

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



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SENATE
P. S. R. No. 785

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID
OF LEGISLATION, ON THE REPORTED ILL EFFECTS OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED
EGGPLANTS ON THE HEALTH OF THE PUBLIC

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 2, Section 15 states that "The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them";

WHEREAS, the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* website, reported on 11 July 2014 that producers, traders and consumers of organic food filed a petition to intervene in the Supreme Court their opposition to government-backed field trials of genetically modified eggplants;

WHEREAS, it was reported that these genetically modified eggplants had *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) inserted into their DNA to produce a protein called Cry1Ac, which is a poison harmful to humans, especially infants and small children;

WHEREAS, the petitioners reportedly included non-government organizations Sibol ng Agham at Teknolohiya, the Pambansang Kilusan ng mga Samahang Magsasaka and Consumer Rights for Safe Food (CRSF), along with 10 individual organic farmers from Tarlac;

WHEREAS, CRSF head Mara Pardo de Tavera allegedly said that their petition was in support of the plea for a writ of Kalikasan filed in 2012 by activist group Greenpeace and its allies to stop the field trials of genetically modified eggplants;

WHEREAS, a writ of Kalikasan is a legal remedy for parties who believe their constitutional right to a balanced and healthful ecology is violated or threatened with a violation and to stop environmentally destructive acts;

WHEREAS, according to Pardo de Tavera, they want finality for the writ of Kalikasan so that it can be implemented, and its grant would lead to appropriate protection orders and would mandate court hearings on environment and health matters;

WHEREAS, Pardo de Tavera reportedly added that they are aware that the government is hell-bent on proceeding with the field tests;

WHEREAS, according to the report, Pardo de Tavera explained that the Supreme Court had brought the Greenpeace petition to the Court of Appeals (CA) for hearings and in May 2013 the Appellate Court granted the petition but the respondents appealed;

WHEREAS, Pardo de Tavera allegedly said that the Greenpeace petition was upheld again in September 2013, prompting the respondents to file a petition for prohibition and certiorari in the Supreme Court and since then, there had been three petitions in intervention in support of Bt eggplant field trials;

WHEREAS, according to Pardo de Tavera, their group has urged their allies to file a similar petition in intervention supporting the CA decision to stop the field trials of Bt eggplants for violating the constitutional right of Filipinos to a balanced and healthy ecology;


WHEREAS, it was reported that scientific studies conducted by at least three medical universities in Europe, warned of severe dangers from the planting and consuming of genetically modified crops, especially rice and eggplant;

WHEREAS, according to the doctors, Cry1Ac has not been approved for human consumption in any food crop and there is concern over its potential to cause allergic reactions when ingested; thus, public alarm over this issue is raised because they are very much concerned about the ill effects of genetically modified eggplants to the health of people, especially farmers who will be asked to field test these crops;

WHEREAS, although the groups will be bringing their cause of action to the Supreme Court, it is still necessary for the legislature to review steps taken by concerned government agencies to increase the production of food in the country, and determine if these steps are indeed harmful to the health of the people;

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 ill effects of genetically modified eggplants on the health of the public.

Adopted,


MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO
JD

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