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SENATE

P. S. Res. No. 655

RECEIVED BY



Introduced by Senator Manuel "Lito" M. Lapid

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES AND OTHER APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES IN THE SENATE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE ALLEGED ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE IN THE COUNTRY, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF PREVENTING THE EXTINCTION OF OUR ENDANGERED SPECIES AND PROTECTING THE HEALTH OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC AGAINST DISEASES AND VIRUSES CARRIED BY THESE ILLEGALLY TRADED WILDLIFE

WHEREAS, Article 2, Section 16 of the 1987 constitution provides that "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, Section 2 of Republic Act 9147, otherwise known as the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act, states that the State shall conserve the country's wildlife resources and their habitats to promote ecological balance and enhance biological diversity in the country;

WHEREAS, in the global arena, illegal wildlife trade is recognized as the third largest industry after drugs and sex, running to billions of dollars every year. It is the single biggest cause of wildlife decline in the whole world;

WHEREAS, 2008 figures indicate that illegal wildlife trade in Southeast Asia ranges from \$8 billion to \$10 billion US dollars per year;

WHEREAS, based on the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) records, the Philippines is the sole host to 1,137 animal species and 14,000 species of plants. The country is one of the 25 biodiversity hot spots in the world, with 592 endemic species of amphibians, birds and mammals considered "threatened or endangered";

WHEREAS, newspaper reports as of September 18, 2008 indicate the alleged illegal trade in wildlife animals allegedly being smuggled into the country through the southern backdoor along the route of Ro-Ro (roll-on, roll-off) ferries in the country;

WHEREAS, as of 2008, the Protected Area and Wildlife Bureau (PAWB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has reported that wild fauna are being smuggled into the Philippines coming from Indonesia and Malaysia

through Mindanao, and then transported to Manila through the route of Ro-Ro (roll-on, roll-off) ferries in our country;

WHEREAS, exotic birds from Indonesia, like the black cockatoo and lory, and orangutans from Malaysia are allegedly smuggled by ship to Mindanao. These contrabands are allegedly concealed inside private vans which are loaded on Ro-Ro ferries plying the waters from Mindanao to Luzon. These endangered animals allegedly end up mostly in public markets in Manila;

WHEREAS, apart from its economic implication, illegal wildlife trade could introduce pests and diseases to the people and animals in our country given that Civet cats from China are known carriers of SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) virus while primates also carry the Ebola virus;

WHEREAS, there is an urgent need to revisit the provisions of existing environmental laws, rules and regulations to combat illegal wildlife trade in the country.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED as it is hereby resolved to direct the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources and other appropriate Committees in the Senate to conduct an inquiry, *In Aid of Legislation*, into the alleged illegal wildlife trade in the country, with the end in view of preventing the extinction of our endangered species and protecting the health of the general public against diseases and viruses carried by these illegally traded wildlife.

ADOPTED,


MANUEL "LITO" M. LAPID
Senator 