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SENATE

P.S. Res. No. 391

RECEIVED BY:

Introduced by SENATOR RAMON BONG REVILLA, JR.

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SERVICES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE SHUTDOWN OF PHILIPPINE AIRSPACE ON JANUARY 1, 2023, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF EVALUATING PHILIPPINE AIRPORT OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT INCLUDING ITS EXISTING FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT; ASSESSING THE SHUTDOWN'S TOURISM AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS; AND PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF THE PASSENGERS FOR COMFORT AND EFFICIENCY

WHEREAS, Republic Act No. 9497 otherwise known as the "*Civil Aviation Authority Act of 2008*" declares that the State shall "provide safe and efficient air transport and regulatory services in the Philippines by providing for the creation of a civil aviation authority with jurisdiction over the restructuring of the civil aviation system, the promotion, development and regulation of the technical, operational, safety, and aviation security functions under the civil aviation authority";

WHEREAS, on 01 January 2023, a severe power outage impacted air traffic control at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) - the Philippines' largest airport. The technical issues were first detected on the morning of New Year's Day according to the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP);¹

WHEREAS, the CAAP shutdown the entire Philippine airspace from inbound and outbound flights around noontime of January 1st;

¹ Chen, H. (02 January 2023) *Philippines Thousands stranded on New Year's Day as power outage hits Manila airport*. Retrieved 03 January 2022, from <https://edition.cnn.com/travel/article/naia-philippines-airport-power-outage-flight-chaos-intl-hnk/index.html>

WHEREAS, a total of 282 flights were either delayed, canceled or diverted to other regional airports while around 56,000 passengers were affected as of 4 p.m. local time on New Year's Day.² The Department of Migrant Workers reported that around 3,000 overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) were among those affected;

WHEREAS, CAAP explained that the flight delays are only "precautionary measures" to ensure the safety of the passengers, crew and aircraft";³

WHEREAS, on 02 January 2023, at least 75 more flights have been canceled;⁴

WHEREAS, the chaos that erupted revealed that officials had expected that the "outdated" air traffic system controlled by the CAAP would eventually conk out. However, according to reports, "no concrete plans to replace it or install backups were laid out." Transportation Secretary Jaime Bautista, himself a former airline executive, admitted that he had known about the problems with the Communications, Navigation and Surveillance Systems for Air Traffic Management (CNS/ATM) that went down on New Year's Day. He said he had raised the lack of a backup system for the CNS/ATM during a Cabinet meeting;⁵

WHEREAS, air transport has a substantial economic impact both through its own activities and as an enabler of other industries. The malfunction that affected the NAIA Communications, Navigation and Surveillance Systems for Air Traffic Management (CNS/ATM) had a domino effect that not only affected those traveling that day but in effect affected other industries such as logistics, tourism and even our

² *Ibid.*

³ Boiser, A and Piad, T. (02 January 2023) *NAIA power outage, tech glitch shut PH air space*. Retrieved 03 January 2023, from <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1711413/naia-power-outage-tech-glitch-shut-ph-air-space>

⁴ (2023, January 2). List: Canceled flights for January 2 due to NAIA Air Traffic Outage. Philstar.com. Retrieved January 3, 2023, from <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2023/01/02/2234825/list-canceled-flights-january-2-due-naia-air-traffic-outage>

⁵ Gregorio, X. (02 January 2023) *Officials aware 'outdated' NAIA air traffic system could fail. What was done about it?* Retrieved 03 January 3, 2022, from <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2023/01/02/2234849/officials-aware-outdated-air-traffic-system-could-fail-what-was-done-about-it>

OFWs. The movement of goods was delayed and hampered, news of this fiasco was reported worldwide and cast a bad light on our tourism facilities and management, and our OFWs who were expected to get to work by their employers were prevented from doing so;

WHEREAS, it is imperative to determine the country's preparedness for technical glitches that affect air traffic which ultimately impacts not only the safety and convenience of passengers, but could likewise directly jeopardize our national security;

WHEREAS, the thousands of lives affected by delayed flights is a cause for concern especially because many of the passengers are returning Filipinos whose jobs are on the line after missing their flights. There should thus be thorough investigation as to the country's management plan involving any similar incident;

WHEREAS, in an archipelagic country such as ours, travelers depend on air transportation for the ease and convenience thereof. An inquiry into the recent mishap is vital so that similar incidents that are detrimental to public interest will be avoided;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, to direct the Senate Committee on Public Services to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the shutdown of Philippine airspace, including the malfunction that affected the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) Communications, Navigation And Surveillance Systems for Air Traffic Management (CNS/ATM) on New Year's Day, with the end in view of evaluating airport operations and management including its existing facilities and equipment; assessing the shutdown's tourism and economic impacts; and protecting the rights of the passengers for comfort and efficiency.

Adopted,


/ RAMON BONG REVILLA JR.