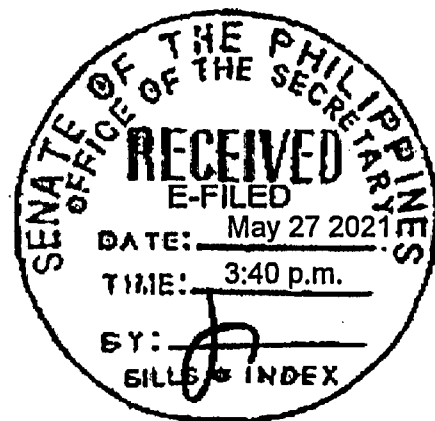


EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Second Regular Session)



SENATE

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 736

Introduced by Senators FRANCIS N. PANGILINAN and RISA HONTIVEROS

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, FOOD, AND AGRARIAN REFORM TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE STATUS OF THE COCONUT FARMERS REGISTRY UNDER THE COCONUT FARMERS AND INDUSTRY TRUST FUND ACT

WHEREAS, on 26 February 2021, the President signed Republic Act No. 11524 or an Act Creating the Coconut Farmers and Industry Trust Fund, Providing for its Management and Utilization, Reconstituting for the Purpose the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) Board, and for other Purposes;

WHEREAS, said law, which took effect on 13 March 2021, establishes a Trust Fund from the more than P100 billion Coconut Levy funds and assets and allows coconut farmers to finally reap the benefits of the levies unjustly imposed on them during the Martial Law years;

WHEREAS, the utilization of the Trust Fund shall be in accordance with the Coconut Farmers and Industry Development Plan, the programs under which are aimed at increasing the incomes and improving the quality of life of coconut farmers;

WHEREAS, Section 4 of the Coconut Farmers and Industry Trust Fund Act mandates the Philippine Coconut Authority to complete the Coconut Farmers Registry within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of the law or by 11 June 2021. The registry shall facilitate the implementation of the programs under the Coconut Farmers and Industry Development Plan and the identification of beneficiaries;

WHEREAS, the National Coconut Farmers Registry System (NCFRS) under the PCA has been in place since 2012 as mandated by the General Appropriations Act of 2012 to ensure the effective and efficient planning, delivery, and monitoring of government programs for coconut farmers. The PCA reported in its website that as of 7 January 2019, a total of 2,439,295 coconut farmers and farm workers have been registered. According to the Philippine Statistics Authority, there are a total of 3.5 million coconut farmers and workers nationwide;

WHEREAS, various farmers' groups have raised concerns on the registration process, which include, among others, the use of English in registration forms, the lack of information dissemination in far-flung areas, and the short registration period. They

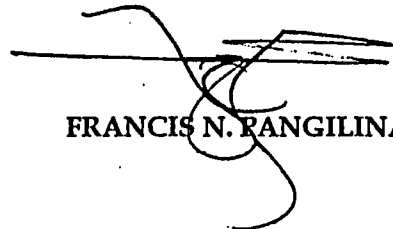
argued that these may lead to the exclusion of many coconut farmers and farmworkers from benefitting from the programs under the Coconut Farmers and Industry Trust Fund Law;

WHEREAS, other groups also raised the imposition of additional requirements such as a certification that landless laborers must secure from their respective *barangays* proving that they are, indeed, coconut farmworkers. It was alleged that some laborers are unable to secure said document because they were either barred by their landlords or turned away by *barangay* officials with connections to certain plantation owners;

WHEREAS, with a system of registration already in place since 2012, there is no reason for the PCA to not be able to fulfill its mandate to complete the coconut farmers registry, which shall facilitate the implementation of programs. However, in view of the above concerns raised by coconut farmers and farmworkers, there is a need to review the status of the registry and the registration forms and process, with the end in view of fully implementing the spirit of the law and not cause injustice to or exclusion of any coconut farmer or farmworker;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, to direct the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Food, and Agrarian Reform to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the status of the Coconut Farmers Registry under the Coconut Farmers and Industry Trust Fund Act.

Adopted,


FRANCIS N. RANGILINAN


RISA HONTIVEROS