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SENATE

P.S. Resolution No. 492

RECEIVED BY: 

INTRODUCED BY SENATOR VILLAR

RESOLUTION URGING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE STATE OF SIBUYAN ISLAND IN THE LIGHT OF THE REPORTED MINING ACTIVITIES THREATENING THE LOCALE, WITH THE END-OBJECTIVE OF PRESERVING THE RICH FAUNA AND FLORA OF "ASIA'S GALAPAGOS" AND MAKING SIBUYAN ISLAND THE GEM OF PHILIPPINE ECO-TOURISM

WHEREAS, Section 16 of Article II of the 1987 Constitution of the Philippines provides that:

"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, Republic Act No. 9147 otherwise known as the "Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act declares it the policy of the State to:

"conserve the country's wildlife resources and their habitats for sustainability. In the pursuit of this policy, this Act shall have the following objectives:

(a) to conserve and protect wildlife species and their habitats to promote ecological balance and enhance biological diversity;

(b) to regulate the collection and trade of wildlife;

(c) to pursue, with due regard to the national interest, the Philippine commitment to international conventions, protection of wildlife and their habitats; and

(d) to initiate or support scientific studies on the conservation of biological diversity.";

WHEREAS, The Island of Sibuyan is home to the world's densest forest, it home to more than a hundred species of plants and trees making it one of the most biologically diverse areas in terms vegetation in the country, the island's richness in endemic species of plant's and animals has earned it the name of being the Galapagos of Asia;

WHEREAS, the Galapagos island is where Charles Darwin thought of the theory of evolution, having been witness to the rich bio-diversity of this island in the Pacific off the coast of South America;

WHEREAS, Sibuyan island's vegetation is made up of primary old growth forests and is one of the world's densest forest cover; it consist of species that are endemic to the archipelago including 54 species of plants found only in Sibuyan;

WHEREAS, it's forest cover is home to endangered bird species including the Philippine hanging parrot (*Loriculus philippensis bournsi*), the Philippine pygmy-woodpecker (*Dendrocopos maculatus menagei*) and the Orange-bellied flowerpecker (*Dicaeum trigonostigma sibuyanicum*) which are endemic to the island;¹

WHEREAS, according to scientists this unique endemism of the island is a result of seismic forces which created the island segregating it from the rest of the Philippine Archipelago;

WHEREAS, the islands biodiversity makes it a perfect model for environmental conservation and the development of eco-tourism in the country;

WHEREAS, despite the rarity of this natural wonder, the government has allowed mining activities and has subjected 1,580.80 hectares of Sibuyan under mineral-production sharing agreements, at present there is a total of 3,578.41 hectares under mineral-production sharing agreement applications and 15,046.36 hectares had exploration applications;²

WHEREAS, scientists and residents of the island have opposed this move by the government and one of them, Councilor Armin Marin, was shot dead while leading a protest against a nickel exploration project;³

WHEREAS, there is a need for the government to reconsider its mining policy on the island in consultation with its residents and explore economic alternatives other than mining in order to preserve this unique ecological feature of the country.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved by the Senate of the Philippines to urge the Senate Committee on the Environment and Natural Resources to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the state of Sibuyan Island in the light of the reported mining activities threatening the locale, with the end-objective of preserving the rich fauna and flora of "Asia's Galapagos" and maki Sibuyan island the gem of Philippine Eco-tourism.

Adopted,


MANNY VILLAR

¹ Kristine Alave "Asia's Galapagos" Sibuyan Island under threat" *Philippine Daily Inquirer* 22 May 2011 A14 print

² *ibid*

³ FAST FACTS *Inquirer Research Philippine Daily Inquirer* 22 May 2011 A14 print