


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



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**SENATE
Proposed Senate Resolution No. 477**

Introduced by Senator Aquilino “Koko” Pimentel III

**A RESOLUTION
DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
ACCOUNTABILITY OF PUBLIC OFFICERS AND
INVESTIGATIONS (BLUE RIBBON) TO CONDUCT AN
INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE RAMPANT
AND UNABATED AGRICULTURAL SMUGGLING IN THE
PHILIPPINES**

1 **WHEREAS**, Section 2 of Republic Act No. 10845, otherwise
2 known as the “Anti-Agricultural Smuggling Act of 2016”, provides
3 that it is the policy of the State to promote the productivity of the
4 agriculture sector and to protect farmers from unscrupulous traders and
5 importers, who by their illegal importation of agricultural products,
6 especially rice, significantly affect the production, availability of
7 supply and stability of prices, and the food security of the State;

8
9 **WHEREAS**, the issue of smuggling has been a decade-long
10 problem that has continued to be a burden in the country’s agricultural
11 market. Unfortunately, up until now, smuggling persists, if not worse
12 than before. The government has not successfully eradicated or even
13 countered smuggling, which has greatly affected our farmers and the
14 consumers as well with the soaring prices of food commodities;

15
16 **WHEREAS**, in September 2021, acting on to the Proposed
17 Senate Resolution No. 992 of Senator Francis N. Pangilinan and the

1 privilege speech of Senate President Vicente Sotto III regarding the
2 smuggling of agriculture products in the country, the Committee of the
3 Whole was convened to discuss the same;

4
5 **WHEREAS**, the Committee of the Whole found that the amount
6 of technically smuggled agri-fishery commodities for the years 2019 to
7 2022 is estimated at P667.5 million. During that time, 31 smuggling
8 cases were pending from May 28, 2021 with the total amount of
9 smuggled goods estimated at P848,327,873.31;

10
11 **WHEREAS**, the Committee also revealed a list of 22 “persons
12 of interest” involved in large-scale agricultural smuggling, yet until
13 now no smuggler has been sent to jail and agricultural smuggling
14 remains rampant in the country;

15
16 **WHEREAS**, Republic Act No. 10845 took effect on June 2016
17 and was supposed to protect the local farmers. However, seven years
18 after its enactment, smuggled agricultural products are still hurting
19 local food producers;

20
21 **WHEREAS**, this year, at least P19 million worth of illegal sugar
22 were discovered at the Manila International Container Port on January
23 11, 2023, and an estimated P20 million worth of red onions were
24 reportedly seized in the Port of Zamboanga last January 22, 2023;

25
26 **WHEREAS**, none other than President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.
27 admits that smuggling is “absolutely rampant” and the systems
28 designed to address it are “ineffective”.¹ He even called for the private
29 sector to help win the fight against rampant smuggling in the country².
30 In response, various agricultural stakeholders have offered to help the
31 government stop the chronic smuggling of food products that has
32 depressed local production and kept food prices high;³

33

¹ *BBM admits smuggling rampant, preventive systems ineffective*, Philippine Star, 15 Jan. 2023.

² *PBBM hits rampant smuggling*, <https://manilastandard.net/news/314296252/pbbm-hits-rampant-smuggling.html>. Posted on January 15, 2023.

³ *Agri stakeholders offer help to stop chronic food smuggling*, <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1192876>. Posted on January 17, 2023.

1 **WHEREAS**, to make matters worse, the DA has warned
2 consumers against patronizing white onions smuggled into the country.
3 According to DA, these smuggled agricultural products do not comply
4 with sanitary measures. In fact, some 100,000 kilos of smuggled onions
5 recently intercepted at the port of manila contained chemical residue
6 and traces of E. coli;⁴

7
8 **WHEREAS**, all these are indicative that acts of malfeasance,
9 misfeasance and nonfeasance are still prevalent within concerned
10 government agencies such as the Department of Agriculture and
11 Bureau of Customs, causing agricultural smuggling to thrive;

12
13 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** as it is hereby
14 resolved to direct the Senate Committee on Accountability of Public
15 Officers and Investigations (Blue Ribbon) to conduct an inquiry, in aid
16 of legislation, on the rampant and unabated agricultural smuggling in
17 the Philippines, which negatively impact our local farmers and
18 fisherfolks, pose great risks to the health of the Filipino consumers, and
19 deprive the government of its much-needed revenues, with the end in
20 view of identifying accountability and making changes to our anti-
21 smuggling laws and processes, if found necessary.

Adopted,


AQUILINO "KOKO" PIMENTEL III

⁴ *Smuggled onions pose health risks: agri dept*, [https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/12/21/22/smuggled-onions-
pose-health-risks-da](https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/12/21/22/smuggled-onions-
pose-health-risks-da). Posted on Dec. 21, 2022.