

FOURTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC)
OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

8 MAY 19 P2:44

SENATE
P. S. R. No. 403

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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 ALLEGED TREASURE-HUNTING
ACTIVITIES INVOLVING THE MILITARY IN MOUNT BANAHAW

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 2, Section 16, provides that, "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, in the 3 May 2008 issue of the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, it was reported that residents along the slopes of Mount Banahaw are protesting the presence of illegal treasure-hunting in the mountain, particularly in Sitio Idoro in the mountain village of Lalo, the main water source of Tayabas, Lucena City and Pagbilao town;

WHEREAS, the villagers claim that the treasure hunters are being protected by armed men who introduce themselves as government soldiers;

WHEREAS, Mount Banahaw and its surrounding areas are considered protected areas under Presidential Proclamation No. 411, and is under the administrative jurisdiction of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR);

WHEREAS, the villagers said the treasure hunters use explosives and chemicals to loosen the mountain soil which could eventually block their water source;

WHEREAS, these treasure-hunting activities inflict wanton destruction to our country's environment, and, in the case of Mount Banahaw, desecrate a site of great historical and spiritual value to Filipinos;

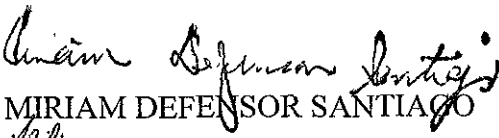
WHEREAS, these reported acts of treasure-hunting violate environmental laws allegedly involving the country's military personnel must be called to the attention of the *Armed Forces of the Philippines* for this violates their code and brings disgrace to their ranks;

WHEREAS, Congress must ensure that existing environmental legislation and its enforcement should be strong enough so that the protection of our natural and historical heritage will be upheld;

WHEREAS, our Armed Forces, as the nation's enforcers of peace and order, must be at the forefront in the protection of the country's natural wealth, not the one consenting its pillage;

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 alleged treasure-hunting activities involving the military in Mount Banahaw.

Adopted,


MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO
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