

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

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SENATE

P. S. Res. No. 975

RECEIVED BY: 

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Introduced by Senator Loren B. Legarda

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**RESOLUTION**

**DIRECTING AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE OPERATION OF DREDGING VESSELS OPERATED BY CHINESE NATIONALS IN SAN FELIPE, ZAMBALES TO DETERMINE ITS IMPACT ON THE RIVER AND COASTLINES, TOURISM, AND THE LIVELIHOOD OF LOCAL FISHERFOLK, AS WELL AS ITS COMPLIANCE WITH ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS, PERMITS, OR NATIONALITY REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE CONSTITUTION**

**WHEREAS**, at least fourteen dredging vessels with Chinese personnel onboard were reported to be operating in the coastal town of San Felipe, Zambales, causing distress among the citizens;

**WHEREAS**, dredging activities are administered by China Harbour Engineering Company Ltd. (CHEC), a subsidiary of the China Communications Construction Co. (CCCC) and the second largest dredging company globally, with numerous infrastructure projects in the Philippines including the Manila Bay Reclamation Development Project;

**WHEREAS**, the United States Embassy in Manila released a statement in 2023 to draw attention to the involvement of CHEC in the Manila Bay Project - that CCCC has been blacklisted by the United States due to its role in the construction and militarization of artificial islands in the West Philippine Sea;

**WHEREAS**, there have been past records and allegations as to the business fraudulent practices of both CHEC and CCCC in different countries, including reports from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank;

**WHEREAS**, San Felipe Mayor Reinhard Jeresano pointed out that dredging activities are being conducted to prevent massive flooding due to blockage from the sand and lahar from the Mount Pinatubo eruption in 1991 and stated that the sand extracted from the area are intended for the reclamation area in Pasay City and the airport in Bulacan;

**WHEREAS**, the dredging activities impact the communities in Sitio Tektek in Barangay Sindol and Sitio Laoag in Barangay Maloma of the municipality of San Felipe according to Mayor Jeresano;

**WHEREAS**, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) issued Administrative Order No. 13 Series of 2019, which covers the implementation of the DENR River Restoration Project through dredging activities in the heavily-silted river channels of Bucao, Maloma, and Sto. Tomas in the province of Zambales. The areas starting from the coastline of river deltas extending all the way upstream are classified as Exclusive River Dredging Zones but do not include the coastal areas;

**WHEREAS**, DENR thereafter released Administrative Order No. 2020-07 to rationalize the importance of such dredging activities for proper flood control, management of sand and gravel, and restoration of the natural state and water flow of heavily-silted river channels;

**WHEREAS**, such dredging activities, if improperly implemented, may lead to the disruption of the ecosystem, reduction of biodiversity, and the increased vulnerability of the livelihood of fisherfolks in Zambales;

**WHEREAS**, residents asserted that flooding is not widespread in the area, and stressed their concerns that these dredging activities diminish their sources of livelihood, mainly fishing and tourism, generate air pollution and loud noise from the vessels affecting their day-to-day lives, and result in environmental degradation such as shoreline erosion and threats to marine life;

**WHEREAS**, Zambales environmentalists and residents have since then stressed their opposition to the ongoing seabed dredging and seabed mining activities through protests and petition, alarmed by the destructive consequences on the environment and its ecosystems;

**WHEREAS**, Governor Hermogenes Ebdane, Jr. of Zambales ordered temporary closure on March 14, 2024 for the suspension of the dredging activities to assess the situation.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED**, that the Senate of the Philippines, directing an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the operation of the dredging vessels in San Felipe, Zambales and determine compliance with their permits, impacts on the river and coastlines, and if the eligibility and qualifications as well as nationality requirements under the Constitution are sufficiently considered, in order to stop or prevent any unlawful activities and to protect marine habitats and avoid any further perennial harmful causes.

*Adopted,*



**LOREN LEGARDA**