

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



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SENATE

RECEIVED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

P.S. Res. No. 503

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Introduced by Senator Loren B. Legarda

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**RESOLUTION**

**URGING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RICE COMPETITIVENESS ENHANCEMENT FUND, AND OTHER PROGRAMS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ADDRESSING THE PLIGHT OF FILIPINO RICE FARMERS**

**WHEREAS**, on 14 February 2019, then President Rodrigo R. Duterte signed Republic Act 11203 or "An Act Liberalizing the Importation, Exportation, and Trading of Rice, Lifting for the Purpose The Quantitative Import Restriction on Rice, and For Other Purposes;"

**WHEREAS**, the law opens the Philippine rice market and places a minimum 35% tariff on imported rice, thus lowering the price of rice from other countries but levelling the playing field for less efficient local producers as the tariff goes into a Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF);

**WHEREAS**, since its passage, the Department of Agriculture receives an annual budget of PHP 10 billion for RCEF – PHP 5 billion is allotted for the free distribution of farm machinery and equipment, PHP 3 billion for the free distribution of inbred certified seeds, and PHP 1 billion each for credit support and training of farmers and extension;

**WHEREAS**, Republic Act 11598, otherwise known as the "Cash Assistance for Filipino Farmers Act," was signed into law on 10 December 2021. The law provides that annual tariff revenues from rice imports in excess of P10 billion shall be distributed as cash assistance to small rice farmers tilling two hectares of land and below until 2024;

**WHEREAS**, during the deliberations for the concurrence of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement, 131 farmer organizations opposed the ratification for reasons that previously promised safety nets have not materialized and have not made the Filipino farmer competitive as intended;

**WHEREAS**, the RCEP was concurred in by the Senate on February 21, 2023 through a resolution, in which a special oversight committee on RCEP was created and guidelines for the implementation of RCEP were included to deliver on the promise of competitiveness;

**WHEREAS**, there are reports of massive selling of rice lands and farmers giving up the tilling of their lands due to failure to reach competitiveness;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Senate of the Philippines conduct an inquiry in aid of legislation on the implementation of the RCEF in making Filipino rice farmers competitive in the global market;

**RESOLVED, FURTHER**, that the issues of conversion of rice lands, safety nets, access to credit, strategic and efficient use of funds, and capacity building for Filipino farmers be comprehensively investigated for the purpose of legislating the necessary changes, ensuring the proper planning and expenditure to allot the optimum budgets for the sector in the coming budget process;

**RESOLVED, FINALLY**, that the proper Senate committee be tasked to ensure in the exercise of its function, that the pitfalls and gaps experienced in the RCEF not be repeated under RCEP.

*Adopted,*

  
**LOREN LEGARDA**