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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
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SENATE

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P.S. Res. No. 576

Introduced by Senator Cynthia A. Villar

A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE SENATE APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION ON THE INFESTATION OF COCONUT TREES IN THE CALABARZON BY THE COCONUT SCALE INSECT OR CSI (ASPIDIOTUS DESTRUCTOR) AND COCONUT LEAF BEETLE (BRONTISPA LONGISSIMA) AND INQUIRE ON THE MEASURES BEING UNDERTAKEN BY THE PHILIPPINE COCONUT AUTHORITY TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM

WHEREAS, the coconut industry is one of the four major sectors of Philippine agriculture and provide significant income, employment and foreign exchange to the Philippine economy, accounting for an export value of almost US\$2 billion in 2011.

WHEREAS, about 3.56 million hectares are planted to coconut in 1,195 municipalities in 68 out of 79 provinces in the country, and serve as source of livelihood to more than 25 million Filipinos and yielding 15 billion nuts annually.

WHEREAS, the coconut industry is being threatened by two deadly pests - 1). The Coconut Scale Insect (*Aspidiotus destructor sp. Signoret*) which is a small plant parasite that feeds on the leaves of young palms and on the surface of the fruits that sucks causing the leaves of the infected plant to turn yellow and wilt, thus preventing photosynthesis, and feed on sap directly from the tree's vascular system and eventually fall off; and 2). The Coconut Leaf Beetle or *Brontispa Longissima* which attack young coconut leaves and mature coconut palm by restricting growth and significantly reduce coconut yields.

- On Coconut Scale Insect -

WHEREAS, the Coconut Scale Insect or CSI or COCO-LISAP infestation was detected as early as March, 2010 in barangay Balele, Tanauan Batangas.

WHEREAS, the town of Agoncillo, Batangas on August 24, 2012 declared six (6) barangays under a state of calamity (Barangays Adia, San Jacinto, Coral na Munti, Balangon, Pamiga and Mabini because of the coconut scale insect infestation.

WHEREAS, scientist and farmers observed that the water inside the nuts with CSI tasted sour;

WHEREAS, recent reports show that CSI or scale insects have also attacked trees like mango, lanzones, rambutan, mangosteen, guava, papaya and avocado.

WHEREAS, based on mid 2013 data CSI or scale insects in CALABARZON are in 476,845 coconut trees located and are in 9 municipalities of Batangas and Quezon –

WHEREAS, the infestation spread to adjoining provinces at the observed speed of 15 kilometers a month.

WHEREAS, farmers in the affected areas were left with no choice but to cut down infested trees and just sell them as lumber to mitigate the losses.

WHEREAS, Philippine Coconut Administration (PCA) in 2013 reported also sighting of CSI in coconut trees in 15 barangays in Basilan Province.

- **On Brontispa** -

WHEREAS, Brontispa or the coconut leaf beetle based on report from the period August 2007 to March 2011, has already affected 3 million coconut trees in Pangasinan, Region 4-A, Southern Palawan, Maasin City, Southern Leyte Province, Samar Province and in the SOCKSARGEN Region.

WHEREAS, it seems that the Brontispa was carried via imported ornamental plants brought in the country from infested sources.

WHEREAS, infested trees loss productivity, thus reducing the number of nuts produced per tree.

WHEREAS, the two infestations negatively impact on coco oil mills and desiccated coconut processing plant as well which in Quezon Province alone require 1.9 million nuts a year in their operations.

WHEREAS, there is a need to conduct survey on the extent of the infestation of coconut trees by the CSI or coconut scale insect and coconut leaf beetle (brontispa) nationwide.

WHEREAS, there is a need to save the coconut industry which has been providing livelihood to millions of Filipinos and boosting export earnings to the country;

NOW THEREFOR, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that the appropriate committee of the Senate conduct an investigation on the infestation of coconut trees of scale insect and brontispa and inquire on the measures being undertaken by the Philippine Coconut Authority, and other concerned government institutions to address the problem.

Adopted.


SENATOR CYNTHIA A. VILLAR

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