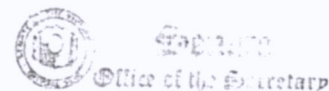


SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Second Regular Session)



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SENATE

P. S. RES. NO. 705

RECEIVED 

Introduced by Senator Antonio "Sonny" F. Trillanes IV

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM AND OTHER APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE/S TO LOOK INTO, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, THE ADMINISTRATION'S REHABILITATION PLAN ON BORACAY, AND FURTHER, ASSESS THE READINESS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM (DOT), DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT (DILG), DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS (DPWH), DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY (DTI), DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT (DSWD), DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT (DOLE), AND OTHER RELATED GOVERNMENT AGENCIES IN ASSISTING THE RESIDENTS OF BORACAY, THE WORKERS, AND THE BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS THAT WILL BE AFFECTED BY THE IMPENDING SIX-MONTH CLOSURE OF THE ISLAND WITH THE END IN VIEW OF DETERMINING WHETHER THERE IS A NEED FOR A REMEDIAL LEGISLATION, AND WHETHER CLOSING BORACAY ENTIRELY FOR SIX MONTHS IS THE BEST APPROACH IN REHABILITATING THE ISLAND AND IS NOT A THOUGHTLESS DECISION MADE ON A WHIM TO FAVOR CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS/GROUPS, AND ENSURING THAT THOSE WHO ARE SET TO BE AFFECTED, IF THIS PUSHES THROUGH, WILL BE PROVIDED WITH ADEQUATE ASSISTANCE, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, LIVELIHOOD, EMPLOYMENT, AND RELOCATION, IF NEEDED

WHEREAS, on 4 April, President Rodrigo Duterte, barely two (2) months after calling Boracay a cesspool¹, approved the proposal to close the island. The shutdown will last for six months and will start on 26 April²;

WHEREAS, the 1,032-hectare island attracted two (2) million visitors last year and generated P56 billion in revenue³;

¹ Agence France-Presse. 02 February 2018. Duterte slams Boracay as 'cesspool', threatens to shut down island. Abs-Cbn News. Retrieved from <http://news.abs-cbn.com/news/02/10/18/duterte-slams-boracay-as-cesspool-threatens-to-shut-down-island>

² N. Corrales. 04 April 2018. Duterte approves 6-month closure of Boracay, starting April 26. Inquirer.Net. Retrieved from <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/980185/boracay-closure-rodriigo-duterte>

³ N. Burgos. 09 April 2018. Mass layoffs start on Boracay island. Inquirer.net. Retrieved from <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/980950/news-boracay-business-employment-aklan-closure-shutdown>

WHEREAS, closing Boracay to tourists will result in P20 billion forgone revenue and will affect the livelihood of 73,522 residents, including 17,328 registered workers and 9,365 unregistered ones⁴;

WHEREAS, days after the announcement of Boracay shutdown, some business establishments already started laying-off employees, with high possibility of more to follow⁵;

WHEREAS, allowing only a three-week notice, many establishments and workers alike are scrambling and are clueless on how to go about months of joblessness;

WHEREAS, barely two weeks before the shutdown, the government is still yet to present a blueprint on how it is set to rehabilitate the island and mitigate the impact of the said closure. No clear plans and guidelines on how the government will handle the dislocation of workers and losses of business operators are in place⁶;

WHEREAS, attesting to the lack of concrete rehabilitation plan for Boracay, the president proclaimed on 9 April that Boracay will be a land reform area for farmers⁷;

WHEREAS, the effects of Boracay shutdown will reverberate to ancillary industries such as those providing services like transportation, ticketing, and touring, as well as the businesses outside Boracay that serve as suppliers of the restaurants and stores in the island;

WHEREAS, several airlines have announced the suspension of flights to and from Caticlan and Kalibo. For instance, budget airline Cebu Pacific estimated a revenue loss between \$3 million and \$5 million for the 6-month closure, which includes the losses from LaBoracay, an annual summer event which runs from April 30 to May 1⁸;

WHEREAS, Jojo Clemente, president of Tourism Congress of the Philippines, mulls that one cannot separate Boracay from the entire Philippine tourism because Boracay is considered as a staple destination in the tour packages offered by international travel agencies. Hence closing Boracay will affect the entire tourism industry in the country, since international travel agencies might remove the entire Philippines in the tour packages they offer⁹;

WHEREAS, there is clearly a need to rehabilitate the island. However, closing the island entirely during peak season and in a very short-notice, should be looked into to ensure that the government is ready to assist those whose livelihood depends on Boracay tourism;

WHEREAS, contrary to the claims that Boracay will be closed because of environmental and sanitation concerns, reports stated that a mega casino is set to be constructed in the island;

WHEREAS, on December 2017, Dr. Lui Che Woo, Galaxy Entertainment Group Limited Chairman, made a courtesy call to Malacañang to personally explain to President Duterte his

⁴ N. Burgos. 09 April 2018. Mass layoffs start on Boracay island. Inquirer.net. Retrieved from <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/980950/news-boracay-business-employment-aklan-closure-shutdown>

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ N. Corrales. 09 April 2018. Duterte: Boracay to be a 'land reform area' for farmers after closure. Abs-Cbn News. Retrieved from <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/981162/duterte-boracay-to-be-a-land-reform-area-for-farmers-after-closure>

⁸ C. Dela Paz. 06 April 2018. With Boracay closure, airline and hotels scramble for 'interim plans'. Rappler News. Retrieved from <https://www.rappler.com/business/199698-boracay-closure-bookings-flights-cancellations>

⁹ C. Talavera. 18 March 2018. Boracay closure to hit entire tourism industry. PhilStar Global. Retrieved from <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2018/03/18/1797845/boracay-closure-hit-entire-tourism-industry>

vision to build a \$300 to \$500 million casino entertainment complex on a 23-hectare property in Boracay¹⁰;

WHEREAS, Nenette Graf, head of Boracay Foundation Inc., expressed her concerns regarding the construction of a casino complex. According to her, "Maybe the timing was just a coincidence but I can say that it is very odd. You want to close the island but at the same time allow a casino operator in?"¹¹

WHEREAS, this view is being shared by Representative Carlos Zarate, in a statement he said that "As concerns are being raised now on the environmental situation in Boracay, the planned resort-casino is not only ill-timed but even dubious in the midst of the Duterte administration's resolve to close Boracay yet allowing the construction of the proposed casino"¹²;

WHEREAS, on 9 April, President Duterte denied knowing about the plans to construct a casino in Boracay. Contrary to previous statements of Malacañang wherein it defended the Philippine Amusement Gaming Corporation's (PAGCor) approval of the construction of the casino-resort¹³;

WHEREAS, there is an urgent need to look into this matter since thousands of lives are set to be affected, livelihood of ordinary Filipinos is threatened and billions of revenues is at stake;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved by the Philippine Senate, to direct the Senate Committee on Tourism and other appropriate Senate committee/s to look, in aid of legislation, into the administration's rehabilitation plan on Boracay, and further, assess the readiness of the Department of Tourism (DOT), Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), and other related government agencies in assisting the residents of Boracay, the workers, and the business establishments that will be affected by the impending six-month closure of the island with the end in view of determining whether there is a need for a remedial legislation and whether closing Boracay entirely for six months is the best approach in rehabilitating the island and is not a thoughtless decision made on a whim to favor certain individuals/groups, and ensuring that those who are set to be affected, if this pushes through, will be provided with adequate assistance, including, but not limited to, livelihood, employment, and relocation, if needed.

Adopted,


ANTONIO "SONNY" F. TRILLANES IV
Senator

¹⁰ 08 December 2017. Look: Duterte shakes hands with billionaire Lui Che Woo who is building a massive Galaxy casino in Boracay. Politics.com. Retrieved from <http://politics.com.ph/look-duterte-shakes-hands-billionaire-lui-che-woo-building-massive-galaxy-casino-boracay/>

¹¹ F. Villamor. 04 April 2018. Idyllic Philippine Resort Island of Boracay is closed to Tourists. The New York Times. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/04/world/asia/boracay-philippines-tourists-closed.html>

¹² E. Colcol. 02 April 2018. Boracay environmental issues only 'smokescreen' to allow casino construction. GMA News Online. Retrieved from <http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/regions/648559/boracay-environmental-issues-only-smokescreen-to-allow-casino-construction-zarate/story/>

¹³ D. Placido. 22 March 2018. Palace defends \$500-M casino-resort plan in Boracay. Abs-Cbn News. Retrieved from <http://news.abs-cbn.com/news/03/22/18/palace-defends-500-m-casino-resort-plan-in-boracay>