


SIXTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC)
OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



Senate
Office of the Secretary

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SENATE
P. S. R. No. 262

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE REPORTED ANOMALOUS IMPORTATION DEALINGS IN THE BUREAU OF PLANT INDUSTRY (BPI) ALLEGEDLY ALLOWING FOR A MONOPOLY OF GARLIC IMPORTATION IN THE COUNTRY

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article XII, Section 19 states that "The State shall regulate or prohibit monopolies when the public interest so requires. No combinations in restraint of trade or unfair competition shall be allowed";

WHEREAS, The *Philippine Star* reported in its 4 September 2013 issue that Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption (VACC) asked the Department of Justice (DOJ) to expedite its resolution of a complaint against officials of the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI);

WHEREAS, the reported complaint involved supposed anomalous deals between the BPI and businesswoman Leah Cruz, who the VACC accused of monopolizing the importation of garlic to the country;

WHEREAS, the VACC alleged in the same article that Cruz has profited illegally to the tune of nearly P200 million in the last 12 months through her dealings with the BPI;

WHEREAS, the VACC alleged that Cruz used her drivers, clerks, and househelp as dummy owners of her companies, which were issued "revalidated" importation permits;

WHEREAS, it was reported that BPI director Clarito Barron issued a memorandum last 20 April 2012 temporarily suspending the issuance of importation permits to revive the garlic industry pursuant to the Garlic Industry Development Road Map, but the order was lifted after Barron was sued for its release;

WHEREAS, it was alleged in the report that Cruz' companies were the only ones allowed to import garlic into the country following the lifting of a memorandum by Barron;

WHEREAS, the VACC alleged that the lifting did not settle the problem of non-issuance of importation permits for garlic, and that there should have been no question on this 'non-issuance' of importation permits if there were no hundreds of container vans of imported garlic in the market;

WHEREAS, according to the news article, Cruz allegedly earned P192 million from her virtual monopoly of garlic importation in the last 12 months;

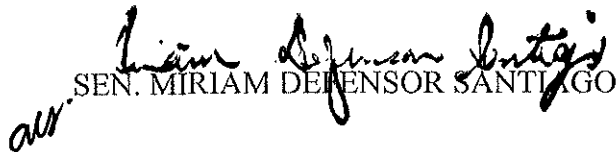
WHEREAS, it was reported that BPI director Barron claimed in a March 2013 letter to Customs Commissioner Ruffy Biazon that the importation permit certificates of extension were signed without his knowledge, authority, and permission;

WHEREAS, public policy abhors monopolies in the Philippine economic setting, since it promotes the concentration of wealth in a few hands while hampering the development of a free market system;

WHEREAS, this development calls for the need for Congress to strengthen the present legal measures which aim to prevent monopolies of industries in the country;

WHEREFORE, be it hereby resolved by the Philippine Senate, to direct the proper Senate committee, to conduct an inquiry in aid of legislation, on the reported anomalous importation dealings in the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) allegedly allowing for a monopoly of garlic importation in the country.

Adopted,

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SEN. MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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