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Senate
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SENATE
P. S. R. No. 398

RECEIVED BY:

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID
OF LEGISLATION, ON THE REPORTED DISCOVERY OF CANCER-CAUSING
CADMIUM IN CHEAP FASHION ACCESSORIES AND JEWELRY SOLD IN METRO
MANILA

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 11, Section 14 of the Constitution provides that “State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them”;

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, various news agencies reported on 17 November 2013 that environmentalist group EcoWaste Coalition found cadmium, a known carcinogen, in some costume accessories and jewelry being sold at bead and trinket shops in Quiapo, Manila;

WHEREAS, it is reported that cadmium may be present in jewelry as part of metal alloys, as solder, or as pigment or stabilizer in non-metal components such as ceramics, plastics or paint coatings;

WHEREAS, along with arsenic, asbestos, benzene, dioxins, lead, mercury, highly hazardous pesticides and other substances, cadmium is reportedly considered by the World Health Organization as one of the ten chemicals of major public health concern;

WHEREAS, cadmium and cadmium compounds are reportedly harmful to humans when inhaled, ingested, or absorbed through the skin, and are classified as “carcinogenic to humans” by the International Agency for Research on Cancer, meaning there is sufficient evidence for their carcinogenicity in humans;

WHEREAS, cadmium is also allegedly recognized as a reproductive and developmental toxin associated with reduced birth weight, premature birth, stillbirth, spontaneous abortion, and birth defects in humans, as well with behavioral and learning disabilities;

WHEREAS, cadmium and its compounds also reportedly belong to the Philippine Priority Chemicals List or substances determined by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Environmental Management Bureau to potentially pose unreasonable risk to public health, workplace, and the environment;

WHEREAS, EcoWaste Coalition reportedly made the discovery after analyzing 50 samples of bracelets, brooches, earrings, hair clips, necklaces, and fashion accessories bought for P15 to P80 each from seven specialty stores along Evangelista and Villalobos Streets in Manila;

WHEREAS, the environmentalist group members were reportedly shocked to find high levels of cadmium in jewelries and ornaments that are quite popular among girls and women, and

added that the excessive amounts of cadmium detected in over half of the samples would make them illegal to sell in Europe;

WHEREAS, the group allegedly said that the government should severely restrict cadmium in accessories and jewelries that may get into children's hands, and manufacturers, importers, distributors and retailers should not market cadmium-laden products to which children might be exposed;

WHEREAS, the group, reportedly said to have used a portable x-ray fluorescence device, reportedly detected cadmium up to 165,300 parts per million in 26 out of 50 samples, far above the European Union's limit of 100 ppm for cadmium content in jewelry;

WHEREAS, the report said that under the EU Regulation 494/2011, cadmium in jewelry is restricted to 0.01 % (or 100 ppm) by weight of the metal in metal beads and other metal components for jewelry making, metal parts of jewelry and imitation jewelry articles and hair accessories, including bracelets, necklaces and rings, piercing jewelry, wrist-watches and wrist-wear, brooches and cufflinks;

WHEREAS, EcoWaste Coalition members reportedly said that they observed that the "Hong Mei" fashion accessories, which they found to have the highest levels of cadmium among the samples, contained inadequate warning information because it did not explicitly disclose the product's cadmium content;

WHEREAS, Congress, which is constitutionally mandated to protect the people's health and the environment, should look into how consumer items containing cadmium find their way into the marketplace despite government regulation and prohibition in order to strengthen and augment these laws;

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 reported discovery of cancer-causing cadmium in cheap fashion accessories and jewelries sold in Metro Manila.

Adopted,

Miriam Defensor Santiago
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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