

FOURTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC )  
OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
First Regular Session )

SECRETARY

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SENATE  
P.S.R. No. 275

RECEIVED BY: Jh

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

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RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN  
INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE OIL SPILL IN THE RICEFIELDS AND  
WATERWAYS OF BARANGAY LIDONG, STO. DOMINGO, ALBAY

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 2, Section 5 provides: "The maintenance of peace and order, the protection of life, liberty, property, and the promotion of the general welfare are essential for the enjoyment by all the people of the blessings of democracy";

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 2, Section 15 provides: "The 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, on 16 January 2008, an oil spill from the abaca fiber processing firm Pacific Cordage Corp. contaminated ricefields and waterways in Barangay Lidong, Sto. Domingo, Albay;

WHEREAS, according to news reports, around two plastic tanks of 2,100 liters of oil spread out into ricefields and waterways, all the way to the coastline of Lidong;

WHEREAS, around seven hectares of rice fields have been affected;

WHEREAS, OIC and administrative officer Renaldo de Vera of Pacific Cordage, admitted that the spill was caused by the negligence of the company's workers; the cordage batching oil, used to soften and preserve abaca fiber, overflowed from a mixing tank when the operator left it unattended on 15 January 2008;

WHEREAS, the operator has been suspended for four months, and a cleanup is reportedly being conducted by the workers and the villagers; more than 2,000 kilograms of abaca fiber from the factory was being used to prevent the oil from spreading further;

WHEREAS, an investigation is reportedly being conducted by engineers from the local government unit, the provincial government, and the regional unit of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR);


WHEREAS, Manuel Rangasa, chief of Provincial Environment and Eco-Cultural Tourism Office, claims that the factory is liable for noncompliance with environmental standards; he said that the company has neither an environmental compliance certificate nor a pollution officer;

WHEREAS, DENR allegedly blatantly allowed the company's failure to comply with environmental laws over the 38 years it has been operating in the area;

WHEREAS, villagers are worried over the health implications of the spill, complaining that the oil has a dizzying, gasoline-like odor; farmers are also concerned about the damage caused to their livelihood;

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 oil spill in the ricefields and waterways of Barangay Lidong, Sto. Domingo, Albay.

Adopted,

  
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO  
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