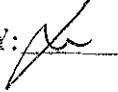




11 JUL 19 P2:16

SENATE

P. S. Res. No. 534

INTRODUCED BY: 

Introduced by Senator Manuel "Lito" M. Lapid

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, *IN AID OF LEGISLATION*, INTO THE POLICIES IMPLEMENTED BY THE GOVERNMENT TO TOTALLY ERADICATE THE COCONUT LEAF BEETLE PEST (*BRONTISPA LONGISSIMA*) TO PROTECT THE COCONUT INDUSTRY IN THE COUNTRY AND PROMOTE FOOD SECURITY

WHEREAS, Section 5 Article XIII of the 1987 Constitution provides that the State shall recognize the right of farmers, farmworkers, and landowners, as well as cooperatives, and other independent farmers' organizations to participate in the planning, organization, and management of the program, and shall provide support to agriculture through appropriate technology and research, and adequate financial, production, marketing, and other support services;

WHEREAS, the coconut industry is a dominant sector of Philippine agriculture. Data from the Department of Agriculture (DA) indicate that out of the 12 million hectare of farmlands in the country, 3.1 million hectare is devoted to coconut production, and there are about 25 million Filipinos who are directly or indirectly dependent on the coconut industry;

WHEREAS, the Philippines is the world's second largest producer of coconut products, and annual coconut trade and production is valued at \$ 800 million or Php40 billion pesos. Our country's coconut supply covers 59% share in the world coconut exports market and is considered to be among the top 5 net foreign exchange earners, averaging to about US \$760 Million per year;

WHEREAS, coconut farms are widely distributed nationwide, largely in regions of Southern Luzon and in Mindanao. There are around 324 million coconut trees in the country, about 85% of which are considered productive;

WHEREAS, the coconut leaf beetle pest (*Brontispa Longissima*) is becoming a new malady of the coconut industry in the Philippines. It is an invasive pest introduced to the country in early 2004 through importations of ornamental palms. It causes great damage to seedlings and mature coconut trees and ornamental palms, killing the young spears and eventually the whole tree in 4-5 months;

WHEREAS, this insect pest has been found in a few young palms in Candelaria Quezon; Bay, Laguna; and San Vicente, Lipa City. In the past years, the pest was spotted in coconut trees along Roxas Boulevard in Manila. Initial surveys show that it is now ravaging palms in various parts of Metro Manila and in nearby towns like Cavite, Batangas, Laguna and Bulacan;

WHEREAS, these insects feed on the soft tissues of the coconut tree but spare the harder veins and midribs. Adult beetles have a long life span that last from 75-90 days, making them the most destructive. These insects cause decay and drying of affected parts which prevent the coconut tree from bearing fruits. They also cause damage to young spears of seedlings and mature coconut trees as well as ornamentals palms which eventually kills the whole tree;

WHEREAS, the Department of Agriculture in Eastern Visayas has reported that there are about 241,000 coconut trees in Eastern Visayas which are infected with coconut leaf beetle during the month of June 2011;

WHEREAS, in Puerto Princesa City, the DA report indicates that about 450 hectares of coconut lands have already been affected by the destructive coconut leaf beetle. Moreover, the data from the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) Palawan Office indicate that a total of 42,361 coconut trees were already infested;

WHEREAS, the Palawan coconut production is a Php 2.7 billion peso industry alone. The continuous spread and destruction of the coconut leaf beetle would be a big loss to the local coconut industry and could hurt approximately 10,000 coconut landholders in the Southern part of our country;

WHEREAS, there is a need for government to formulate and implement a comprehensive coconut pests and diseases prevention program in order to control this invasive pest and raise the awareness of farmers in addressing this type of pest infestation in order to protect our country's multi-billion coconut industry.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED to direct the Senate Committees on Agriculture and Environment and Natural Resources to conduct and inquiry, *In Aid of Legislation*, into the policies implemented by the government to totally eradicate the Coconut Leaf Beetle Pest (*Brontispa Longissima*), to protect the coconut industry in the country and promote food security.

ADOPTED,


MANUEL "LITO" M. LAPID
Senator