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SENATE  
P.S.R. No. 384

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY,  
IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE ILLEGAL ENTRY OF FOREIGN FISHING  
VESSELS AND THE PREVALENT USE OF TOXIC CHEMICALS FOR FISHING

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 2, Section 16 provides "The State shall protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature";

WHEREAS, two abandoned foreign fishing vessels that sank off the city pier apparently due to a lack of maintenance yielded thousands of liters of toxic chemicals used in illegal fishing;

WHEREAS, local fishermen reported discovering the chemicals while they were fishing at the bay;

WHEREAS, personnel of the *Bantay Dagat*, the environmental enforcement arm of the city government, have so far recovered from the shallow seabed, some 10 to 15 feet from the surface, over 3,000 bottles of toxic chemicals believed to be formalin and sodium cyanide;

WHEREAS, the deadly chemicals were contained in one-liter bottles, stashed inside the compartment of two wooden fishing boats, which local residents claimed, were owned by Chinese poachers who had been detained for illegal fishing and whose cases are still pending in local courts;

WHEREAS, Coast Guard and PNP maritime officials have yet to determine the exact name of the fishing vessels and the reason why they sank;

WHEREAS, Mayor Edward Hagedorn reportedly ordered the inspection of all fishing vessels docked at the city port and demanded an explanation from enforcement agencies on the sinking of the vessels;

WHEREAS, formalin is believed to be used by foreign fishermen to preserve fishes caught in local waters while they await their return to their home ports, that usually takes three to four months, according to local fishermen familiar with the operations of illegal foreign poachers; on the other hand, sodium cyanide is commonly used as an ingredient to a potent mixture that is used to stun fish, particularly high-priced groupers, in order to catch them live and sell to Chinese restaurants in Manila and Hong Kong;

WHEREAS, the chemical, which is banned in all forms of fishing, is extremely toxic and destroys coral reefs;

WHEREAS, several poaching and illegal entry cases against Chinese, Vietnamese and Malaysian fishermen are lodged before local courts while their vessels are docked at the local pier under the custody of law enforcement agencies;

WHEREAS, it is imperative for the government to increase vigilance and institute effective mechanisms to deter the entry of foreign fishing vessels;

WHEREFORE, be it hereby resolved by the Philippine Senate, to direct the proper Senate committee to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the illegal entry of foreign fishing vessels and the prevalent use of toxic chemicals for fishing.

Adopted,

*Miriam Defensor Santiago*  
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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