

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC)
OF THE PHILIPPINES)
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Senate
Office of the Secretary

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SENATE
P. S. R. No. 160

RECEIVED BY: *[Signature]*

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION
DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID
OF LEGISLATION, ON THE PROLIFERATION OF MARINE DEAD ZONES WHICH
COULD LEAD TO HUGE ECONOMIC LOSSES FOR THE COUNTRY

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, based on a report in the Inquirer.net, the United Nations Environmental Policy (UNEP) and government environment officials warned of increasing number of marine dead zones in the world, putting countries like the Philippines, which depend heavily on the oceans for food and jobs, in a precarious economic position;

WHEREAS, according to UNEP officials, pollutants from land have choked the life out in some of the world's oceans, which have led to loss of habitats and species; this situation is aggravated by exploding marine litter from cities, fertilizers, tourism and industrial activities;

WHEREAS, the health and integrity of Philippine coasts have been further impacted by increased urbanization and tourism, over-exploitation of natural resources, and the ever-increasing marine pollution loads from maritime and land-based activities;

WHEREAS, Thiaw further warned that one specific threat is the proliferation of dead zones, where excess algal blooms stimulated by fertilizers and sewage are consuming all of the oxygen in the water, resulting in no or little life left in these areas; over 240,000 square kilometers of estuaries and shelf areas and some of the most productive waters are affected by this threat;

WHEREAS, the issue of wastes and litter in the world's oceans and tributaries has often been neglected since the pollutants are out of sight and therefore disregarded by the communities and governments;

WHEREAS, sewage, for example, is a major source of pollution in the water; the world discharges 3 billion tons of wastewater every day and only 10 percent is treated while the rest of the waste would end up in estuaries and in the seas, damaging marine habitats and contaminating fisheries;

WHEREAS, it was reported that dead zones have been increasing in Asia and the largest whirlpool of microscopic trash in the world can be found in the Pacific high seas, a major spawning and fishing ground for the Philippines;

WHEREAS, the proliferation of dead zones in the developing world could result in huge economic losses for countries dependent on marine resources;

WHEREAS, the Philippines as the second-largest archipelago in the world has one of the longest coastlines at nearly 40,000 kilometers;

WHEREAS, according to Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Ramon Paje, the seas supply more than 80 percent of the animal protein of the Filipino public and more than 60 percent of the country's 96 million population lives near the coast;

WHEREAS, the proliferation of dead zones could result in a marked decline in the quality of fishes for food and loss of jobs for millions of Filipino fishermen and their families;

WHEREAS, Paje reportedly emphasized that these bare facts alone underscore both the importance of marine and coastal resources to our people, and the strain and stress that land-based activities exert on these resources in particular and on the oceans in general;

WHEREAS, it is imperative for the State through the local government units and communities to institute policies to effectively manage their land-based activities and reduce its damaging impact on the marine ecosystems;

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 proliferation of marine dead zones which could lead to huge economic losses for the country.

Adopted,

Miriam Defensor Santiago
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO
ack.

/dpm