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OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Second Regular Session)

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SENATE
P. S. R. No. 712

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION
DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY,
IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE ALLEGED USE OF THE ROLL-ON, ROLL-
OFF FERRIES FOR WILDLIFE AND FAUNA SMUGGLING

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 2, Section 15, states, "The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them";

WHEREAS, Article 2, Section 16 of the same states, "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, the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* in its 18 September 2008 report alleged that roll-on, roll-off (Ro-Ro) ferries are used to engage in the illegal trade of smuggling wild animals into the country;

WHEREAS, according to the report, wild animals are smuggled through southern backdoors. Theresa Mundita Lim, director of Protected Area and Wildlife Bureau (PAWB), allegedly said that wild fauna were smuggled from Indonesia and Malaysia through Mindanao, and then transported to Manila on ships;

WHEREAS, Lim alleged added that exotic birds from Indonesia, like the black cockatoo and lory, and orangutans from Malaysia, were often smuggled by ships to General Santos and Davao in Mindanao; later, these are concealed inside private vans loaded on Ro-Ro ferries destined for Samar, Albay, Sorsogon or Manila;

WHEREAS, these contraband allegedly end up in public markets, such as Cartimar or Arranque, or are flown to other countries, such as Thailand;

WHEREAS, Lim also allegedly said that tips from "vigilant individuals" are crucial for the PAWB to intercept the smuggling of wild animals;

WHEREAS, the report further alleged that the illegal wildlife trade in Southeast Asia ranges from \$8 billion to \$10 billion a year, while in the Philippines also, the trade earns an estimate of at P4 million to P6 million a year. The illegal wildlife and fauna trade in the Philippines allegedly is the third-largest in the illegal trading industry after drugs and sex;

WHEREAS, illegal fauna and wildlife trading is reportedly the single biggest cause of wildlife decline, since half of those transported die in transit, while most of those rescued are allegedly already dying. Most of the illegally traded wildlife are endangered species;

WHEREAS, it was also reported that apart from its economic impact, illegal wildlife poaching could introduce pests and diseases to the people and animals. Lim reportedly said that, some of the birds come from Indonesia, which is an avian influenza-positive country, while Civet cats from China are known carriers of the SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) virus, while primates can carry the Ebola virus;

WHEREAS, it is imperative that the State protects its wildlife from decline due to illegal smuggling by enforcing stricter measures that will prohibit ro-ro ferries from carrying loads that have not been duly inspected for smuggled items by port officials;

WHEREAS, the government should also think of creative ways to entice informers to step forward and report on illegal smuggling. Together with this, the State should also implement an educational campaign informing Filipinos about the dire effects of illegal wildlife smuggling;

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 alleged use of the roll-on, roll-off ferries for wildlife and fauna smuggling.

Adopted,


MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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