

NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



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SENATE
P.S. Resolution No. 350

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Introduced by **SENATOR IMEE R. MARCOS**

RESOLUTION
DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN
INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE SOARING MARKET PRICES
OF LOCAL ONIONS

WHEREAS, Section 9, Article XVI of the 1987 Constitution provides that the State shall protect consumers from trade malpractices and from substandard or hazardous products;

WHEREAS, pursuant to the said policy, Republic Act No. 7581, or the "Price Act", was enacted to ensure the availability of basic necessities and prime commodities at reasonable prices at all times without denying legitimate business a fair return on investment;

WHEREAS, onion is one of the prime commodities regularly monitored by the Department of Agriculture (DA) to protect consumers against price irregularities in the local market;

WHEREAS, in August 2022, the retail price of white onions has soared to as high as Php 400 per kilogram. DA attributed the price spike for white onions to a supply shortfall since many onion farmers have allegedly shifted to planting the red variety of onions;

WHEREAS, in October 2022, the monitored price of domestically produced red onion in wet markets has also risen to as much as Php 200 to Php 220 per kilogram;

WHEREAS, the DA, through Administrative Circular No. 09, dated 07 October 2022, released a suggested retail price for red onions at Php 170 per kilogram in Metro Manila, following the increase in prices of red onions;

WHEREAS, prices of red onions in public markets remained high despite the government's recent imposition of a price cap. Based on DA's monitoring as of 29 November 2022, majority of public markets in Metro Manila are still selling local red onions for Php 280 to Php 300 per kilogram;

WHEREAS, in a news article, dated 30 November 2022, the Manila Times reported that the Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura (Sinag) President Rosendo So has warned that retail prices of onions could reach Php 400 per kilo as he noted a shortage in the supply of such. So further stated that some DA officials are allegedly conniving with traders to manipulate the supply of the onions stating, *"The people at the BPI (Bureau of Plant Industry) have been there for a long time. Only the heads are replaced. They know the consumption and the volume of production of onions to be able to plan and if there is a need to import to prevent an increase in the prices of onions. It's the consumers who suffer. The farmers do not benefit. What I can see is connivance between officials of the DA and the traders"*;

WHEREAS, the vendors said the higher prices were driven by the lack of supply of imported onions from other countries like China and India;

WHEREAS, the DA has warned the public against buying onions from online platforms stating that these may be smuggled products and may not have been reviewed and could probably be unfit for human consumption;

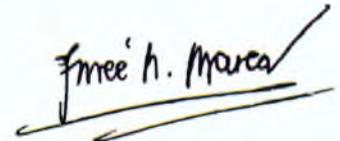
WHEREAS, just recently, the BPI, on 02 December 2022, along with the Bureau of Customs, DA, Philippine National Police (PNP), and Coast Guard seized around 1,037 bags of yellow onions in Tondo, Manila. The BOC and PNP estimated the confiscated goods to be worth about Php 1.9 million. However, the BPI states that the market value of said onions is about Php 3.9 million. The BPI took samples from the smuggled onions for testing and some had contaminants. BPI officer-in-charge for Information and Computer Section, Jose Diego E. Roxas, stated: *"Kumuha na ng sample yung safety services division ng BPI and sa ngayon on-going pa po yung testing kung May kasamang contaminants yung sibuyas na naconfiscate"*;

WHEREAS, the BPI has reportedly recommended the importation of onions to stem the surging prices of red onions and combat the supply shortage of onions due to crop damage from Severe Tropical Storm Paeng in October 2022 and increasing consumer demand this holiday season;

WHEREAS, there is a need to determine the cause, as well as, ensure that the proposed importation of onions will not kill the local onion production or industry;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED,
directing the appropriate Senate committee to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation,
into the soaring market prices of local onions.

Adopted,


JIMMIE R. MARCOS