

SENATE

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P. S. Res. No. 20

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Introduced by: Sen. Ralph G. Recto

A RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SERVICES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE 250-PERCENT INCREASE IN TOLL FEES IN THE SOUTH LUZON EXPRESSWAY (SLEX), APPROVED WITHOUT ADEQUATE CONSULTATIONS IN CONSONANCE WITH THE PEOPLE'S RIGHT TO INFORMATION ON MATTERS THAT AFFECT PUBLIC INTEREST.

WHEREAS, the Constitution mandates that the State adopt and implement a policy of full public disclosure of all its transactions involving public interest;

WHEREAS, the highest law of the land also recognizes that the right of the people to information on matters of public concern shall be upheld;

WHEREAS, the Toll Regulatory Board (TRB) approved the petition of the South Luzon Toll Corporation (SLTC) to increase the toll fee for the P30-kilometer stretch from Alabang, Muntinlupa City to Calamba City in Laguna from P0.82 per kilometer to P2.70 per kilometer, representing a 250-percent increase, starting June 30 of this year;

WHEREAS, because of the mounting public opposition to the increase, the implementation of the approved increase had been pushed back to July 10 of this year;

WHEREAS, because of the increase, Class 1 vehicles would have to pay P77 from the previous rate of P22, while Class 2 vehicles like light trucks and buses would pay P155 from the current P43 and Class 3 vehicles, or the heavy, multi-wheeler trucks, would pay P232 from P65, from Alabang to Calamba;

WHEREAS, both the TRB and SLTC have defended the increase in toll fees for the stretch citing the major rehabilitation work on the SLEX completed last year;

WHEREAS, several groups have called on the TRB and the Department of Transportation and Communication (DOTC) to reverse the approval of the toll fee adjustment, restart the approval process and expand its consultations to include also stakeholders in provinces who will be affected by what is described as an unprecedented increase in toll that would consequently jack up the costs of agricultural produce, bus fares, and basic goods being transported through SLEX from the provinces;

WHEREAS, SLEX data indicate that at least 250,000 vehicles of various types ply through the expressway, in effect generating an average of P2.6-B revenue a year based on the old rate while with the new toll fee rates, the operator of the SLEX would be earning some P9.8 billion a year;

WHEREAS, it is reported that improvements on the SLEX amounted to only P8.5 billion;

WHEREAS, the 250-percent hike in the SLEX toll fee should be justified by the physical improvements on the expressway including comparison with the dramatic changes in the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX);

WHEREAS, the issue at hand is impressed with public interest as it will not only affect the

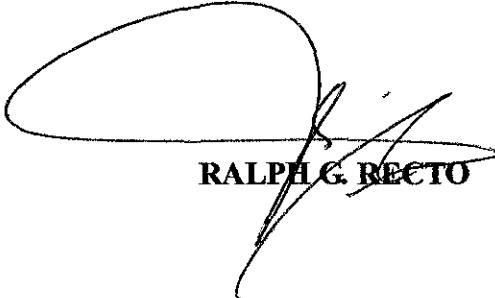
hundreds of thousands of motorists who directly use SLEX but potentially millions who will be indirectly affected by the huge increase in toll fees;

WHEREAS, it is also important that the people be informed of the justifications for the high increase in the SLEX toll fees, especially if the amount appears to be exorbitant and confiscatory;

WHEREAS, it is especially crucial that in these times of economic hardship, the government should ensure that no further burden be allowed to aggravate the already poor conditions of a majority of the people;

Now Therefore, Be It Resolved, by the Philippine Senate, to direct the Committee on Public Services to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the 250-percent increase in toll fees in the South Luzon Expressway (SLEX), reportedly approved without adequate consultations, in consonance with the people's right to information on matters that affect public interest.

Adopted,



RALPH G. RECTO