereas, between the mid-20th century and the early 21st century, the country’s forest land was reduced by more than half largely as a result of logging, mining and farming activities and now accounts for less than one-fourth of the country’s total land area³;

Whereas, in the 1900s, an estimated 21 million hectares of the country’s total land area of 30 million hectares had forest cover which declined to 5.4 million hectares or 18.3 percent by 1988⁴;

Whereas, the traditional view is that population growth and poverty are the main causes of deforestation and given the fact that deforestation is a complex process, these factors might have contributed to the problem with deforestation in the late 1980s;

Whereas, the massive forest exploitation and excessive annual allowable cuts, which went on for at least 50 years, would have had significant implications for the process of deforestation in the Philippines coupled with weak reforestation efforts⁵;

Whereas, the rains that the Philippines had been experiencing was within the range of rainfall during a La Niña period but compared with the La Niña episodes 10 to 20 years ago, the impact this time was more severe⁶;

¹ http://ecogovproject.dentr.gov.ph/Downloads/Publications/Fact_Sheet_green_environment2.pdf

² <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/456399/Philippines/23727/Plant-and-animal-life>

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Deforestation in the Philippines: a different perspective by Luz Centeno Sternberg and Mahinda Siriwardana

Whereas, deforestation, with other man-made environmental changes, aggravates the effects of the La Niña phenomenon;

Whereas, stormy weather which caused raging floodwaters and landslides from off-season rains that hit the central and southern Philippines since December has accounted for 56 people killed while leaving at least 19 missing⁷;

Whereas, some places in Isabela and in the town of Prosperidad, Agusan del Sur, which are located in elevated areas are being flooded for the first time due to deforestation;

Whereas, deforestation has other far reaching effects, including displacement of animal life living in the forests, loss of valuable top soil due to lack of protection from the elements, landslides, silted streams, and the destruction of coastal mangroves which protect the coastline from hurricanes and other severe weather fronts⁸;

Whereas, forest loss and poverty are mutually reinforcing and unless addressed in an integrated manner, will threaten both the livelihoods of the poor and the environmental security of the country;

Whereas, sustainable forest and other natural resource management must be tackled to reduce poverty and ensure livelihoods in the Philippines⁹;

Whereas, the State should preserve the environment, specifically the forests, to prevent further damage to life and property caused by floods; NOW THEREFORE BE IT

RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, to urge the Committees on Environment and Natural Resources and Climate Change to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the state and extent of deforestation in the Philippines and formulate policies and programs to curb its effects while initiating reforestation efforts.

Adopted,


MANNY VILLAR
Senator

⁶ Deforestation blamed for La Niña devastation by Kristine L. Alave

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ <http://www1.american.edu/TED/philwood.htm>

⁹ http://www.adb.org/media/Articles/2005/7687_Philippines_deforestation/