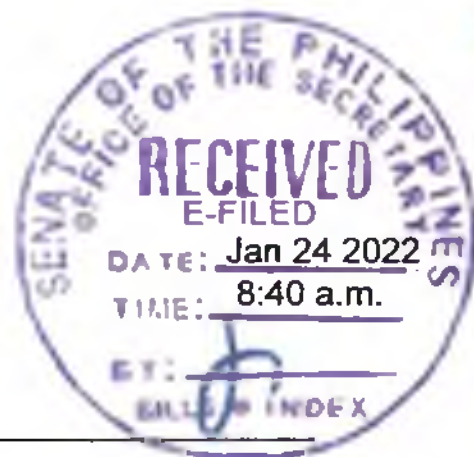


EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Third Regular Session)

SENATE
P.S. Resolution No. 981



Introduced by **SENATOR IMEE R. MARCOS**

RESOLUTION
DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE
TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE
IMPORTATION OF 60,000 METRIC TONS (MT) OF FISH FOR THE FIRST
QUARTER OF 2022 BY THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (DA) DESPITE
THE PRONOUNCEMENT OF THE NATIONAL FISHERIES AND AQUATIC
RESOURCES MANAGEMENT COUNCIL (NFARMC) THAT THE COUNTRY HAS
ENOUGH FISH SUPPLY THEREBY CAUSING THREAT TO THE LOCAL
FISHERIES SECTOR AND COMPROMISING NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY

WHEREAS, Article XIII, Section 7 of the 1987 Constitution provides that the State shall protect the rights of subsistence fishermen and, thus, it shall provide support to such fishermen through appropriate technology and research, adequate financial, production, and marketing assistance, and other services;

WHEREAS, Republic Act (R.A.) No. 8850, or the "*Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998*", as amended, was enacted with the end goal of achieving food security as the overriding consideration in the utilization, management, development, conservation and protection of fishery resources. Section 61 of said Act also provides that fishery products may be imported only when the importation has been certified as necessary by the Department, in consultation with the Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management (FARMC);

WHEREAS, on the other hand, R.A. No. 10845, or the "*Anti-Agricultural Smuggling Act of 2016*" declares that it is the policy of the State to promote the productivity of the agriculture sector and to protect farmers from unscrupulous traders and importers, who by their illegal importation of agricultural products significantly affect the production, availability of supply and stability of prices, and the food security of the State;

WHEREAS, on 19 January 2022, various news articles state that the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture (DA), William Dar, has signed Certificates of Necessity to Import (CNI), thereby approving the importation of 60,000 metric tons

(MT) of small pelagic fish for the first quarter of 2022 to allegedly ensure sufficient supply in the country;

WHEREAS, in a press statement, Secretary Dar said that based on the data from the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), there is a potential deficit of about 119,000 MT this quarter. Secretary Dar also cited the damage caused by Typhoon Odette on the fisheries sector as another reason to import more fish. Further, according to the latest data from the DA-Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Operations Center, fisheries suffered the largest share of the damage to agriculture caused by Typhoon Odette at Php 3.97 billion;

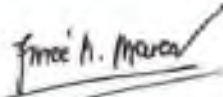
WHEREAS, Secretary Dar mentioned that there is a need to import fish to bring down the country's food inflation since according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), fish inflation registered at 7.6% in 2021 as compared to the 6.1% inflation in 2020;

WHEREAS, said importation was approved despite the pronouncement of the National Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Council (NFARMC), through Resolution No. 03 Series of 2022, that the country still has enough fish supply and that there is no need to issue CNIs for the first quarter of 2022 since there are still available fish for the first quarter. That, considering the utilization of the volume from the previous CNI wherein: 12,023 MT which are still in transit 22,613 MT which are still in the cold storages, as well as the volume under the CNI 11,015 MT, for a total volume of on-stock equivalent to 45,651 MT as of 13 January 2022 and taking into consideration the availability of cold storages and the upcoming lifting of the closed fishing season;

WHEREAS, despite strong opposition from the NFARMC and other concerned groups, this is not the first time that the Department has approved the importation of fish within a short period of time to augment the expected shortfall in local production and allegedly prevent unwarranted increases in fish prices;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, directing the appropriate Senate committee to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, into the importation of 60,000 metric tons (mt) of fish for the first quarter of 2022 by the Department of Agriculture (DA) despite the pronouncement of the National Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Council (NFARMC) that the country has enough fish supply thereby causing threat to the local fisheries sector and compromising national food security.

Adopted,


IMEE R. MARCOS