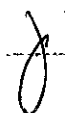


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SENATE

P.S. RES NO. 1506

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator Antonio "Sonny" F. Trillanes IV

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE/S ON ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES AND/OR LABOR, EMPLOYMENT AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT, TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE RECENT FATAL MINING ACCIDENTS AND ENVIRONMENTAL INCIDENT AND INQUIRE INTO THE SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS AT THE SEMIRARA COAL MINE IN SEMIRARA ISLAND, ANTIQUE, AND FOR OTHER RELATED PURPOSES.

WHEREAS, as reported on July 18, 2015 in the front page headline news of a leading daily newspaper, five (5) miners died and four (4) others are missing when part of the Panian open-pit coal mine in Semirara Island, Antique collapsed last Friday, 17 July 2015¹;

WHEREAS, said open-pit mine is operated by Semirara Mining and Power Corporation ("*Semirara Mining*"), a unit of DMCI Holdings, Inc. The latter is a publicly listed company currently embroiled in a number of controversies, including the Torre de Manila fiasco which has hugged the headlines recently;

WHEREAS, this is the second time in recent years that Semirara Mining has been involved in a fatal work-place accident. On February 14, 2013, a major TV based news network reported that five (5) miners were killed with five (5) others were missing when the west wall of the same Panian open-pit mine gave way at 11:55 p.m. on Wednesday, February 13, 2013²;

WHEREAS, in 2009, Semirara Mining was likewise accused of polluting Semirara Island's coastal resources with wastes from its coal washing plant³;

WHEREAS, Semirara is the nation's only large-scale coal producer reportedly accounting for 92% of the country's coal production⁴. As such, it is expected to put into place adequate mine safety and/or workplace safeguards, as well as environmental safety and natural resources preservation and/or conservation measures;

WHEREAS, unfortunately, Semirara Mining's dismal record shows that it has very little regard for the safety of its workers and for environmental protection and/or preservation;

¹ "5 dead, 4 missing in coal mine collapse", Philippine Daily Inquirer, 18 July 2015; Page 1; Also reported in Inquirer.net: <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/705819/3-dead-6-missing-as-part-of-semirara-mining-pit-collapses>

² "Five miners killed, five missing as Semirara coal mine collapses", GMA News Online, 14 February 2013: <http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/294880/news/regions/five-miners-killed-five-missing-as-semirara-coal-mine-collapses>

³ "Semirara folk score pollution of coastal resources", GMA News Online, 28 February 2009:

<http://gmanetwork.com/news/story/150803/news/regions/semirara-folk-score-pollution-of-coastal-resources>

⁴ See: "Fact Sheet: The DMCI-owned Semirara Mining Corporation" by Macas, Thrisa, 17 July 2015, GMA News Online:

<http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/524142/economy/companies/factsheet-the-dmci-owned-semirara-mining-corporation>

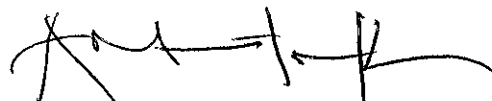
WHEREAS, in fact, a detailed astronaut photograph⁵ released by the NASA Earth Observatory on April 12, 2010 shows the heavily gouged northern end of Semirara Island, with mine tailings apparently spilling into the Sulu Sea. The picture starkly depicts what appears to be an environmental disaster waiting to happen. A copy of the said photo is hereto appended as ANNEX "A";

WHEREAS, what is more alarming is that Semirara Mining, the country's largest coal mining company, has refused to participate in the Philippine Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (PH-EITI), a global standard being advocated by the Government through the Department of Finance (DOF) to increase transparency, demonstrate commitment to reforms and anti-corruption and enhanced trust and stability in this volatile sector, as reflected in the Philippine Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative Report 2014⁶;

WHEREAS, in view of all of the foregoing, there is an apparent need to conduct an investigation, in aid of legislation, into the afore-mentioned fatal mining accidents and environmental incident involving Semirara Mining and to inquire into the safety and environmental conditions at Semirara Island with the end in view of enacting remedial legislation intended to govern mining operations in order to prevent similar fatal accidents and/or possible large-scale environmental disasters which may result from the poor and/or dismal safety and environmental practices of mining companies like Semirara Mining;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, to direct the Senate's Committee/s on Environment and Natural Resources and/or Labor, Employment and Human Resource Development, to conduct an investigation, in aid of legislation, into the afore-mentioned fatal mining accidents and environmental incident involving Semirara Mining and look into the safety and environmental conditions at Semirara Island in Antique, with the end in view of enacting remedial legislation intended to govern mining operations in order to prevent similar fatal accidents and/or possible large-scale environmental disasters which may result from the poor and/or dismal safety and environmental practices of mining companies like Semirara Mining.

Adopted,

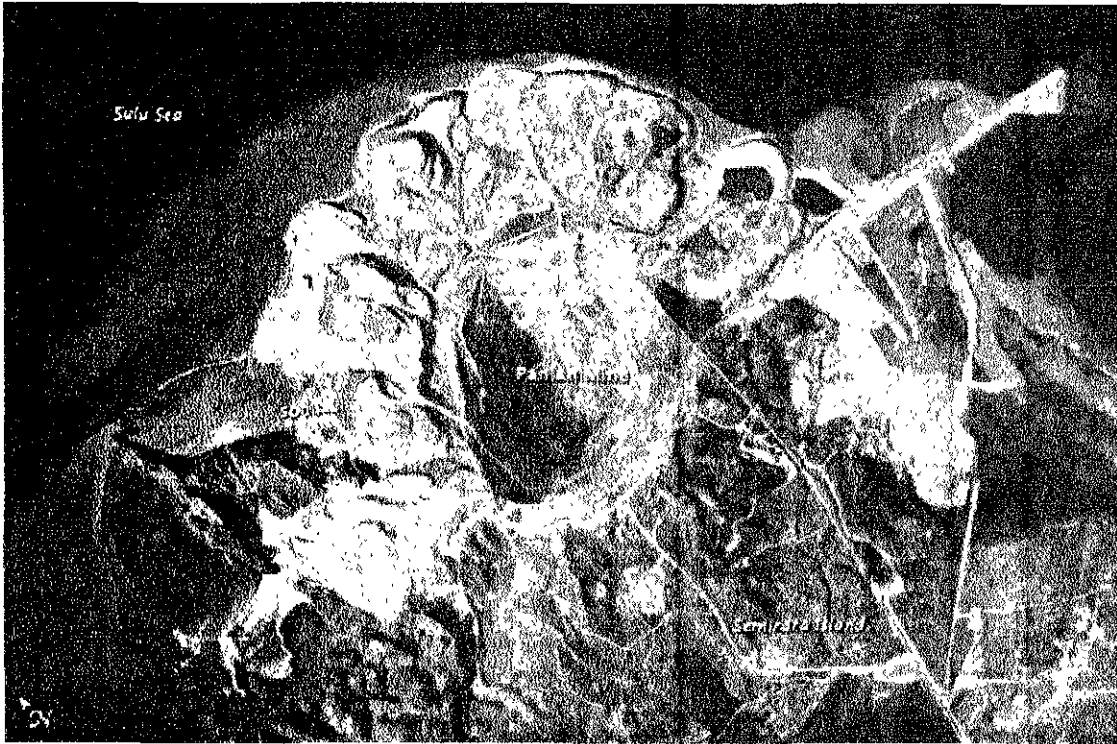


ANTONIO "SONNY" F. TRILLANES IV
Senator

⁵AFP Photo/Nasa Observatory: <http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/photo/149342/at-least-9-killed-in-semirara-mine>

⁶ See: *"The Makings of the First PH-EITI Country Report"* by Atty. Marie Gay Alessandra V. Ordenes, Country Coordinator of PH-EITI dated 10 January 2015; Available online at: <http://ph-eiti.org/#/News/Blogs/The-Making-of-the-First-PH-EITI-Country-Report>

ANNEX "A"



BIGGEST PIT. The Panitan Mine operated by Semirara Mining Corp is the biggest open-pit coal mine in the Philippines. Image from NASA

Note: As published in Rappler: <http://www.rappler.com/nation/51623-semirara-mining-bulldoze-pocan-coal-expansion>