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SENATE  
P. S. R. No. 1430

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

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RESOLUTION  
DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE  
TO INVESTIGATE, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, THE REPORTED  
P1.1 BILLION FLOOD WARNING SYSTEM RENDERED USELESS  
ALLEGEDLY BECAUSE OF NEGLIGENCE BY THE METRO MANILA  
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 11, Section 1 provides: "Public office is a public trust. Public officers and employees must, at all times, be accountable to the people, serve them with utmost responsibility, integrity, loyalty, and efficiency; act with patriotism and justice, and lead modest lives";

WHEREAS, ABS-CBN Newsbreak, in a report dated 7 October 2009, entitled "P1-B Flood Warning System Wasted Due To Neglect", alleged that expensive flood warning equipment and devices have been rendered idle and put to waste because of neglect following the transfer of flood control from the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) to the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA);

WHEREAS, it was reported that a flood warning system from Japan amounting to P1.1 billion has been rendered useless because of neglect, indifference, or simply lack of foresight on the part of the MMDA for the inoperable early warning facilities that could have minimized the flooding and deaths in the Pasig-Marikina-Laguna Lake complex;

WHEREAS, sources claim that MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando simply let the equipment suffer wear and tear, without the required maintenance because he reportedly thought that the cost outweighed the benefits;

WHEREAS, the flood warning system in Metro Manila was procured through the Effective Flood Control Operation System (EFCOS), a brainchild of the DPWH, which was aimed to achieve effective flood control operations for the Pasig-Marikina-Laguna Lake complex through two major components of the Metro Manila Flood Control Master Plan: the Mangahan Floodway and the Napindan Hydraulics Control structure;

WHEREAS, it was learned that the EFCOS involved the construction of an office that will serve as central network for the rainfall gauges and water level stations, plus a master control and multiplex communications network, relay towers, and warning stations;

WHEREAS, the EFCOS is composed of two phases: the first one, completed in 1992, was financed through a Japanese loan amounting to P600 million, wherein two rainfall gauges in Boso-Boso in Antipolo and Mt. Oro in Montalban, including nine water stations, were initially set up, with the master control station in the Rosario Weir (a weir is a small dam built in a river to back up or divert water) and data from the water gauges

and water level stations are transmitted through a telemetry system to the Rosario Master Control Station;

WHEREAS, from the data, authorities have advance information on any overflowing of riverbanks along the stretch of the Pasig river, thus alerting them for potential flooding and how to regulate the water level in the Rosario Weir, whether to divert the waters into the Laguna Lake for temporary storage or into the Manggahan floodway, which was designed to mitigate flooding from the lower Marikina river and Pasig river;

WHEREAS, the second phase, completed in 2001, was a grant from the Japan International Cooperation Agency, to the tune of P500 million, and involved the installation of additional rainfall gauges in Mt. Campana in Antipolo, Rizal; Aries and Nangka, both in San Mateo, Rizal; Science Garden in Quezon City; and, in Napindan, Pasig City;

WHEREAS, additional water-level stations were also set up, telecom equipment systems were distributed to the different local government units in Metro Manila for better coordination, and nine warning posts were also installed along the Manggahan floodway, which were supposed to be operated by remote control to forewarn those living near the Pasig river for any potential flooding;

WHEREAS, according to DPWH sources, in 2002, the EFCOS project was turned over to the MMDA under Fernando based on a 2-page Memorandum of Agreement and that Fernando himself lobbied with the President for the transfer of the EFCOS project under his control, including the entire staff of EFCOS;

WHEREAS, it was reported that sometime in 2006, the EFCOS project no longer gathered or relayed data, and in May 2008, operation was suspended by the MMDA reportedly due to budgetary constraints, and worse, all the flood warning equipment, which were operational before, were no longer functioning;

WHEREAS, MMDA Flood Control Director III Engr. Baltazar Melgar claimed that the EFCOS equipment from Japan were already "outmoded," and downplayed the project's supposed benefits, saying, "we only get little information that could be useful from the EFCOS devices";

WHEREAS, a hydrologist engineer from the DPWH claimed that the data from the rainfall gauges and water level stations are essential in bridge designs and flood control, and that it also provides the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) information for its flood advisories;

WHEREAS, there is an urgent need to investigate this alleged neglect and misfeasance because these equipment's data could have served as basis in issuing flood advisories, helped in disaster preparedness, and minimized the casualties and damages brought about by the two recent typhoons which struck the country;

WHEREFORE, be it hereby resolved by the Philippine Senate, to direct the proper Senate committees to investigate, in aid of legislation, the reported P1.1 billion flood warning system rendered useless allegedly because of neglect by the Metro Manila Development Authority.

Adopted,

  
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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