



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

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SENATE
P.S. Res. No. 935

Introduced by Senator Grace Poe

RESOLUTION

URGING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE, TO LOOK INTO AND CONDUCT A TRANSPARENCY ASSESSMENT, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE STATE POLICIES TO PRESERVE AND PROTECT IMPORTANT NATIONAL HERITAGE, CULTURAL PROPERTIES, AND SIGNIFICANT PHILIPPINE LANDMARKS, TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION THE REPORTED CONSTRUCTION OF 31-FLOOR CONDOMINIUM NEAR A NATIONAL TREASURE SUCH AS THE SAN SEBASTIAN CHURCH WITH THE END IN VIEW OF PROVIDING CLARITY IN THE DEVELOPMENT POLICY OF THE COUNTRY

1 WHEREAS, the Philippine Constitution, Section 15, Article 14, mandates that "The
2 State shall conserve, promote, and popularize the nation's historical and cultural
3 heritage and resources, as well as artistic creations";

4 WHEREAS, the Philippine Constitution, Section 16 of the same Article, provides
5 that "All the country's artistic and historic wealth constitutes the cultural treasure of the
6 nation and shall be under the protection of the State which may regulate its
7 disposition";

8 WHEREAS, Republic Act No. 4846, otherwise known as the Cultural Properties
9 Preservation and Protection Act, declares that is the policy of the State to preserve and
10 protect the important cultural properties.

11 WHEREAS, Republic Act No. 10066, otherwise known as the National Cultural
12 Heritage Act of 2009, provides for the protection, preservation, conservation, and
13 promotion of the national cultural heritage sites;

1 WHEREAS, San Sebastian Church, also known as Basilica Menor de San
2 Sebastian, is a Roman Catholic Church constructed in 1890 and completed the following
3 year;

4 WHEREAS, the 127 year old Basilica stands tall in the busy district of Quiapo,
5 once the heart of historic Old Manila;

6 WHEREAS, the Basilica features neo-gothic architectural design that is built
7 entirely of 1,500 tons of prefabricated steel parts manufactured in Belgium and
8 assembled in the Philippines;¹

9 WHEREAS, the architectural wonder that is the San Sebastian Church is the
10 country's first and only church made of steel, and said to be the lone all-steel structure
11 in Asia;²

12 WHEREAS, the Basilica further boasts of detailed interiors that are hand painted
13 by award-winning Filipino portraitist and royal court painter Lorenzo Rocha and turn-of-
14 the-century artisans Isabelo Tampinco and Felix Martinez;³ of exquisite colored stained
15 glass windows by the oldest steel glass firm in Germany, the Henri Oidtmann
16 Company;⁴ and the magnificent gilded retablo designed by notable Filipino artist
17 Lorenzo Guerrero;⁵

18 WHEREAS, the Basilica is declared as a National Historical Landmark in 1973
19 through Presidential Decree No. 260⁶ and a National Cultural Treasure in the Philippine
20 Registry of Cultural Properties;⁷

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¹ Rojas, J. (Aug. 30, 2015). How to save the country's only all-steel church? Inquirer. Retrieved from <http://lifestyle.inquirer.net/205035/how-to-save-the-countrys-only-all-steel-church/>

² Zulueta, L. B. (Feb. 23, 2015). Rust corroding all-steel San Sebastian Church. Inquirer. Retrieved from <https://lifestyle.inquirer.net/185240/rust-corroding-all-steel-san-sebastian-church/>

³ Rojas, J. (Aug. 30, 2015). How to save the country's only all-steel church?

⁴ Conopio, C. (Jan. 22, 2014). Gothic architecture: Basilica Minore de San Sebastian. Retrieved from <http://www.asianjournal.com/life-style/travel/gothic-architecture-basilica-minore-de-san-sebastian/>

⁵ ABS CBN News. (Dec. 8, 2015). Minor Basilica of San Sebastian now a national cultural treasure. Retrieved from <https://news.abs-cbn.com/lifestyle/12/08/15/minor-basilica-of-san-sebastian-now-a-national-cultural-treasure-report>

⁶ Macairan, E. (Dec. 5, 2015). Minor Basilica of San Sebastian declared a national cultural treasure. Philippine Star. Retrieved from <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2015/12/05/1529586/minor-basilica-san-sebastian-declared-national-cultural-treasure>

⁷ ABS CBN News. (Dec. 8, 2015). Minor Basilica of San Sebastian now a national cultural treasure.

1 WHEREAS, the San Sebastian Church currently faces threats in light of the
2 construction of a high-rise condominium in the vicinity by Summithome Realty
3 Corporation;⁸

4 WHEREAS, the 31-floor residential building is reportedly located only about a
5 hundred steps away from the Basilica, in a small barangay of 1,200 residents;⁹

6 WHEREAS, Summithome Realty Corporation allegedly secured barangay
7 clearance supporting their application for a building permit sans proper and full
8 consultation with the local community;¹⁰

9 WHEREAS, the Summithome condominium development however may have an
10 impact to the chances of the Basilica of ever becoming a UNESCO World Heritage Site;

11 WHEREAS, the World Heritage Committee, the committee which selects the sites
12 to be listed as UNESCO World Heritage Site, reportedly issues strict requirements on
13 conservation, and the authenticity and integrity of the sites;

14 WHEREAS, the Summithome condominium development is further feared as
15 another soaring eyesore similar to the Torre de Manila condominium development that
16 have ruined the sightline of a national monument such as that of historic Rizal Park;

17 WHEREAS, the new development is already tagged as "a Godzilla tower rising
18 from hell" by renowned Filipino anthropologist Dr. Fernando Nakpil-Zialcita;¹¹

19 WHEREAS, the San Sebastian Church is a spiritual, historical, and cultural
20 treasure, and any structure built around such site is a desecration to its dignity and
21 sanctity;

22 WHEREAS, a country as culturally and historically rich as the Philippines should
23 be at the forefront in protecting national treasures through statutory regulations
24 combined with the strong support of the local community;

⁸ Katigbak-Lacuesta, M. (Oct. 1, 2018). 'A Godzilla rising from hell': the real threat a highrise brings to San Sebastian. ABS CBN Newsn ANCX. Retrieved from <https://news.abs-cbn.com/ancx/culture/spotlight/10/01/18/saving-san-sebastian>

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid

1 WHEREAS, the Congress should check the procedure and guidelines in the
2 issuance of building permits vis-à-vis the compliance of the Summithome Realty
3 Corporation;

4 WHEREAS, the recurrence of the incident should now call for a thorough study
5 and clarification on the national heritage and development policy of the country;

6 NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved by the Senate of the
7 Philippines, urging the appropriate Senate Committee, to look into and conduct a
8 transparency assessment, in aid of legislation, on the state policies to preserve and
9 protect important national heritage, cultural properties, and significant Philippine
10 landmarks, taking into consideration the reported construction of 31-floor condominium
11 near a national treasure such as the San Sebastian Church with the end in view of
12 providing clarity in the development policy of the country.

13 Adopted,


GRACE POE