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SENATE
P. Senate Resolution No. **215**

RECEIVED BY: *[Signature]*

Introduced by Senator M. A. Madrigal

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL COMMUNITIES TO INVESTIGATE, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, THE IMPENDING DISPLACEMENT OF THE MANOBO CULTURAL COMMUNITY FROM SAMAR ISLAND BY REASON OF THE RECENT EXTENSION OF THE TIMBER LICENSING AGREEMENT OF BASEY WOOD INDUSTRIES INC. COVERING PORTIONS OF THE DECLARED PROTECTED AREA OF SAMAR ISLAND NATURAL PARK

WHEREAS in 1988 and early 1989, Samar Island was beset by constant floods and landslides that were attributed to the rampant and unabated cutting of trees by several companies which were issued Timber Licensing Agreements (TLA) in the area, including Basey Wood Industries Inc.;

WHEREAS the constant flooding and landslides at that time particularly devastated the livelihood, health, safety and well-being of the indigenous peoples in the island, specially the Manobos;

WHEREAS on 8 February 1989, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), through then Secretary Fulgencio Factoran, issued DENR Special Order No. 185 placing the entire Samar Island under a logging moratorium and creating a study team to conduct an extensive study to determine the extent of remaining forest resources and preserve a sustainable rate of forest extraction to safeguard the ecological balance in the island;

WHEREAS DENR Special Order No. 185 ordered the suspension of all logging operations in the island of Samar, including the transport of logs and wood products outside the island;

WHEREAS on various dates from 1989 up to 2004, TLA holders requested for the lifting of the logging moratorium in Samar Island that were all denied by several DENR Secretaries, including Antonio Cerilles, Heherson Alvarez and Elisea Gozun;

WHEREAS on 13 August 2003, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo issued Proclamation No. 442 declaring the Samar Island Natural Park (SINP) as a "protected area" under the National Integrated Protected Area Systems Law;

WHEREAS recently, it was reported that former DENR Secretary Angelo Reyes, shortly before leaving the DENR, extended by six years the TLA of Basey Wood Industries, Inc. to allow it to cut the amount of trees that it could have cut during the moratorium in its concession area of 57,525 hectares;

WHEREAS at least 70 percent of Basey Wood Industries, Inc.'s concession area is located within the SINP whose old growth forests and watersheds have already been adversely affected by the resumption of previous industries' commercial logging;


WHEREAS it is reported that personnel of Basey Wood Industries, Inc. are already in Samar Island to commence operation and cut down trees;

WHEREAS various objections have been raised by church leaders, NGOs and LGU officials against the extension Basey Wood Industries' TLA, particularly in relation to the displacement of the indigenous peoples, who largely depend on the SINP for their livelihood, sustenance and social and cultural survival;

WHEREAS the lifting of the logging moratorium in a protected area which did not go through a transparent process of consultations not only makes a mockery of the purposes and goals of protecting a valuable natural park but moreover violates the right of indigenous communities to a "free, prior and informed consent" on issues affecting their welfare and very survival as a people;

WHEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, TO DIRECT THE COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL COMMUNITIES TO INVESTIGATE, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, THE IMPENDING DISPLACEMENT OF THE MANOBO CULTURAL COMMUNITY FROM SAMAR ISLAND BY REASON OF THE RECENT EXTENSION OF THE TIMBER LICENSING AGREEMENT OF BASEY WOOD INDUSTRIES INC. COVERING PORTIONS OF THE DECLARED PROTECTED AREA OF SAMAR ISLAND NATURAL PARK.

Adopted,


M. A. MADRIGAL