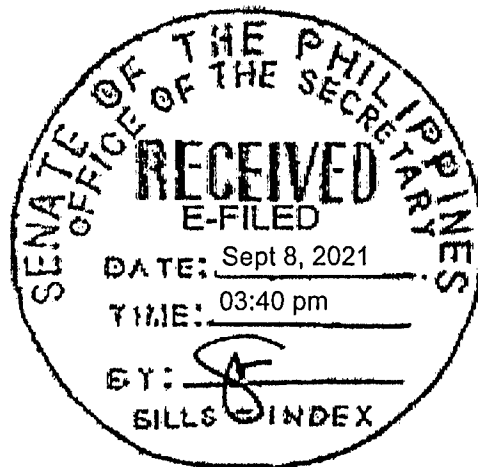


EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE )  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
Third Regular Session )



SENATE

P.S. Res. No. 902

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Introduced by **SENATOR LEILA M. DE LIMA**

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**RESOLUTION**  
**DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT**  
**AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, REGARDING THE**  
**EFFECTIVENESS OF THE STAYSAFE PH APPLICATION AND THE**  
**STATUS OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT'S CONTACT TRACING**  
**EFFORTS WITH THE END IN VIEW OF IMPROVING THE DISMAL**  
**RESPONSE OF THE GOVERNMENT TO THE RAPID SPREAD OF THE**  
**COVID-19 VIRUS**

1           WHEREAS, the StaySafe PH application is the Department of the Interior and  
2 Local Government's (DILG) and the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious  
3 Diseases' (IATF-EID) official contact tracing mobile app with Google-Apple Exposure  
4 Notification (GAEN) feature via Bluetooth connectivity in the Philippines;<sup>1</sup>

5           WHEREAS, the StaySafe PH application is designed to aid the management of  
6 COVID-19 cases by reminding people to maintain physical distance, as well as  
7 recording and monitoring COVID-19 symptoms. The application is intended to  
8 provide seamless, fast, and efficient contact tracing efforts, and will make it easier for  
9 government authorities and medical experts to keep track of the cases all over the  
10 country and carry out decisive actions to stem the rapid transmission of the virus;<sup>2</sup>

11           WHEREAS, in April 2020, the National Task Force on COVID-19 signed a  
12 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Multisys Technologies Corporation  
13 adopting StaySafe PH app as the country's official contact tracing, health condition  
14 reporting, and physical distancing system. The system and its database were turned

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<sup>1</sup> Multisys Technologies Corporation. (2021). MTC (3.0.10) [Mobile App]. Play Store. Retrieved 31 August 2021 from: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=ph.staysafe.mobileapp&hl=en&gl=US>.

<sup>2</sup> Department of Interior and Local Government. (30 March 2021). *DILG to LGUs, public: Use StaySafe.PH app to boost contact tracing*. Retrieved 31 August 2021 from: <https://dilg.gov.ph/news/DILG-to-LGUs-public-Use-StaySafePH-app-to-boost-contact-tracing/NC-2021-1062>.

1 over last March 2021 by the developer, Multisys Technologies Corporation, to the  
2 DILG which will ensure compliance with all laws, rules and regulations;<sup>3</sup>

3 WHEREAS, the application is currently reportedly being used by 15 million  
4 Filipinos and 700 LGUs and aims to reach over 50 million users and connect all  
5 1,634 cities and municipalities in the country;<sup>4</sup>

6 WHEREAS, despite the National Government mandating the use of the  
7 application as early as December last year,<sup>5</sup> Health Secretary Francisco Duque, in a  
8 Laging Handa briefing on August 26, claimed that the application has a very limited  
9 to almost no impact in contact tracing efforts;<sup>6</sup>

10 WHEREAS, during the same briefing, the DILG contradicted the statement of  
11 the Department of Health (DOH) regarding the supposed lack of impact of the  
12 government's contact tracing app. According to the DILG, the StaySafe PH app  
13 recorded 150 confirmed COVID-19 cases who tried to enter some establishments in  
14 July, and the registration in the application continues to expand with 6.4 million  
15 people already signed up as of 26 August 2021. Also, over 47 million scans were  
16 conducted through the app and 4.25 million quarantine codes for users were  
17 generated;<sup>7</sup>

18 WHEREAS, the Department of Information and Communication Technology  
19 (DICT) is in charge of data collection of the application which is linked to the Health  
20 Department's surveillance and contact tracing platform COVID Kaya or the COVID-  
21 19 document repository system;<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Alimario, A (26 August 2021). *Tracing czar defends Staysafe app*. Retrieved 31 August 2021 from: <https://cnnphilippines.com/videos/2021/8/26/Tracing-czar-defends-StaySafe-app.html>

<sup>5</sup> Perez-Rubio, B., Gregorio, X. & Adel, R. (26 August 2021). *COVID-19 task force requires all establishments to use Stay Safe app*. Retrieved 31 August 2021 from: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/12/04/2061458/covid-19-task-force-requires-all-establishments-use-stay-safe-app>

<sup>6</sup> Romero, A. & Cabrera, R. (27, August 2021). *StaySafe app useless? DICT told to explain*. Retrieved 31 August 2021 from: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2021/08/27/2122902/staysafe-app-useless-dict-told-explain>

<sup>7</sup> Rita, J. (26 August 2021). *DILG exec denies StaySafe contract tracing app had almost no impact*. Retrieved 31 August 2021 from: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/800961/dilg-exec-denies-staysafe-contract-tracing-app-had-almost-no-impact/story/>.

<sup>8</sup> Romero, A. & Cabrera, R (27 August 2021). *StaySafe app useless? DICT told to explain* Retrieved 31 August 2021 from: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2021/08/27/2122902/staysafe-app-useless-dict-told-explain>.

1           WHEREAS, on 25 August 2021, according to the Health Secretary, the DOH's  
2 data repository system, which determines who tested positive and who were exposed,  
3 was last updated back in March;<sup>9</sup>

4           WHEREAS, Senator Pia Cayetano compared the StaySafe contact-tracing app  
5 to a manual logbook wherein it just records your name and whereabouts without  
6 being fully utilized. She emphasized the lack of a system of coordination between the  
7 National Government and local government units (LGUs). If these gaps are left  
8 unaddressed, the StaySafe PH app will simply be a mobile application that scans  
9 quick response (QR) codes before entering an establishment and nothing more;<sup>10</sup>

10           WHEREAS, effective and efficient contact tracing is a critical component in  
11 any government's pandemic response. The government's contact tracing efforts to  
12 monitor and prevent the spread of the virus must emphasize comprehensive  
13 planning and preparation. This entails a continuous monitoring and evaluation of  
14 technical and procedural lapses which can adversely affect the government's  
15 objective of ensuring the public's health and safety from the COVID-19 virus;

16           WHEREAS, the government is already operating on limited resources and the  
17 funds and manpower utilized for developing and maintaining a reportedly ineffective  
18 contact tracing application will be deemed a monumental waste if it cannot perform  
19 up to its most basic standards;

20           WHEREAS, there seems to be deliberate negligence, if not inaction, on the  
21 part of the DICT, DOH, and DILG regarding our contact tracing mechanisms and  
22 protocols which is an essential part of a multi-pronged approach to successfully fight  
23 the COVID-19 pandemic

24           WHEREAS, there is a need to inquire into the viability of the StaySafe PH app  
25 as the national government's official contact tracing platform and determine the  
26 status of the government's contact tracing efforts and how it can effectively be  
27 integrated into one coherent, comprehensive, and responsive national system of  
28 public health surveillance to help with the government's COVID-19 response;

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<sup>9</sup> Gonzales, C. (25 August 2021). Duque admits 'StaySafe' contact tracing app had 'almost no impact' Retrieved 31 August 2021 from: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1478717/duque-admits-staysafe-contact-tracing-app-had-almost-no-impact>.

<sup>10</sup> Domingo, K. (25 August 2021). 'Only a digital log': Pia Cayetano says govt's contact-tracing app 'not doing anything'. Retrieved 31 August 2021 from: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/08/25/21/govt-contact-tracing-app-not-effective-senator-laments>

1           WHEREAS, there is also need to look into the accountability of the persons  
2 behind the StaySafe PH app as to why millions of pesos in public funds were used to  
3 pay for something that was never an integral part of our COVID-19 response;

4           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE, to direct the  
5 appropriate Senate Committee to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, regarding  
6 the effectiveness of the StaySafe PH application and the status of the national  
7 government's contact tracing efforts with the end in view of improving the dismal  
8 response of the government to the rapid spread of the COVID-19 virus.

*Adopted,*

  
LEILA M. DE LIMA