

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



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SENATE
P.S.R No. 506

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION
DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID
OF LEGISLATION, ON THE REPORTED ILLEGAL TRADE OF PHILIPPINE SEA
TURTLES IN PALAWAN

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 2, Section 16 provides: "The State shall protect and advance the right of the people to a balance and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature";

WHEREAS, Republic Act No. 9147, also known as the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act, pursues, with due regard to the national interest, the Philippine commitment to international convention, protection of wildlife and their habitat;

WHEREAS, according to various news reports on 31 January 2014, Philippine National Police rescued 120 protected sea turtles found hidden in a pen inside a mangrove swamp, apparently intended for sale to foreign traders;

WHEREAS, local authorities reportedly said that the incident is the latest case of sea turtles captured in the western island of Palawan where various species are known to congregate;

WHEREAS, it was reported that the turtles were subsequently set free but no one was found tending the hidden pen, and that a police investigation was launched to determine who captured and stored the sea turtles;

WHEREAS, it was also reported that such seizures of illegally-captured turtles are common in Balabac because the animals often congregate there;

WHEREAS, sea turtles are protected under law and catching them is punishable by at least 12 years in jail;

WHEREAS, according to reports from recent years, authorities have frequently caught foreigners, often Chinese, catching or buying sea turtles in the waters off Palawan;

WHEREAS, it was reported that turtles are often sold as exotic pets, end up in food markets or are used by practitioners of traditional medicine;

WHEREAS, Congress should look into the perpetuation of this illegal activity despite the implementation of various laws protecting endangered species in the country;

WHEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE PHILIPPINE SENATE to direct the proper Senate committee to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the reported illegal trade of Philippine sea turtles in Palawan.

Adopted,

Miriam Defensor Santiago
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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