

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




Senate  
Office of the Secretary

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**SENATE**

P. S. Res. No. 388

RECEIVED BY: 

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Introduced by Senator Manuel "Lito" M. Lapid

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**RESOLUTION**

**DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON HEALTH AND DEMOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, *IN AID OF LEGISLATION*, INTO THE POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT AS REGARDS THE PROPAGATION AND SALE TO THE MARKET OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED FISH AND SEAFOOD PRODUCTS FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION WITH THE END IN VIEW OF ENSURING THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF CONSUMERS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC**

**WHEREAS**, the 1987 Constitution provides 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, and shall protect and promote the right to health of the people, and instill health consciousness among them";

**WHEREAS**, as the world's population grows at an accelerating pace, so does the consumption of seafood and fish. To date, fish is harvested at a rate that exceeds the fisheries' ability to replenish themselves. Fish species that used to be plentiful are now rare in the wild, with more than 50 percent of the world's main fisheries stocks fully exploited, while another 28 percent are over-exploited or depleted;

**WHEREAS**, genetic engineering techniques nowadays allow the manipulation of inherited traits to modify organisms. Genetically modified (GM) fish and seafood products are currently under development and have been argued by its advocates to offer potential benefits such as increasing aquaculture productivity. Those who are in favor of the genetically modified fish argue that there is a need for the aquaculture industry to grow fish in a way that is economically viable and environmentally responsible;

**WHEREAS**, here in the Philippines, the Department of Agriculture (DA) has cited biotechnology as one of the strategic key to the country's survival during these crucial times when the country is threatened by unfavorable weather conditions such as drought and super typhoons that can adversely affect agricultural production. Biotechnology is making big and important strides not only in agriculture but in other areas of human existence such as in health, energy and environment;

**WHEREAS**, some critics of this rapidly evolving field are concerned that the current technological and regulatory safeguards are inadequate to protect the health of the consuming public and the vulnerable ecosystem. As such, none of these genetically modified fish and seafood products have yet appeared on the market, mainly due to the concern expressed among the public of the fish's potential negative effect on the ecosystem should they escape from fish farms;

**WHEREAS**, the Food and Drugs Administration (FDA) in the United States has issued a statement that genetically engineered salmon that grows twice as fast as the conventional fish appears to be safe. They stated that the genetically modified/genetically engineered salmon fish is identical in every measurable way to the traditional food Atlantic salmon but added that more testing may be needed before it is served on the general public's dinner tables;

**WHEREAS**, various environmentalists and health advocates all over the world disagree with the findings of the FDA and pointed out that there has not been enough time to find out the long term health effects that these genetically modified fish could cause to the human health once these products are sold to the market;

**WHEREAS**, the Greenpeace, an international environmental organization, argued that genetically modified or genetically engineered fish have the potential to cause irreversible damage to wild fish stocks and to the wider marine environment. They have expressed grave reservations and warned the general public that even a small number of genetically modified/genetically engineered fishes released into the wild can have potentially devastating effects to the marine ecosystem;

**WHEREAS**, researchers at Fisheries and Oceans Canada have demonstrated that coho salmon engineered with a growth hormone gene eat almost three times as much food as their non-transgenic tank-mates, raising the concern that escaped genetically engineered salmon into the waters could out-compete native salmon in natural streams;

**WHEREAS**, researchers at Purdue University in Indiana, the United States, estimate that 60 fertile genetically engineered/genetically modified fish introduced into a natural population of 60,000 could annihilate the natural fish stock in 20-30 years;

**WHEREAS**, there is an urgent need on the part of the government of formulate a clear cut policy as regards the propagation, culture and sale to the market of *genetically modified fish and seafood products for human consumption* as this situation could cause irreversible health effects to the general public.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** as it is hereby resolved to direct the Senate Committees on Health and Demography and Environment and Natural Resources to conduct an inquiry, *In Aid of Legislation*, into the policy of the government as regards the propagation and sale to the market of genetically modified fish and seafood products for human consumption with the end in view of ensuring the health and safety of the consumers and the general public.

**ADOPTED,**

  
**MANUEL "LITO" M. LAPID**  
Senator