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SENATE
P.S. Res. No. 1

RECEIVED BY: *ju*

Introduced by Senator Poe

RESOLUTION

URGING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD TO CONDUCT AN IMMEDIATE INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE PLIGHT OF FILIPINO COCONUT FARMERS TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION THE REPORTED OUTBREAK OF SCALE INSECTS IN CALABARZON, THE RECURRING PROBLEM OF PESTILENCE AND THE STRESSES OF WEATHER DESTROYING COCO FARMS WITH THE INTENTION OF PROTECTING THE COCONUT INDUSTRY AND ITS FARMERS

WHEREAS, it is a declared policy of the State that "all sectors of the economy and all regions of the country shall be given optimum opportunity to develop" (in Article XII, Section 1, National Economy and Patrimony, 1987 Philippine Constitution);

WHEREAS, it is also an important policy of State to promote and protect the coconut industry considering the importance of this industry in nation-building, it being one of the principal industries and one of the largest income-earners of the country;

WHEREAS, one third of the country's arable agricultural land or about 3.31 million hectares is planted to coconut sprawling in sixty four (64) out of total seventy eight (78) provinces, and 1,195 out of the 1,554 municipalities in the country;

WHEREAS, at present, there are 320 million coconut trees, 44.8 Million coconut trees are classified as old and senile, according to the Philippine Coconut Authority;

WHEREAS, the coconut, also called the "Tree of Life" because of its many uses, is a major source of foreign exchange;

WHEREAS, about 24 million Filipinos or one-third of the Philippine population directly or indirectly benefit from the coconut industry. There are 1.5 million coconut farmers and farm workers;

WHEREAS, the Philippines is a major producer of coconut oil, copra meal, desiccated coconut, coco shell charcoal, activated carbon and coco chemicals;

WHEREAS, very recently it was reported that a substantial portion of coconut plantations in the Calabarzon areas were threatened with the outbreak of scale insects;

WHEREAS, in 2011, it was reported that coconut farms in the CARAGA Region were affected and destroyed by the so-called coconut leaf beetles (*brontispa longissima*);

WHEREAS, millions of coconut trees are aging and dying due to stresses of weather (such as El Nino phenomenon) and diseases, thus, adversely affecting the capacity of these coconut trees to bear fruits;

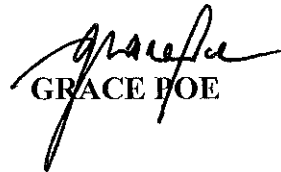
WHEREAS, the peak years of coconut trees are between 7 and 25 years, when they bear between 40 and 65 nuts per year. Mature trees bear very few nuts or none at all;

WHEREAS, due to drought brought by El Nino two years ago, yields from the plantation decline, volume was reduced by 40.20 percent to 895,215.55 metric tons in the first 7 months of 2011 per PCA data. Notwithstanding the decline in volume, the coconut exports totaled \$1.22 billion this year, 34.74 percent increase compared to 908.72 Million earned in the same period in 2010 due mainly to high global demand and prices in 2011;

WHEREAS, considering the huge impact of the coconut industry to the Philippine economy, there is a need to assess the state of this vital industry taking into account the aging and dying of millions of coconut trees;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Senate of the Philippines to urge the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Food to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, into the plight of Filipino coconut farmers taking into consideration the reported outbreak of scale insects in Calabarzon, the recurring problem of pestilence and the stresses of weather destroying coco farms with the intention of protecting the coconut industry and its farmers.

Adopted,


GRACE POE