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SENATE

P. S. Res. No. 1222

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Introduced by Senator Manuel "Lito" M. Lapid

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON HEALTH AND DEMOGRAPHY, AGRICULTURE AND OTHER APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES IN THE SENATE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE ALARMING REPORTED CASES OF HERBICIDE GRAMOXONE POISONING IN THE PROVINCE OF BENGUET AND THE CORDILLERA REGION, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF PROTECTING THE GENERAL PUBLIC FROM THE POTENTIAL HEALTH HAZARDS CAUSED BY GRAMOXONE POISONING

WHEREAS, the State is mandated to protect the health of its citizens and to adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development which shall endeavor to make essential health services available to the people;

WHEREAS, recently, the Provincial Government of Benguet has requested the Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority (FPA) to recall the sale of gramoxone herbicide given that it has reportedly been identified as the culprit in the series of poisoning cases in said province. Health authorities in Benguet reported that majority of cases of suicide and poison cases can be attributed to the use of the herbicide gramoxone which comes in liquid form;

WHEREAS, gramoxone is used to protect crops against annual and perennial weeds. The active ingredient of gramoxone which is *paraquat* only affects the green parts of plants sprayed, stopping the energy producing cells (chloroplasts) and rapidly desiccating the tissue. Gramoxone allows for efficient inter-row application on a wide range of crops, especially tree and shrub crops, such as olive trees, tea plants, coffee trees or grapevines;

WHEREAS, the use of gramoxone herbicide has revolutionized weed control by replacing the time-consuming chore of hand weeding and has freed costly manual labor by improving the speed with which new crops can be sown. Today, gramoxone is a useful tool for farmers who apply low or zero tillage to minimize soil erosion, and as part of their weed management tool;

WHEREAS, unfortunately, data from the provincial health office in Benguet indicate that from 2007 to 2009, there have been 17 reported deaths due to gramoxone poisoning in the Province of Benguet alone, with the current

year having the most recorded cases of 13 incidents. The poisoning cases were recorded in the municipalities of Atok, Buguias, and Kibungan;

WHEREAS, there is an urgent need to eliminate the risk of gramoxone poisoning in the various regions in our country and provide enabling legislative intervention that would protect the health and well being of the general public.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED as it is hereby resolved to direct the Senate Committees on Health and Demography, Agriculture and other appropriate Committees in the Senate to conduct an inquiry, *In Aid of Legislation*, into the alarming reported cases of herbicide gramoxone poisoning in the Province of Benguet and the Cordillera Region, with the end in view of protecting the general public from the potential health hazards caused by gramoxone poisoning.

ADOPTED,


MANUEL "LITO" M. LAPID
Senator