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SENATE
P.S. Res. No. 346

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator Ramon Bong Revilla, Jr.

RESOLUTION

**DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN
INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE FAULTY RADIOFREQUENCY
IDENTIFICATION (RFID) SYSTEMS OF THE VARIOUS METRO MANILA
EXPRESSWAYS AND THEIR DETRIMENTAL EFFECTS ON OUR ECONOMY**

WHEREAS, according to a study by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Philippines is projected to lose Php 5.4 Billion to traffic daily by 2035 if no interventions are made in Metro Manila;

WHEREAS, a study¹ by an insurance technology site showed that Metro Manila has a 43% congestion level and that Filipinos lose 98 hours to traffic annually equivalent to roughly spending 4 days in the Metro's infamous traffic jams every year;

WHEREAS, on November 17, 2022, a damaged fiber optic cable in the Autosweep Radiofrequency Identification (RFID) system, which is operated by San Miguel Corporation (SMC), caused tag readers to malfunction and triggered heavy traffic on the South Luzon Expressway (SLEX)²;

WHEREAS, aside from the SLEX, other toll ways operated by SMC like the Southern Tagalog Arterial Road (STAR), the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Expressway (NaiaX), and Skyway also encountered problems with their RFID-linked electronic toll tag readers as all these also use the Autosweep RFID system³;

WHEREAS, on December 7, 2020, Valenzuela City Mayor Rex Gatchalian suspended the business permit of the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX) Corp., which is operated by Metro Pacific Tollways Corporation (MPTC), in the city after it failed to address the heavy traffic that its cashless toll collection has caused the locality;

¹ Manila is the world's 8th city with longest hours spent in traffic --- study,
<https://www.philstar.com/business/2022/09/08/2208311/manila-worlds-8th-city-longest-hours-spent-traffic-study>

² Autosweep RFID system failure triggers heavy traffic on SLEX,
<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1694584/autosweep-rfid-system-failure-triggers-heavy-traffic-on-slex>

³ Ibid.

WHEREAS, according to Mayor Gatchalian, the monstrous traffic jam that was caused by technical glitches in the Easytrip RFID system of NLEX took a toll on the economic, mental and general well-being of the citizens of the locality⁴. Apart from NLEX, MPTC is also the operator of 3 other major toll road systems in Luzon namely Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway (SCTEX), Cavite Expressway (CAVITEX), and Cavite-Laguna Expressway (CALAX);

WHEREAS, the use of electronic toll collection system will help motorists experience uninterrupted and faster toll transactions. The RFID system is meant to facilitate seamless, fast and reliable cashless transactions making motorists spend less time on the road and more time with their families;

WHEREAS, motorists only need to slow down and not make a full stop to pay their toll as the RFID system is meant to perform transactions at 3 to 4 seconds per vehicle⁵ but with the faulty RFID systems installed in our expressways, the Filipino motorists and commuters are forced to spend hours stuck in long lines at toll way booths and languishing in traffic;

WHEREAS, this representation, along with his fellow *Caviteños*, ply the Coastal Road from Cavite to Manila and vice versa on a daily basis and suffers first-hand the horrendous traffic brought about by the inefficiencies of these faulty RFIDs. The problem on faulty RFIDs in our expressways has been a recurring and persistent issue that our motorists and commuters experience everyday, a plight that has been regularly reported to this representation by our *kababayans* seeking for relief, and in social media posts;

WHEREAS, the Toll Regulatory Board (TRB) has continuously approved the application for higher toll rates of the various operators over the years. This increase in charges, the latest of which were implemented on 12 May 2022 for both Manila-Cavite Toll Expressway (CAVITEX) and the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX), and 1 June 2022 for Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway (SCTEX), further aggravated the financial and mental stress of our motorists and commuters;

WHEREAS, this unnecessary suffering of the riding public, caused by defective RFID systems despite paying the costly toll fees, is a flagrant disregard for the well-being of our people. The higher charges should equate to better and faster service but instead, service is deteriorating, motorists and commuters are repeatedly complaining and the traffic is worsening. Indeed, consumers are not getting commensurate service for the prices they pay;

WHEREAS, there are a multitude of other costs and problems that is brought about by the horrendous traffic situation in Metro Manila, i.e., from additional pollution due to burning more fossil fuels and carbon emissions, to poor public health from the

⁴ Gatchalian halts NLEX Corp. operation in Valenzuela City amid 'RFID mess', <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1369034/valenzuela-city-suspends-business-permit-of-nlex-operator>

⁵ Philippines gets first RFID-based toll collection system, <https://www.asmag.com/showpost/29649.aspx>

constant exposure to pollution, to lost time and revenue due to poor travel turnaround time;

WHEREAS, the government must take action in order to solve the worsening road congestion that is aggravated by defective RFID systems, thus exacerbating the economic burden in our country;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved by the Senate, to direct the appropriate Senate Committee to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the faulty radiofrequency identification (RFID) systems of the various Metro Manila Expressways and its detrimental effects on our economy, with the end goal of reviewing and improving our National Transport Policy and solving traffic congestion.

Adopted,


RAMON BONG REVILLA, JR.