

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

8 APR 28 2011

RECEIVED BY: 

SENATE
P. S. R. No. 372

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION
DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN
INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE RAMPANT
DESTRUCTION OF PHILIPPINE CAVES

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 12, Section 2 provides that “All lands of the public domain, waters, minerals, coal, petroleum, and other mineral oils, all forces of potential energy, fisheries, forests or timber, wildlife, flora and fauna, and other natural resources are owned by the State. xxx The exploration, development, and utilization of natural resources shall be under the full control and supervision of the State. xxx”;

WHEREAS, in a 9 April 2008 article news article of the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) estimated that there are about 1,500 caves in the country, 38 percent of which are in Luzon, 37 percent in Mindanao and 22 percent in Negros and Panay Islands in the Visayas;

WHEREAS, according to the standards set by Republic Act No. 9072 also known as the National Caves and Cave Resources Management and Protection Ac, the DENR, along with the Western Visayas Caving Association, National Museum of the Philippines and several local government units, classified and assessed 20 caves in Western Visayas, as part of its efforts to protect the caves;

WHEREAS, the DENR in Western Visayas has recently stepped up efforts to protect and preserve caves in the region amid illegal excavations and unregulated access to the caves;

WHEREAS, according to the Protected Areas and Wildlife Division of the DENR in Western Visayas, many of the caves in the region have been vandalized and illegal excavations are reportedly being done by treasure hunters;

WHEREAS, it was also reported that four of the 20 caves in Western Visayas belong to Class I, which have fragile geological formations and with threatened species; the activities in these caves are limited to mapping, photography, education and scientific purposes;

WHEREAS, nine caves were categorized Class II, or caves which are hazardous to inexperienced visitors and contain sensitive geological, archaeological, cultural, historical and biological values; some portions of these caves are closed to public access and are only open to experienced cavers or guided education tours or visits;

WHEREAS, seven caves were classified as Class III or those that are generally safe to inexperienced visitors and with no known threatened species, archaeological and geological value;

WHEREAS, there is a very urgent need for all agencies, non-governmental organizations, local government units and other concerned sectors to institute various measures to protect Philippine caves, such as the establishment of a comprehensive cave management plan, forge agreements with stakeholders and deputize cave protection enforcement officers to ensure the protection and preservation of the caves;

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 rampant destruction of Philippine caves

Adopted,


MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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