

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC
OF THE PHILIPPINES
Second Regular Session

Secretary of the Senate

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SENATE

P.S. RES. NO. 744

[Signature]

INTRODUCED BY SENATOR PIA S. CAYETANO

A RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO INQUIRE, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE PROPOSED RECLAMATION OF THE FREEDOM ISLAND IN THE CITIES OF LAS PINAS AND PARANAQUE WHICH IS SAID TO BE THE LAST REMAINING MANGROVE AND ECO-RESERVE IN METRO MANILA

WHEREAS, Freedom Island and Long Island, collectively known as Freedom Islands, cover a total area of 175 hectares with around 30 hectares of 8 species of mangroves and 113 hectares of mudflats along the coasts of Las Piñas and Parañaque;

WHEREAS, it was declared as a Critical Habitat for Migratory Birds and ecotourism area by virtue of Proclamation Order No. 1412 as amended by Proclamation Order No. 1412-A dated 31 January 2008, naming it the Las Piñas-Parañaque Critical Habitat and Eco-Tourism Area (LPPCHEA);

WHEREAS, it was likewise identified as an Important Bird Area, a Key Biodiversity Area, and a priority site for biodiversity conservation by the Haribon Foundation, Conservation International and Wetlands International;

WHEREAS, it also plays a vital role for men and marine life as it is a natural shield against typhoons and an outlet for major waterways in the two cities while being the source of livelihood of local fisherfolk families such as gatherers of shellfish and mussels;

WHEREAS, on March 24, 2011, the Paranaque and Las Pinas Coastal Bay Project was approved by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) when the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) granted the Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) to Alltech Contractors Inc., the proponent of the said project;

WHEREAS, this is a flagship project of the local governments of Las Piñas and Parañaque, in partnership with the PRA and Alltech Contractors, made possible through the Private-Partnership Partnership Center of the Philippines;

WHEREAS, this proposed Php 37.84 billion-project plans to reclaim 635.14 hectares of the shoreline in front of the sanctuary for the construction of an entertainment center, ports, business parks, roads, real estate properties, and universities, with the highway and a drainage system cutting through the mangroves;

WHEREAS, there are differing opinions on the impact of the project to the population and the ecosystem;

WHEREAS, based on various studies cited by opposing groups, 8 barangays in Parañaque and 14 in Las Piñas will experience worse flooding if strong typhoons hit the

country because these cities parallel to the Freedom Island are considered lying in low grounds;

WHEREAS, Save Freedom Island spokesperson Glacy Macabale said that the project will destroy the last island, last bird sanctuary and last mangrove forest in Metro Manila as well as affect the livelihood of almost 10,000 fishermen and vendors in the area;


WHEREAS, this claim is being disputed by the proponents of the reclamation project as they claim that it would help reduce flooding from storm surges in the two cities by dredging the mouths of the Parañaque, Las Piñas and Zapote rivers and removing a sandbar at the mouth of the Las Piñas river which is expected to improve the water flow during heavy rains;

WHEREAS, in addition, Engr. Eduardo Destura, Department Manager for Planning and Evaluation under PRA's Reclamation and Regulation office said that the mangrove area and bird sanctuary will not be destroyed as the Coastal Lagoon will remain intact and untouched;

WHEREAS, considering the effects this project may have on the ecosystem and the economy, it is important that this be evaluated carefully weighing the benefits and consequences;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Senate of the Philippines direct the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources to inquire, in aid of legislation, into the proposed reclamation of the Freedom Island in the cities of Las Pinas and Paranaque which is said to be the last remaining mangrove and eco-reserve in Metro Manila.

Adopted,


PIA S. CAYETANO
Senator