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SENATE  
P.S. Res. 235

RECEIVED BY: *ju*

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Introduced by Senator Poe

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**RESOLUTION**

**URGING THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES AND CLIMATE CHANGE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE ACTUAL STATE OF PHILIPPINE ENVIRONMENT TO SERVE AS THE NEW BLUEPRINT FOR PROTECTION, PROMOTION AND FORMULATION OF APPROACHES, MECHANISMS AND POLICIES TO REVERSE THE COUNTRY'S CONTINUING ECOLOGICAL DEGRADATION**

Whereas, the 1987 Philippine Constitution provides as a basic policy: "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" (Art. II, Sec. 16);

Whereas, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in time for the Earth Day 2013 last April provided the following data as published:

- The Philippines has the second-lowest forest cover in Southeast Asia. Philippine forests have dwindled in the past 100 years, from 30 million hectares to 7.2 million, or 24 % of our land area.
- The country's biodiversity is among the most threatened in the world; despite the country having one of the most extensive coral reef areas in the world, only 2 percent of them remain in excellent condition.
- As for major urban centers, particularly Metro Manila, air pollution is a common problem while bodies of water in these areas remained unfit for human activity.

Whereas, environmental deterioration has resulted in a degraded ecosystem, poor health, scarcity in natural resources, poverty, unmitigated flooding, as well as death and destruction of properties;

Whereas, in the issue of primary forest cover in the Philippines:

1. The present primary forest cover of the Philippines are just remnants of what it was in the turn of the last century, containing trees which have attained great age and a forest cover exhibiting unique ecological features;
2. Between 1990 and 2005, the Philippines lost a third of its forest cover;
3. The current deforestation rate is around two percent per year, representing a 20 percent drop from the rate of the forest cover in the 1990;
4. Despite the ban on timber harvesting following severe flooding in the late 1980s and early 1990s, illegal logging continues to be responsible for much of the historical forest loss;
5. Human activities like mining operations, agricultural fires (kaingin), collection of firewood, and rural population expansion have also contributed to deforestation in recent years; and

6. The continuing disappearance of our primary forests is of great concern because of the high levels of endemic species that are dependent on its preservation, of the 1,196 known species of amphibians, birds, mammals and reptiles in the country, nearly 46 percent are endemic. Among plants, the number of endemic species is around 40 percent.

Whereas, the following data on Philippine coral reefs are insightful:

- Most of the country's coral reefs are in need of rehabilitation with only two percent still in pristine condition;
- The Philippines' corals encompass 26,000 square kilometers;
- The coral reefs of the Philippines are home to 500 of the 800 coral species in the world.
- The coral reefs of the Philippines are at risk because of over-exploitation, illegal fishing practices, coastal pollution, and rising ocean temperature. Accordingly, the country's coasts and seas have suffered heavy degradation wrought by over half a century of destructive practices;
- The World Resource Institute released a study in 2012 stating that the Philippines is one of the nine countries in the world with high to very high exposure to coral reef threats, but low to medium adaptive capacity.

Whereas, on the part of the DENR, among their initiatives include the national greening program, a massive reforestation aimed, the total log ban in all natural forests, the reduction of carbon emissions in the atmosphere, the absorption of runoff water and the distribution of geo-hazard maps to all communities to mitigate the loss of lives and property during extreme weather events triggered by climate change, among others;

Whereas, with the continued threats to the country's environment, it is imperative to act now and ensure that they are preserved for generations and generations of Filipinos: Now therefore be it

RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, To Urge the Senate Committees on Environment and Natural Resources and Climate Change to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the actual state of Philippine environment to serve as the new blueprint for protection, promotion and formulation of approaches, mechanisms and policies to reverse the country's continuing ecological degradation.

Adopted,

  
GRACE POE