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SENATE  
P. S. R. No. 1428

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

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RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON STRENGTHENING FOREST PROTECTION LAWS IN LIGHT OF THE ALLEGED CONTINUED ILLEGAL LOGGING ACTIVITIES IN SIERRA MADRE, AND IT BEING A CONTRIBUTING FACTOR TO THE FLOODS BROUGHT BY TROPICAL STORM ONDOY

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 2, Section 16 states 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, various news articles on 19 October 2009 report that illegal logging in Sierra Madre, one of the country's remaining heavily forested areas, continues up to this day;

WHEREAS, it was reported that Catholic priests and leaders of indigenous tribes have been contacting various media organizations to report such anomalies;

WHEREAS, the development supported the reports on 15 October 2009 that the military and provincial representatives of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources seized 18.88 cubic meters (8,000 board feet) of suspected illegally cut narra logs from Sierra Madre in Isabela province along the coast of Mauban, Quezon;

WHEREAS, the news articles state that a certain "Martin" has been reported as the alleged owner of confiscated logs found loaded on an outrigger in Barangay Cagsiay II;

WHEREAS, religious leaders and indigenous tribe leaders claim that widespread illegal logging operations in Quezon forests and transshipments of illegally cut timber and voluminous sacks of charcoal aboard huge boats often sail at night;

WHEREAS, they also claim that the illegal cargoes—transported aboard cargo trucks travelling in the middle of the night and bound towards the coastal towns of Real in northern Quezon and Mauban fronting Lamon Bay—have the blessing of local DENR officials;

WHEREAS, the report said that the two towns have long been known as transshipment points of illegal forest products bound for Metro Manila and other Southern Tagalog provinces;

WHEREAS, despite efforts of government officials in forest protection that led to some success in the apprehension of suspected criminal loggers and seizures of substantial volume of illegally cut products, officials and leaders are seeking and encouraging multisectoral collaboration on forest protection activities;

WHEREAS, these leaders claim that the illegal logging activities in Sierra Madre contribute to the flash floods brought by the Tropical Storm Ondoy, putting areas in Luzon under water, claiming lives, and millions of pesos worth of damage to properties;

WHEREAS, the devastating repercussions of illegal logging and various environmental abuse have become apparent in the wake of the storms Ondoy and Pepeng, and these reports of continued violations of the log ban with the alleged collaboration of corrupt government officials are despicable and unscrupulous in the face of the wanton destruction of life and property the country has recently experienced;

WHEREAS, as this is both an issue of environmental protection and also of graft and corruption, the existence of these violations merit the legislation of stricter forest protection laws and tougher penalties for the perpetrators of illegal logging;

WHEREFORE, be it hereby resolved in the Philippine Senate, to direct the proper Senate committee to conduct an inquiry in aid of legislation, on strengthening forest protection laws in light of the alleged continued illegal logging activities in Sierra Madre, and it being a contributing factor to the floods brought by the Tropical Storm Ondoy.

Adopted,

  
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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