

SENATE
Proposed Senate Resolution No. 1451

A

INTRODUCED BY SENATOR MANNY VILLAR

RESOLUTION
DIRECTING THE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD AND
HEALTH AND DEMOGRAPHY TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF
LEGISLATION, INTO THE AERIAL SPRAYING OF CHEMICALS PRACTICED
BY BANANA PLANTATIONS IN MINDANAO

WHEREAS, a group of concerned farmers and residents in Davao has opposed the aerial spraying of pesticides and fungicides in banana plantations in the locality. Invoking the fundamental right to life, they claimed that aerial spraying operations have caused damages and posed danger to the health of residents of communities around the banana plantations, including skin and respiratory problems. The group also claimed that the cost of aerial spray operations in banana plantations of big companies far outweigh the benefits;

WHEREAS, the Pilipino Banana Growers and Exporters Association (PBGEA), an association of 18 banana corporations argued that stopping the spraying could expose the banana plants to pest attacks that could drive their business to bankruptcy that would eventually result in loss of jobs;

WHEREAS, recently, the Department of Health urged the Department of Agriculture to stop the aerial spraying of chemicals practiced by banana plantations in Mindanao "until proof of its safety is clearly established by the industry";

WHEREAS, the recommendation that was contained in a resolution signed by Health Secretary Francisco Duque III was based on the "precautionary principle espoused by the Rio Declaration, of which the Philippines is a signatory." The resolution was also signed by seven members of the DOH executive committee;

WHEREAS, the resolution came after the executive committee of the DOH met on Oct. 24, when they also approved and adopted the results of the study conducted in 2006 by the DOH, the Philippine Society of Clinical and Occupational Toxicology Inc. and the National Poison Control and Management Center of the University of the Philippines. The said study was conducted in Barangay Camocaan in Guihing town, Davao del Sur. It established that the diseases of people living inside and around banana plantations were caused by the chemicals sprayed aerially, the drift of which has reached them;

WHEREAS, the DOH has recognized that the fungicides mancozeb and chlorothalonil which are sprayed aerially "caused acute health effects and chronic effects to workers and communities living near plantations". Studies indicate that the pesticide drift in aerial spraying reaches more than three kilometers. The DOH said that "based on studies, drift is greatest from aerial application where almost 40 percent of the chemicals is lost to drift";

WHEREAS, there is a need to address the issue at the soonest possible time in order to balance the right to health of the people in the communities and the concomitant right of the banana growers to livelihood;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, to direct the Committees on Agriculture and Food and Health and Demography to conduct an investigation, in aid of legislation, into the aerial spraying of chemicals practiced by banana plantations in Mindanao.

Adopted,



MANNY VILLAR
Senator