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S E N A T E

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INTRODUCED BY SENATOR VILLAR

RESOLUTION
URGING THE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO
CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL
STATUS OF THE BALILI RIVER IN BENGUET AND TO FORMULATE POLICIES AND
WAYS TO RESTORE, PRESERVE, AND SAVE THE SAME

Whereas, Section 16 of Article II of 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”;

Whereas, Balili River is a major river found in the Municipality of La Trinidad, Benguet, and is a major source of strawberry and flower farms in the area;

Whereas, it passes through 74 of the city’s 128 villages, where 58% of Baguio’s population (175,160 people) lives before it reaches La Trinidad and meanders through farms in four villages¹;

Whereas, the Balili River is now considered as a biologically dead river because of the fact that common organisms can no longer live in that particular body of water due to environment pollution²;

Whereas, the identified major sources of pollution in the river are:

- Solid wastes or garbage from households, particularly plastics and styrofoams, which float and form small islands in the middle of the River while clogging the waterways causing floods;
- Domestic sewage which is directly discharged into the River by households posing danger and risk to humans as well as aquatic life;
- Human activities done along the River and the ongoing construction and widening of the Baguio-La Trinidad-Bontoc Road causing siltation of the river³;

Whereas, according to Dr. Ricardo Pama, University of the Cordilleras (UC) President, Baguio remains to be a key area in the rehabilitation of the River because it the main source of pollution citing its city market and abattoir;

Whereas, urbanization brings about an increase in the demand for water, the increase in waste generation and consequent disposal problem, the conversion of land to residential, commercial

¹ “Schools unite to save key Benguet river,” by Vincent Cabreza, Philippine Daily Inquirer, August 28, 2011

² Professor Jay Jay F. Manuel, Secretary, Saving the Cordilleras Ecosystem Network, Inc. (SCENE, Inc.)

³ <http://www.emb.gov.ph/regions/car/pcd/water/balili.htm>

and industrial use, leak and spill of toxic and hazardous substances into waterways and the impairment of water resources;

Whereas, the factors mentioned in the last preceding paragraph gradually reduces the effectiveness in watersheds of major river systems, including the Balili River;

Whereas, linkages with government agencies and concerned private organizations should be established with the common goal of improving the water quality of the Balili River by eradicating pollution and restoring the river to its former pristine;

Whereas, the State, with its unfailing commitment to the protection of the environment, should formulate policies to save the Balili River;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, to urge the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the environmental status of the Balili River in Benguet and to formulate policies and ways to restore, preserve, and wave the same.

Adopted,


MANNY VILLAR
Senator