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OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES }  
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SENATE  
P. S. RES. NO. 482



RECEIVED BY:                     

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*Introduced by Sen. M. A. Madrigal*

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**RESOLUTION**

**DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL COMMUNITIES TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE DISPLACEMENT AND HARASSMENT OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN NUEVA VIZCAYA BECAUSE OF THE LAND-CLEARING AND EXPLORATION OPERATIONS OF THE AUSTRALIAN MINING FIRM OCEANAGOLD PHILIPPINES, INC.**

**WHEREAS** Australian firm OceanaGold Philippines, Inc. (OceanaGold) has acquired a US \$117 million gold and copper mining project at the upland town of Kasibu, province of Nueva Vizcaya;

**WHEREAS** this site is believed to have at least 2.47 million ounces of high grade gold and some 350,000 tons of copper, making the location attractive to mining firms;

**WHEREAS** OceanaGold has been clearing the village of Didipio and nearby barangays since December 2007 as part of its mining exploration activities;

**WHEREAS** hundreds of houses have been illegally demolished, hundreds of families have been ejected from their homes, and hundreds of hectares of farmlands have been cleared to give way to roads, structures and other facilities for the mining project;

**WHEREAS** the Ifugao and Bugkalot tribes from barangays Paquet, Dine, Biyoy, Catawaran, Kakidungen and Pa'o have expressed their opposition to the mining project;

**WHEREAS** these indigenous peoples questioned the alleged free and prior informed consent (FPIC) obtained by the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) as a requirement under the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997;

**WHEREAS** residents and communities reported that OceanaGold resorted to intimidation and harassment to quell popular opposition and make way for demolition teams and bulldozer trucks;

**WHEREAS** Nueva Vizcaya Bishop Ramon Villena expressed opposition to the mining project as it runs counter to the province's development plan for environmental eco-tourism and agri-business;

**WHEREAS** on 9 April 2008, Nueva Vizcaya Governor Luisa Cuaresma issued a cease-and-desist order on the mining firm's operations for its refusal to pay its local tax obligations;

**WHEREAS** Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Lito Atienza rebuffed the order of the provincial government and directed OceanaGold to proceed with its operations, citing the Philippine Mining Act of 1995 as the legal basis for the DENR's directive;

**WHEREAS** a local court recently issued an injunction order against the ongoing demolition

of houses in the project site;

**WHEREAS** it was reported on 24 June 2008 that OceanaGold suspended their operations allegedly to cut down on the company's costs and to acquire additional financing for the project;

**WHEREAS** the OceanaGold expects to start its extraction activities by February 2009;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED**, to direct the Senate Committee on Cultural Communities to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, into the displacement and harassment of indigenous peoples in Nueva Vizcaya because of the land-clearing and mining exploration activities of the Australian firm OceanaGold Philippines, Inc.

**Adopted,**



**M. A. MADRIGAL**