

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

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SENATE
P. S. R. No. 683



Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE, TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE PRACTICE OF FEEDING WHALE SHARKS BY LOCAL TOURISM INDUSTRIES, AND ITS IMPACT ON THE ANIMAL'S NATURAL WAY OF LIFE

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 2, Section 16 provides: "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, Agence France Presse reported last 7 January 2012 that there is currently a debate between the officials of the coastal town of Oslob and environmentalists on whether feeding whale sharks in their area is beneficial for the sea creatures;

WHEREAS, according to the report, local officials said that feeding whale sharks does no harm, and helps in their tourism industry, and that the town's fishermen have been feeding whale sharks with baby shrimp since the 1980s and now use this feeding to make the creatures rise to the surface of the water for the amusement of tourists;

WHEREAS, it was reported that officials from the regional head of the coastal marine management division reportedly discouraged the practice of feeding the whale sharks for its possible negative effect on the animal's natural way of life, saying the sharks could become dependent on this practice;

WHEREAS, the coastal marine management officials reportedly said that the whale sharks might approach other boats expecting food, and run the risk of colliding with them;

WHEREAS, the coastal marine management officials also allegedly said that perpetuating the practice also makes the whale sharks more vulnerable to poachers;

WHEREAS, it was reported that the local government of Oslob is already regulating the feeding practice, ensuring that only a small number of boatmen would feed the whale sharks in a designated area only in the mornings; in addition, tourists are also barred from feeding or swimming with the whale sharks and the boatmen are required to use rowing boats and keep their distance to avoid hurting fish with their propellers or in collisions;

WHEREAS, Congress should look into this debate in crafting a law protecting whale sharks and similar sea creatures in their natural habitats with careful consideration of the local tourist industries dependent on the presence in their coastal areas;

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 practice of feeding whale sharks by local tourism industries and its effect on the animal's natural way of life.

Adopted,


MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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