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News Release
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Villar seeks stronger law to ensure only safe and quality fireworks proliferate the market

Sen. Manny Villar today said there is a need to improve existing laws that will protect consumers against the dangers of fireworks and pyrotechnics such as fire, injury and loss of lives especially during the Christmas season.

“Alam naman natin kapag Bagong Taon, maraming nasasaktan, maraming sunog dahil sa mga paputok. Kailangan talagang maglabas ng matinding regulasyon at matinding implementasyon ng ating batas,” Villar said during the hearing of the Committee on Trade and Commerce, which he chairs.

“Sana itong Pasko na ito ay masimulan na natin nang sa ganoon ay maraming buhay ang maligtas sa darating na Bagong Taon,” he added.

During the hearing, C/Supt. Carlitos Romero, Director for Plans & Standards of the Bureau of Fire Protection, said in 2010, 50 fire incidents were caused by fireworks and pyrotechnics, and it increased by 13.6 percent this year.

“Judging from the rising number of fatalities, fires and injuries, I don’t think we can say that we have high standards in the manufacturing and use of fireworks,” Villar said.

He added safety instructions on the use of firecrackers should be clearly seen on the product labels, including how far away a person should be when lighting a firecracker.

Mario Gaudiano of the Bureau of Products and Standards of the Department of Trade and Industry revealed that more smuggled fireworks are flooding the market now, which is in violation of Republic Act 7183, or the act regulating the sale, manufacture, distribution and use of firecrackers and other pyrotechnic devices.

Villar said monitoring should be strengthened to stop the entry of smuggled firecrackers which do not pass DTI inspection.

Villar authored Proposed Senate Resolution No. 644 which directs a Senate study on the trading, exhibition and promotion of Philippine made fireworks and other pyrotechnic devices.

He cited the Department of Health statistics showing that injuries caused by fireworks in 2010 is seven percent higher compared to 2009.

The resolution authored by Villar also wants to look into mechanisms to improve the competitiveness of our products with the end in view of further strengthening consumer protection by ensuring safe and quality products.

Villar noted that the popularity of fireworks has lead to the development of several areas of the country as fireworks manufacturing centers, notably the province of Bulacan.

He said despite the popularity of locally made fireworks, the pyrotechnic industry only has a few manufacturers whose products can compete with pyrotechnics coming from other countries.

“The sad fact is that most products are being manufactured manually in crude and unsupervised manner which makes it difficult for government agencies to ensure their quality and safety,” Villar said.

“Trading and selling of fireworks are often done in the streets with the products exposed to the elements, this and other practices further endanger the consumer as the quality and safety of the items on sale become even more dubious,” he added.