



'11 MAY 30 P4:47

SENATE
P.S. Res. No. 498

RECEIVED BY:

Introduced by Senator Loren Legarda

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD, ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES, AND ON CLIMATE CHANGE, TO CONDUCT AN IMMEDIATE INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE CAUSE OF THE MASSIVE FISHKILL IN TAAL LAKE

WHEREAS, Section 16, Article II of the 1987 Constitution 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, over 700 metric tons of milkfish and tilapia worth approximately Php57.226 million have been killed in the different fish cages surrounding Taal Lake starting last 26 May 2011;

WHEREAS, these numbers continue to rise by the day, as crabs and native fish species that only thrive in Taal Lake, such as the *Biya*, have also been reportedly affected;

WHEREAS, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) reported that the fishkill was caused by an "overturn" wherein moderate to heavy rains made the surface water of Taal Lake cold and dense, which in turn forced the deep hot bottom water containing pollutants to rise, heating the fish cages filled with fish stock and depriving the same of dissolved oxygen;

WHEREAS, the sudden drop in temperature and the heavy rains, which led to the overturn may have been caused by the extreme shift of weather brought about by climate change;

WHEREAS, there have also been reports to BFAR on May 23 that the run-off from the Balete River leading to Taal Lake was discolored and contained animal waste;

WHEREAS, BFAR's laboratory analysis of the water in the affected areas as of 24 May 2011 revealed high levels of pollutants such as nitrite found in animal waste (1.65 parts per million [ppm] as compared to the acceptable level of less than 0.10 ppm) as well as low levels of dissolved oxygen (at 3.42 ppm as compared to the acceptable levels pegged at 6ppm);

WHEREAS, as early as 2008, BFAR already warned that improper aquaculture practices such as intensive feeding, overcrowding of fish cages and overstocking of tilapia fry, as well as the presence of unconsumed fish feeds, urine, domestic, industrial and agricultural waste in the Lake may have contributed to its high levels of hydrogen sulphide and ammonia during the said year, the decomposition of which consumes oxygen;

WHEREAS, the fishkill in Taal Lake reportedly affected as much as 27% of the fish supply of Metro Manila and will indubitably affect majority of the fisherfolk from the lakeside communities of Taal, who depend primarily on fishing for their subsistence.

WHEREAS, there is a need to determine the various and interrelated causes of the disastrous fishkill, in order to protect the precious ecosystem of Taal Lake, the livelihood of the lakeside communities surrounding it as well as the consumers who may be affected by the same.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, to direct the Senate Committees on Agriculture and Food, Environment and Natural Resources, and on Climate Change to conduct an immediate investigation, in aid of legislation, on the cause of the massive fishkill in Taal Lake.

Adopted,



LOREN LEGARDA

Senator