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INTRODUCED BY SENATOR VILLAR

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**RESOLUTION**

**URGING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE REPORTED MASSIVE BLEACHING OF THE COUNTRY'S CORAL REEFS, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF INTENSIFYING NATIONAL AND LOCAL EFFORTS ON CORAL REEF CONSERVATION**

*Whereas*, Article II, Sec. 16 of our Philippine Constitution states, "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*, according to international marine watchdog group Reef Check, the Philippines and nearby Indonesia, another vast archipelago, account for 30 percent of the world's coral reefs;

*Whereas*, the waters of the Philippines is part of the Coral Triangle, a 5.7-million square kilometer area which contains 75 percent of the world's coral species, and considered one of the most diverse marine ecosystems in the world;

*Whereas*, Philippine coral reefs total about 6.5 million acres (26,000 square kilometers);

*Whereas*, coral bleaching is a stress condition in reef corals which is characterized by the whitening of its appearance due to the death of zooxanthellae, the protozoa that gives it coloration;

*Whereas*, coral bleaching is often caused by warmer-than-normal ocean water temperatures brought about by global warming;

*Whereas*, the first ever mass-bleaching event in the Philippines was reported in 1998-99, which began at Batangas, off Luzon, in June 1998 (an El Niño year) and then proceeded nearly clockwise around the Philippines, correlating with anomalous sea-surface temperatures;

*Whereas*, global warming has already led to increased levels of coral bleaching, and this is predicted to increase in frequency and severity in the coming decades and that such bleaching events may be the final nail in the coffin for already stressed coral reefs and reef ecosystems;<sup>1</sup>

*Whereas*, data from weather satellites show that the temperature in the oceans surrounding the Philippines rose by around 2 degrees Celsius in 2009;

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<sup>1</sup> [http://wwwf.panda.org/about\\_our\\_earth/blue\\_planet/coasts/coral\\_reefs/coral\\_threats/](http://wwwf.panda.org/about_our_earth/blue_planet/coasts/coral_reefs/coral_threats/)

*Whereas*, in the southern region of Palawan, for instance, the bleaching "is extensive," with "50-75 percent" of the corals affected;

*Whereas*, coral reefs in the country could diminish in 50 years if bleaching happens every 10 years or so:<sup>2</sup> Now therefore be it

RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, to urge the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the reported massive bleaching of the country's coral reefs, with the end in view of intensifying national and local efforts on coral reef conservation.

Adopted,

  
MANNY VILLAR  
Senator

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<sup>2</sup> per opinion of Professor Al Licuanan of De La Salle University