

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

6 MAY 24 11:31

SENATE

RECEIVED BY: 

P.S. Res. No. 487

Introduced by Senator Manny Villar

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES AND OTHER APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE PHILIPPINES' PREPAREDNESS FOR TSUNAMI THREATS, WITH THE END VIEW OF RECOMMENDING POLICY MEASURES TO MITIGATE A TSUNAMI'S DISASTROUS EFFECTS

WHEREAS, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said the Philippines should brace for killer waves because it lies in a geologically dangerous region and has a recent history of tsunami devastation;

WHEREAS, the country has been struck by about 40 tsunamis in the past 400 years. The Philippines, an archipelago of about 7,100 islands, is flanked by the Pacific Ocean to the east and the South China Sea to the west with undersea trenches – potential quake triggers – *running alongside its coast on both sides*;

WHEREAS, last May 17, 2006, the far-flung coastal village of Buhatan in Santo Domingo town in Albay province participated in an unprecedented drill by more than two dozen Pacific Rim countries to test a tsunami warning system. The ocean-wide exercise, the first test of a Pacific warning system set up in 1965, was conducted to prepare for any repeat of the 2004 Asian tsunami catastrophe in which at least 216,000 people were killed or left missing in 11 countries, mainly because they were not forewarned of the danger;

WHEREAS, except for minor glitches, including a power outage that prevented one office from faxing a warning, officials said the drill went well and Buhatan villagers managed to reach a designated safe hilltop more than two hours before the imaginary tsunami should have engulfed their village;

WHEREAS, engineer Allan Labayog of the Phivolcs regional observatory in Zamboanga City said only the Bicol Region is considered well organized and prepared. He expressed concern over the lack of preparation of most areas in the archipelago where tsunamis could strike;

WHEREAS, Labayog said Zamboanga City has no action plan nor clear areas elevated enough for an emergency relocation if a tsunami hits. He noted the city's proximity to the Cotabato Trench, the movement of which in 1976 triggered a tsunami killing thousands of villagers in the Zamboanga Peninsula;

WHEREAS, there is a need to identify other areas in the Philippines that could be hit by killer waves, and tsunami drills in these areas should be conducted to save human lives;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, to direct the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources and other appropriate committees to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, into the Philippines' preparedness for tsunami threats, with the end view of recommending policy measures to mitigate a tsunami's disastrous effects.

Adopted,


MANNY VILLAR
Senator