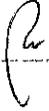


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SENATE

RECEIVED BY: 

P.S. Resolution No. 311

INTRODUCED BY SENATOR VILLAR

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE REPORTED RISE OF ILLEGAL FISHING IN THE COUNTRY SPECIFICALLY IN THE PALAWAN AREA FOR THE PURPOSE OF HALTING THE CONTINUING DESTRUCTION OF CORAL REEFS, A DIVERSE MARINE HABITAT AND EXPLORING ALTERNATIVE MEANS TO IMPROVE THE ECONOMIC WELL BEING OF LOCAL FISHERFOLKS AND THEIR DEPENDENTS.

Whereas, Sec. 7, Article XIII of the 1987 Constitution provides that:

“The State shall protect the rights of subsistence fishermen, especially of local communities, to the preferential use of the communal marine and fishing resources, both inland and offshore. It shall provide support to such fishermen through appropriate technology and research, adequate financial, production, and marketing assistance, and other services. The State shall also protect, develop, and conserve such resources. The protection shall extend to offshore fishing grounds of subsistence fishermen against foreign intrusion. Fishworkers shall receive a just share from their labor in the utilization of marine and fishing resources.”;

Whereas, in the latest data of Reef Check, the world’s largest reef conservation organization, only less than five percent of the country’s estimated 27,000 square-kilometers of coral reef are considered in “excellent condition”;

Whereas, in 1997, the Philippines’ live hard coral reef cover was at 60 percent but this went down 40 percent in 1998; more than 20 percent in 1999; around 30 percent in 2000; 20 percent in 2001; more than 20 percent in 2002 to 2005; and around 30 percent in 2006;¹

Whereas, coral reefs are extremely diverse and are considered to be one of the most multifunctional and economically important coastal marine ecosystems, these reefs are productive shallow water marine ecosystems and are considered to be one of the greatest natural treasures of the world;

Whereas, many coastal communities rely on the coral reefs as fisheries, these fisheries serve as the main source of animal protein in poor communities and the various types of invertebrates, shells, and seaweed also act as a major source of income;

¹ http://www.palawan.com/articles.php?article_id=94 Dec. 13, 2010 10:40 AM

Whereas, with a market worth more than \$200 million a year, the illegal live fish trade in the country is reaching alarming levels and is accelerating the destruction of massive coral reefs, particularly in the Palawan area;²

Whereas, since the late 1970s, Fishermen spray cyanide into the coral reefs to stun inhabiting fish so they can be easily caught with nets and thereafter sold to specialty restaurants in Hong Kong and other Asian cities;

Whereas, this type of fishing is unsustainable and lead to reef destruction and the dwindling of fish stock to the detriment of the local fishermen;

Whereas, if the trade of live reef fish in the country goes on unabated, critical coral reefs particularly in the Palawan area will soon be gone resulting in economic repercussions for the Philippines.

NOW, WHEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved by the Senate of the Philippines to direct the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources to conduct an investigation, in aid of legislation on the reported rise of illegal fishing in the country specifically in the Palawan area, for the purpose of halting the continuing destruction of coral reefs, a diverse marine habitat and exploring alternative means to improve the economic well being of local fisherfolks and their dependents.

Adopted,


MANNY VILLAR

² <http://www.wri.org/publication/reefs-at-risk/cyanide-fishing> Dec. 13, 2010 12:55 PM