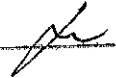


FOURTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC)
OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Second Regular Session)

8 AUG -4 P2:51

SENATE
P. S. R. No. 548

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEES TO INVESTIGATE, IN AID OF
LEGISLATION, THE ALLEGED RAMPANT ILLEGAL LOGGING IN THE SIERRA
MADRE NATURAL PARK

WHEREAS, Article 12, Section 14 of the Constitution provides, "The Congress shall, as soon as possible, determine, by law, the specific limits of forest lands and national parks, marking clearly their boundaries on the ground. Thereafter, such forest lands and national parks shall be conserved and may not be increased nor diminished, except by law. The Congress shall provide for such period as it may determine, measures to prohibit logging in endangered forests and watershed areas;

WHEREAS, *The Philippine Daily Inquirer*, in its 1 August 2008 article entitled "Raids Expose Extent of Sierra Madre Illegal Logging", reported that the ongoing crackdown in Isabela province has exposed unabated illegal logging in the Sierra Madre, following the discovery of what officials said were about a million board feet of illegally cut logs within a protected area;

WHEREAS, last 31 July 2008, members of the province's anti-illegal logging task force reported the confiscation of 160 logs, amounting to about 42,000 board feet of various species of hard wood, believed felled from the forests of the Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park, a protected area, which brought to more than 80,000 board feet the volume of lumber that the task force has seized in the past two weeks;

WHEREAS, Isabela Gov. Maria Gracia Cielo Padaca allegedly said that while she was happy with the confiscation, she was "very, very sad" that the volume of forest products has exposed the alarming extent of illegal logging in Sierra Madre, and that she was worried over the volume of logs that may have come down from the past years that the illegal logging trade has continued in the area;

WHEREAS, it was reported that the crackdown began when government teams scoured the Baua River in Ilagan town, Isabela for felled logs awaiting transport, since illegal loggers reportedly use rivers to transport sawn lumber, primarily to evade checkpoints set up along roads;

WHEREAS, it was learned that after the trees are felled and cut into flitches, these are then allegedly submerged in the river for storage; the illegal loggers then reportedly use the river current to ship the contraband downstream to a waiting truck that brings the lumber to buyers, often furniture traders in Ilagan town;

WHEREAS, Gov. Padaca, who was deputized by Environment Secretary Lito Atienza to lead the illegal logging campaign in Isabela, led the revival of the task force, which is composed of employees from the province's environment office,

Department of Environment and Natural Resources, army soldiers, policemen and representatives from nongovernment organizations, after receiving complaints from upland residents on the continued cutting of trees by illegal loggers;

WHEREAS, although the results of the task force's campaign are indications of the effectiveness of the multisectoral approach to illegal logging, the discovery of the felled logs inside the Sierra Madre Natural Park is a matter of great concern that calls for the more effective implementation of current laws and regulations, and might even necessitate the crafting of new ones;

WHEREFORE, be it hereby resolved by the Philippine Senate, to direct the proper Senate committees to investigate, in aid of legislation, the alleged rampant illegal logging in the Sierra Madre Natural Park.

Adopted,


MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

/cdr