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S E N A T E

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INTRODUCED BY SENATOR VILLAR

RESOLUTION

RECOMMENDING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES (DENR) AND OTHER CONCERNED STATE AGENCIES THE IMMEDIATE REHABILITATION AND CLEAN UP OF THE MANILA BAY

Whereas, Article II Section 16 of the Philippine Constitution states, “The State shall protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature”;

Whereas, Manila Bay is distinguished not only for its scenic sunset view, but also since it has been a vital water resource ever since communities started to sprung and flourished around Manila and in its neighboring areas;

Whereas, 23 million Filipinos approximately depend largely on the national asset as an important source of food, livelihood, employment, income, services and recreation;

Whereas, the Bay contributes to an estimate of 55 % in the country’s GDP by producing almost 1/3 share of the country’s share in fisheries, aquaculture, manufacturing, shipping, agriculture, mining, quarrying, tourism and forestry;

Whereas, at present, environmental concerns have become threats in delimiting the productivity and sustainability of the Bay, considering that it was recognized as one of the most polluted bays in Asia, according to Greenpeace Southeast Asia;

Whereas, Manila Bay has been suffering from dilapidation as a result of pollution, mismanagement and destruction which are likely caused by rapid urbanization, population increase and apathy of the general population;

Whereas, data from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in the year 1999 showed that Manila Bay had a fecal coliform content of about 1 million UPN, noting that the safe figure is only about 200 UPN;

Whereas, DENR Secretary Lito Atienza explicated that large quantities of fecal coliform bacteria can bring about diseases such as ear infection, dysentery, typhoid fever, viral and bacterial gastroenteritis and hepatitis A that people can get from direct contact with the water;

Whereas, in 2006, Greenpeace Southeast Asia and Eco-Waste Coalition, a non-governmental organization (NGO) environmental alliance conducted a research to document the extent of plastic pollution in the Bay, which revealed that plastic “sando” bags and other synthetic packaging materials like drinking straws and beverage bottles comprise at least 76 percent of the trash polluting the Bay;

Whereas, the problem however is not a new concern, for as early as 1977, President Ferdinand Marcos, through the release of Presidential Decree 1152 has ordered for the clean-up of polluted bodies of water, including Manila Bay;

Whereas, concerned groups have escalated this concern to several government agencies, significantly that in 1999, a group of students lobbied the petition to urge government agencies to facilitate the cleaning- up of the Bay;

Whereas, in 2002, it was ordered that several government agencies must come up with a comprehensive plan to restore Manila Bay into a state which can be deemed safe for swimming, skin-diving and for other recreation;

Whereas, very recently, the revival of Manila Bay arose as a concern for several state agencies when the Supreme Court (SC) has ordered for the state agencies' assumption of focused responsibility in contribution for the rehabilitation of the Bay;

Whereas, state agencies, headed by the DENR were tapped by the SC not only for the goal of rehabilitating the condition of the Bay, but also for the preservation of the Bay's water quality;

Whereas, the SC ruling was deemed as final and executory, according to environmental lawyer Antonio Oposa, who contributed much of his time acting as a counsel for the petition to rehabilitate Manila Bay which was filed by concerned environmentalists in 1999;

Whereas, the initiative of Oposa led to the formation of a Commission composed of members of the Philippine Bar Association, Integrated Bar of the Philippines and other environmentalist groups and individuals which will assume the responsibility of monitoring the execution of every concerned agency to give meaning to the jurisprudence rendered by the SC;

Whereas, the sustenance and vitality of Manila Bay reflects the opportunities that await the people who depend on it for many purposes therefore it is important that concerned state agencies must strictly perform their responsibility to take part in reviving one of the country's national asset;

Whereas, the rehabilitation of Manila Bay must be done seriously and immediate, with the intention of restoring it to its pristine glory and for maintaining an ecological balance: NOW THEREFORE BE IT

RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, to recommend to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and other concerned state agencies the immediate rehabilitation and clean up of the Manila Bay.

Adopted,


MANNY VILLAR
Senator