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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
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SENATE

RECEIVED BY:

P. S. RES. NO. 561

Introduced by Senator JOEL VILLANUEVA

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE/S OF THE SENATE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE MEASURES, PLANS, AND PROGRAMS OF THE GOVERNMENT TO AVOID POSSIBLE WATER SHORTAGE IN METRO MANILA AND OTHER AFFECTED AREAS IN THE COUNTRY

WHEREAS, Article 1, Section 2(c) of Republic Act No. 9275 or the Clean Water Act of 2004 provides the State's policy to formulate a holistic national program of water quality management that recognizes that water quality management issues cannot be separated from concerns about water sources and ecological protection, water supply, public health and quality of life;

WHEREAS, the Philippines, as an archipelagic country surrounded by 1,380 square kilometers of water area, has 421 principal river basins, that serve as sources of daily sustenance and livelihood to people and their communities;¹

WHEREAS, despite the abundance of water resources in the country, lack of sustainable water supply has been a constant problem, especially during the dry season;

WHEREAS, water scarcity is a serious concern for an expanding population. According to the latest data of the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), there are 109,035,343 Filipinos as of May 2020.² By 2024, it is projected to increase to 114,163,719 based on the Department of Health's Population Projection: 2020-2025 data;³

¹ July 30, 2014. Republic Act No. 9275: The Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004. Food and Fertilizer Technology Center for the Asian and Pacific Region. Available at <https://ap.fttc.org.tw/article/715> (Accessed on March 20, 2023); March 15-16, 2022. National River Basin Summit 2022. Department of Environment and Natural Resources – River Basin Control Office. Available at <https://rbco.denr.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Documentation-Report-National-River-Basin-Summit-Mar-15-16-2022-2.pdf> (Accessed on March 20, 2023).

² July 7, 2021. 2020 Census of Population and Housing (2020 CPH) Population Counts Declared Official by the President. Philippine Statistics Authority. Available at <https://psa.gov.ph/content/2020-census-population-and-housing-2020-cph-population-counts-declared-official-president> (Accessed on March 21, 2023).

³ Population Projection 2020-2025. Department of Health. Available at <https://doh.gov.ph/sites/default/files/publications/Population%20Projections%20by%20Region%2C%20Province%2C%20Cities%20and%20Municipalities%2C%202020-2025.pdf> (Accessed on March 21, 2023).

WHEREAS, early this year, the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) warned of a possible water shortage supply crisis in 2023 if there will be no new water source or increase in water supply to meet the increasing demand.⁴ In fact, concessionaire Maynilad Water Services continuously implements scheduled water service interruptions in areas where demand for water is high;⁵

WHEREAS, the Angat Dam, which has a storage capacity of about 850 million cubic meters, supplies 98% of Metro Manila's water needs and provides for the irrigation needs of 25,000 hectares of farmlands in Bulacan and Pampanga.⁶ Although far from the critical water level of 180 meters (as of March 20, 2023), the decreasing trend of this year's water level is a cause of concern and an object of strict monitoring to avoid the situation in 2022 where water level was below critical level of 176 meters in the months of July and September;⁷

WHEREAS, the New Centennial Water Source-Kaliwa Dam Project (Kaliwa Dam), an alternative water source to the Angat Dam, was set for construction last January 2020 until December 2025.⁸ It was expected to reduce water dependency on the Angat Dam by 97% through the augmentation of 600 million liters of water per day for the benefit of 17.46 million people or 3.49 million households in Metro Manila, Rizal, and Quezon City;⁹

WHEREAS, despite moving the start of Kaliwa Dam construction to June 2022, it still failed to materialize for failure to obtain several permits and certifications.¹⁰ Although the construction is now scheduled on June 2023, strong opposition from affected Indigenous Peoples, environmental watchdogs and other stakeholders can cause further delays,¹¹ especially since the construction of the dam will likely cause massive environmental degradation in the Kaliwa watershed forest reserve;

⁴ January 24, 2023. NCR water deficit looms in 2023 with growing population — MWSS RO. Inquirer. Available at <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1720494/fwd-water-deficit-projected-in-ncr-in-2023-due-to-increasing-population-mwss-ro#ixzz7wU3uxnzh> (Accessed on March 20, 2023).

⁵ Service Advisories. Maynilad. Available at <https://www.mayniladwater.com.ph/service-advisories/> (Accessed on March 20, 2023).

⁶ December 9, 2022. MWSS assures public of ample water supply. PhilStar. Available at <https://www.philstar.com/business/2022/12/09/2229493/mwss-assures-public-ample-water-supply#:~:text=Angat%20Dam%20supplies%20more%20than,farmlands%20in%20Bulacan%20and%20Pampanga.> (Accessed on March 20, 2023).

⁷ Dam Water Level Update. Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration. Available at <https://www.pagasa.dost.gov.ph/flood> (Accessed on March 20, 2023).

⁸ February 18, 2022. Kaliwa Dam construction eyed to start in June. CNN. Available at <https://www.cnnphilippines.com/news/2022/2/18/kaliwa-dam-project-construction.html> (Accessed on March 21, 2023).

⁹ The New Centennial Water Source-Kaliwa Dam Project. BRI Monitor. Available at <https://www.brimonitor.org/case-studies/the-new-centennial-water-source-kaliwa-dam-project-ncws-kdp/> (Accessed on March 21, 2023); February 6, 2023. Securing future water supply. Inquirer. Available at <https://opinion.inquirer.net/160841/securing-future-water-supply> (Accessed on March 21, 2023).

¹⁰ February 18, 2022. Kaliwa Dam construction eyed to start in June. CNN. Available at <https://www.cnnphilippines.com/news/2022/2/18/kaliwa-dam-project-construction.html> (Accessed on March 21, 2023).

¹¹ February 19, 2023. Kaliwa Dam to displace 200 families: Quezon Ips. Philippine News Agency. Available at <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1195568> (Accessed on March 21, 2023); February 13, 2023. Quezon-Manila protest march set vs Kaliwa Dam in Sierra Madre Available at <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1728922/quezon-manila-protest-march-set-vs-kaliwa-dam-in-sierra-madre#ixzz7waNt1fG3> (Accessed on March 21, 2023).

WHEREAS, in the past 10 years, the Philippines experienced the longest and one of the worst El Niño conditions that lasted for 18 months from March 2015 to mid-2016, affecting 400,000 farmers and 550,000 hectares¹² with over Php4 billion damages to farms.¹³ Just this month, Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) warned of another El Niño with the end of La Niña, which increases the likelihood of below normal rainfalls and incoming dry spells, posing threats to clean water supply;¹⁴

WHEREAS, given the foregoing and acknowledging that access to clean water supply is an integral need of every Filipino household, there is a need to ensure that the current state of the country's water supply is adequate for the residents of Metro Manila and other affected areas, especially with the forecasted dry season.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES, that the appropriate Committee/s of the Senate to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the measures, plans, and programs of the Government to avoid possible water shortage in Metro Manila and other affected areas in the country.

Adopted,


SENATOR JOEL VILLANUEVA 

¹² April 2, 2019. Striking a Balance: Managing El Niño and La Niña in Philippines' Agriculture - Philippines. Available at <https://reliefweb.int/report/philippines/striking-balance-managing-el-ni-o-and-la-ni-philippines-agriculture> (Accessed on March 21, 2023)

¹³ February 20, 2016. El Niño farm damage rises to P4B. Inquirer. Available at <https://business.inquirer.net/207351/el-nino-farm-damage-rises-to-p4b> (Accessed on March 21, 2023).

¹⁴ March 16, 2023. La Niña over; El Niño seen this year – PAGASA. PhilStar. <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2023/03/16/2251987/la-nia-over-el-nio-seen-year-pagasa#:~:text=A%20golden%20sunset%20radiates%20its,falls%20on%20March%2015%2C%202023.&text=MANILA%2C%20Philippines%20%E2%80%94%20State%20weather%20forecasters,Ni%C3%B1o%20expected%20later%20this%20year> (Accessed on March 22, 2023); March 21, 2023. 11 million families lack access to clean water. PhilStar. Available at <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2023/03/21/2253235/11-million-families-lack-access-clean-water> (Accessed on March 22, 2023); El Niño / La Niña Monitoring. PAGASA. Available at <https://bagong.pagasa.dost.gov.ph/climate/el-nino-la-nina/monitoring> (Accessed on March 22, 2023).