

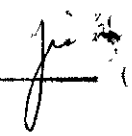
SIXTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC)
OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



Senate
Office of the Secretary

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SENATE
P. S. R. No: 153

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY,
IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE WORSENING WATER CRISIS IN THE ASIAN
REGION, AND THE NEED FOR THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT TO
IMPLEMENT EFFICIENT WATER GOVERNANCE PRACTICES TO COMBAT
WATER SHORTAGE

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 2, Section 16 provides: "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, Republic Act No. 9275 also known as the Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004, Section 2 (c) mandates that it shall be the policy of the State to formulate a holistic national program of water quality management that recognizes that water quality management issues cannot be separated from concerns about water sources and ecological protection, water supply, public health and quality of life;

WHEREAS, according to an *Inquirer.net* article, Asia is currently facing a worsening water crisis that threatens to curtail food production;

WHEREAS, this observation was based on a report by the Asian Development Bank, which was written by a team of 1,250 water scientists; it covers 12 Asian countries namely Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, the Philippines, Samoa, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam;

WHEREAS, coastal areas, especially heavily populated mega delta regions in South, East, and Southeast Asia, will be at the greatest risk due to increased flooding from the sea and, in some mega deltas, flooding from the rivers;

WHEREAS, in essence, the report claims that pollution, urbanization, and climate change is sucking Asia dry; this may be due to massive urbanization which presented new types of water-related challenges;

WHEREAS, one out of five people in the region do not have access to safe drinking water while half of the population in the Asia-Pacific region, equating to a staggering 1.6 billion people, are still without adequate sanitation;

WHEREAS, on the health front, the report predicts that climate change will mean more diarrheal diseases due to more frequent floods and droughts in East, South and, Southeast Asia; an increase in coastal water temperature will also worsen the abundance and toxicity of cholera in South Asia;

WHEREAS, in the Philippines, there are 16 rivers and lakes that are already biologically dead during the summer, and only 33 percent of river systems are suitable water supply sources;

WHEREAS, up to 58 percent of the country's groundwater is now contaminated, while over-exploitation has already resulted in the intrusion of salty water following the lowering of water level;

WHEREAS, to exacerbate the situation, depletion of groundwater resources has been an increasing problem in Metro Manila and Metro Cebu;

WHEREAS, although groundwater resources are generally abundant and are of adequate quality for domestic purposes, the study states that poor environmental management of extractive resource industries—such as uncontrolled forestry, mining, and minerals extraction—has led to the pollution of downstream water courses and aquifers;

WHEREAS, water pollution is also attributable to the fact that majority of solid waste disposal and landfill sites are poorly operated and maintained, permitting leakage to pollute some water resources;

WHEREAS, in Manila, for instance, the study noted that less than four percent of the population was connected to a sewer network, with many high-income households constructing their own facilities;

WHEREAS, flush toilets connected to septic tanks are widely used, and often serve large housing developments, but sludge treatment and disposal facilities are rare, resulting in indiscriminate disposal of untreated or poorly treated effluent into the Pasig River, one of the world's most polluted rivers;

WHEREAS, the study recommends major changes in water governance practices, and to look to successful models such as in Singapore and Cambodia which had improved monitoring of water consumption;

WHEREAS, government officials are urgently enjoined to prepare emergency plans for coping with drought, and to increase the budget allocation for water-saving technology and artificial rainmaking;

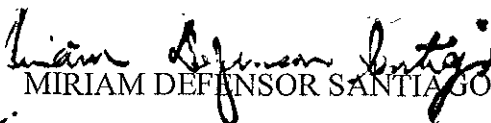
WHEREAS, it is imperative for the State to double its efforts to build new wastewater treatment facilities on a massive scale to reduce contamination;

WHEREAS, the various local government units must also develop innovative policies to aid and compensate drought-hit farmers;

WHEREAS, there is also a need to increase official awareness of the importance of providing clean drinking water and proper wastewater management services so that this issue would be prioritized by majority of our policymakers;

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 worsening water crisis in the Asian region, and the need for the Philippine government to implement efficient water governance practices to combat water shortage.

Adopted,

ass.

MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

/dpm