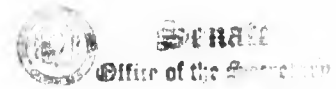


**NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES**)
Second Regular Session)



24 MAR 13 P3:41

SENATE
P.S. Res. No. 967

RECEIVED BY: _____

Introduced by Senator Maria Lourdes Nancy S. Binay

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE REPORTED CONSTRUCTION OF STRUCTURES WITHIN THE VICINITY OF THE CHOCOLATE HILLS, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF PRESERVING BOHOL'S PROTECTED AREA AND MAJOR TOURIST ATTRACTION

WHEREAS, the Chocolate Hills Natural Monument in Bohol is a protected area under Republic Act No. 11038 or the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System Act of 2018;

WHEREAS, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has recognized Bohol Island in the Visayas island group as the Philippines' first Global geopark. According to UNESCO, the geopark abounds in karstic geosites such as caves, sinkholes and cone karst, including the famous cone-shaped Chocolate Hills in the center of the geopark;

WHEREAS, Chocolate Hills has also been recognized by UNESCO as a Natural Monument. It has been declared the country's 3rd National Geological Monument on June 18, 1988 because of its scientific and geomorphic uniqueness. According to UNESCO, the hills are located throughout the towns of Carmen, Batuan and Sagbayan and consist of about 1,776 mounds of the same general shape.;

WHEREAS, in an article published by inquirer.net entitled "*Protect Chocolate Hills from development, Bohol official urges DENR*", it was reported that the latest attractions – Captain's Peak Garden and Resort in Sagbayan town and Bud Agta in Carmen town- became controversial due to the construction of illegal and informal structures, including swimming pools, slides, and cottages that were too close to the feet of the hills;

WHEREAS, it was reported that Bohol provincial board member and chairperson of the provincial board committee on environment, Atty. Jamie Aumentado Villamor, has urged the Department of Environment and Natural

Resources-Protected Area Management Board (DENR-PAMB) to stop the construction of structures within the vicinity of the Chocolate Hills following an investigation on the illegal structures by these resorts;

WHEREAS, it was reported that during the inspection conducted by the provincial board, it was found that Captain's Peak Garden and Resort built cottages and water slides for a swimming pool at the foot or sides of at least three hills and that PAMB failed to fully explain why it allowed the resort to use at least a 20-percent portion of the Chocolate Hills;

WHEREAS, it was also reported that another resort, Bud Agta in Barangay Tamboan in Carmen was cited by environmentalists for illegal structures near the Chocolate Hills;

WHEREAS, in an article published by The Bohol Chronicle on August 21, 2023 entitled "*Probe on Chocolate Hills 'destruction' ordered*", it was reported that one of the prohibitions under PAMB Resolution No. 01, series of 2018, governing the Chocolate Hills Natural Monument, for the Captain's Peak Garden Eco- Park Tourism resort in barangay Canmano, Sagbayan town, is that the hills should not be altered or defaced and extraction is strictly prohibited;

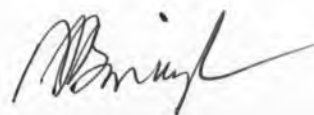
WHEREAS, it was also reported that one of the issues that needs to be resolved is whether the clearing of the access road within the resort area was a breach of existing laws. The cutting or improvement of the access road inside the vicinity of the resort was done by the town upon the barangay's request;

WHEREAS, it is necessary for the Senate to conduct an inquiry on the matter to help protect the Chocolate Hills from destruction due to the construction of illegal structures within its vicinity;

WHEREAS, it is the duty of the Senate to help protect and maintain the natural, biological, and physical diversities of the environment particularly on areas with biologically unique features to sustain human life and development;

RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, by the Senate of the Philippines, to direct the proper Senate committees to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the reported construction of structures within the vicinity of the Chocolate Hills, with the end in view of preserving Bohol's protected area and major tourist attraction.

Adopted,



MARIA LOURDES NANCY S. BINAY