

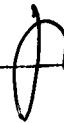
**NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
Second Regular Session**)
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23 SEP 12 P5:30

SENATE

P.S.R. No. 794

RECEIVED BY: 

INTRODUCED BY SENATOR RISA HONTIVEROS

RESOLUTION

**CALLING FOR THE APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE OF THE SENATE OF THE
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION IN AID
OF LEGISLATION INTO THE UNCOORDINATED AND CONTRADICTING
POLICIES ON RICE REGULATION.**

WHEREAS, on August 31, 2023, the President, invoking Republic Act No. 7581 (the "Price Act"), issued Executive Order No. 39, s. 2023 (EO 39) to impose a mandatory price ceiling on regular milled and well-milled rice effective September 5, 2023;

WHEREAS, EO 39 explains that "the current surge in retail prices of rice in the country has resulted in a considerable economic strain on Filipinos, particularly those who are underprivileged";

WHEREAS, it purports to implement the State policies to "provide effective and sufficient protection to consumers against hoarding, profiteering, and cartels" and to "promote the productivity of the agriculture sector and to protect farmers from unscrupulous traders and importers, who by their illegal importation of agricultural products, especially rice, significantly affect the production, availability of supply and stability of prices, and the food security of the State";

WHEREAS, economists have opposed such measure, warning that it will cause enormous losses to farmers and retailers, lead to greater economic strain on consumers, and promote the very ills it professes to remedy; indeed, EO 39 may likely encourage rather than curb hoarding, profiteering, and the proliferation of cartels- a former Department of Agriculture (DA) undersecretary predicts that "we will soon see rice shortage, black markets, and rice queues", making rice even less accessible and risking critical supply gaps which hurt the poorest of Filipinos most;

WHEREAS, on September 11, 2023, Department of Finance (DOF) Secretary Benjamin Diokno admitted that the administration's economic team was not consulted on the mandatory price ceiling: "Nagulat nga kami, lumabas", and agreed it would have "adverse effects if allowed to linger for a longer period";

WHEREAS, contrary to EO 39's purported goal of protecting farmers and the agriculture sector, Sec. Diokno also announced the DOF's proposal to reduce rice import tariff rates to zero percent (0%), which would be disastrous to local farmers especially given the upcoming harvest season;

WHEREAS, such proposal would also contradict the administration's past statements bolstering the need for government-to government importation of rice;

WHEREAS, these extreme and conflicting policies are being thrown around, even as the National Food Authority (NFA) has failed to utilize its P7,000,000,000.00 subsidy to maintain a sufficient rice buffer stock sourced solely from local farmers, as mandated by Republic Act No. 11203 ("Liberalizing the Importation, Exportation and Trading of Rice, Lifting for the Purpose the Quantitative Import Restriction on Rice");

WHEREAS, there is an evident lack of leadership, coordination, and cohesion in the country's policies on rice regulation, to the grave risk and detriment of the people;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED TO CALL FOR THE APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE OF THE SENATE OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION IN AID OF LEGISLATION INTO THE UNCOORDINATED AND CONTRADICTIONING POLICIES ON RICE REGULATION.

Adopted.


RISA HONTIVEROS
Senator