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SENATE
P. S. R. No. 1432

RECEIVED

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY,
IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE DEVELOPMENT AND PRESERVATION OF
BIRD WATCHING DESTINATIONS IN ORDER TO BOOST LOCAL TOURISM

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 2, Section 16, mandates: "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 media have reported that according to Tourism Secretary Ace Durano, aside from ecological benefits, the presence of migratory birds in the country will propel tourism and give jobs to Filipinos;

WHEREAS, the country boasts more than 200 endemic bird species along with huge numbers of migratory birds that pass by to feed; this number includes the third-rarest bird in the world, the Cebu Flowerpecker (*Dicaeum quadricolor*);

WHEREAS, thousands of rare migratory birds from Asian mainland, Japan, and Australia, such as the black-winged stilts, Philippine duck, and the Chinese egret, flock to the country's wetlands between the months of October and March and tourists who visit birding sites can create alternative livelihood for local communities;

WHEREAS, according to ornithologist Arne Jensen of the Wild Bird Club of the Philippines (WBCP), the presence of migrating birds in the country's wetlands and forests signal that the environment is healthy to support both wildlife and human needs;

WHEREAS, based on WBCP records, the number of shorebirds recorded in Balanga wetlands during the Asian Water Bird Census in January topped other four sites in the country, after WBCP recorded 15,521 birds;

WHEREAS, it was reported that in Asia, the industrial island-nation of Taiwan is getting the biggest chunk of the huge bird-watching market but the Philippines, with its wide array of bird species and side destinations, should be able to grab a big part of the market;

WHEREAS, it was also reported that in the United States there are more than 50 million bird watchers affiliated with various clubs and organizations while the United Kingdom, perhaps the biggest bird-watching nation on the planet, has 8 million hobbyists;

WHEREAS, the Department of Tourism (DoT) is increasing its efforts to promote local communities as bird watching destinations, where local and foreign tourists can observe or photograph birds in the wild;

WHEREAS, the Philippines is being groomed to be the top bird watching destination with its rich biodiversity including 600 bird species, of which 200 are endemic species or can only be found locally based on data from WBCP;

WHEREAS, bird watching allows us to bring prosperity to communities through alternative jobs created via tourism;

WHEREAS, stakeholders are mandated to protect the environment they inhabit and keep themselves informed about ecological biodiversity and the importance of preserving the environment;

WHEREAS, once a community is identified as a potential bird watching site, WBCP and DoT coordinates with the local government to educate people about conservation of its forest and wetland areas so that it will continue to shelter wildlife, including birds;

WHEREAS, aside from promotion of bird watching sites, the Philippines should control its ballooning population and inform the public about the link of conservation and economic prosperity;

WHEREAS, the lack of policy on child spacing has taken its toll on the country's natural resources and continuous land conversion decreased the natural habitat for birds and naturally, the birds disappear which is a clear signal that the environment resources are below optimum level to sustain life;

WHEREAS, there is also a need to make the people understand the direct connection between conservation efforts and good economy;

WHEREAS, the Philippines has the best environmental laws but it needs to improve its implementation and monitoring practices since illegal logging continues to be pervasive in this country;

WHEREAS, people should be informed that with a good environment, one can sustain a good quality of life especially in the area of developing watersheds where birds can feed and breed which can also become an alternative source of livelihood for the local communities;

WHEREAS, protection of the country's forests and wetlands are beneficial not only to migratory birds that flock to the country during wintering months but also to the country's local economy;

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 development and preservation of bird watching destinations in order to boost local tourism.

Adopted,


MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

/dpm