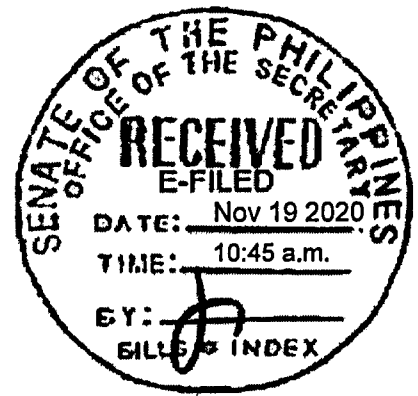


EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Second Regular Session)



SENATE

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 575

Introduced by Senator FRANCIS N. PANGILINAN

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE UNPRECEDENTED FLOODING IN CAGAYAN VALLEY AND ISABELA DUE TO THE ONSLAUGHT OF TYPHOON ULYSSES

WHEREAS, on 11 November 2020, Typhoon Ulysses brought heavy rains to the Cagayan Valley triggering an unprecedented flooding, which killed at least twenty-four (24) people and displaced 300,000 more in the region;

WHEREAS, according to the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), as of 17 November 2020, Typhoon Ulysses left at least P2.7 billion in damage to agriculture and P5.2 billion in infrastructure, affecting 73,000 farmers and fisherfolk, and over 71,000 hectares of agricultural areas with 109,000 metric tons in production losses. Affected communities include rice, corn, high value crops, fisheries, livestock and poultry, irrigation facilities, machineries and equipment, and agricultural infrastructure in the Cordillera Administrative Region, Ilocos Region, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, and Bicol;

WHEREAS, of the reported damage, the rice sector accounted for around 42.3%. Cagayan Valley is the country's second largest rice-producing region and accounts for 14% of national rice output. It is also the country's top corn producer accounting for 23% of annual production;

WHEREAS, the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) operates Magat Dam - an irrigation and hydroelectric dam at the boundary of Alfonso Lista town in Ifugao province and the municipality of Ramon in Isabela - which has a 45-square-kilometer reservoir that is fed by watersheds in Nueva Vizcaya (60 percent), Ifugao (33 percent) and Isabela (7 percent);

WHEREAS, at the height of the typhoon, the NIA ordered Magat Dam's 7 gates to be opened for 11 hours, releasing 6,706 cubic meters of water per second at maximum discharge, which is equivalent to a total of 106,223 Olympic-sized swimming pools, or two swimming pools per second;

WHEREAS, NIA allegedly opened Magat Dam's gates before the reservoir breached the spilling level of 193 meters above sea level with a view to maintaining a standard safety level and a normal inflow and outflow in order to prevent more severe floods. However, NIA alleged that they have opened Magat Dam's gates as early as a week before Typhoon Ulysses' onslaught because of heavy rains and to prevent the dam from breaking;

WHEREAS, the NDRRMC said that the widespread flooding in Cagayan Valley was not due to the release of water from Magat Dam, but rather the swelling of Cagayan River over the course of several weeks due to continuous rains experienced in Luzon;

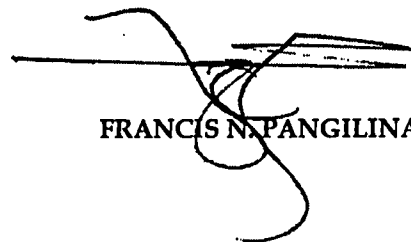
WHEREAS, the severe flooding that inundated large parts of the Cagayan Valley was also attributed to a confluence of factors, which include environmental destruction, degradation of forests in Cordillera and Sierra Madre, illegal logging, illegal quarrying/mining, yellow corn farming in the slopes and mountains, the use of herbicide, the absence of lack of a disaster management platform that shows hydrometeorological hazard maps, which used to be provided by Department of Science and Technology's (DOST) Project-NOAH – a project defunded in 2017 – and the absence of a central authority to implement a programmatic dam discharge in the severely-flooded areas;

WHEREAS, it is imperative to conduct an investigation in aid of legislation to determine the possible causes of the massive flooding and assess whether the existing standards or protocols for the release of water from the Magat dam were observed, and if necessary, amend the same for better preparation and response during calamities and avert casualties and damages to property, including the development and implementation of an integrated water resources planning and management system that will cover flood control (DPWH), irrigation (NIA), water supply (MWSS, LWUA, LGUs, private operators), hydro power (DOE, NPC), and water regulations (NWRB), as well as installation of a river management operational protocol;

WHEREAS, the investigation should include a review of our policies in relation to water or flood management and the formulation of solutions moving forward to prevent severe flooding in Cagayan Valley and other surrounding provinces, as well as other river basin systems in the country, and to hold erring government officials accountable;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, to direct the appropriate Senate committee to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the unprecedented flooding in Cagayan Valley and Isabela due to the onslaught of Typhoon Ulysses.

Adopted,


FRANCIS N. PANGILINAN