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Press Release

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Villar's committee to hear legislation on the use of environment-friendly bags

The Senate Committee on Trade and Industry chaired by Sen. Manny Villar will hold a public hearing on bills filed in the Chamber regulating the use of plastic bags and mandating the use of recyclable and environment friendly bags in lieu of plastic bags by shopping malls and retailers on Monday, Sept. 27.

Lodged with the committee are Senate Bill Nos. 1103 and 1543, authored by Villar and Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago, respectively.

"A year ago today, Typhoon Ondoy swamped much of Metro Manila to extraordinary level of floodwater. I still remember that the minute the floodwaters receded, one of the obvious observations was that the plastic thrash had been found to be a major cause of blocked drainage and floodways," Villar said.

A survey conducted by the National Solid waste Commission of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in 2003 found that plastic materials comprised 15 percent of all solid waste generated in Metro Manila. More recently, a survey conducted by the Quezon City Environmental Protection and Waste Management Department at the Payatas Disposal Facility this year found that plastic materials comprised 21 percent of all garbage dumped at the facility. Plastic bags in particular, comprised more than half of this amount.

Villar added there is a need to enact a law that will promote the use of environment-friendly bags to conserve energy and natural resources, reduce the volume of waste disposed daily, diminish plastic bag litter and invite citizens to actively participate in practices that promote a clean and sustainable environment.

Under Villar's proposal, all department stores, malls, and retail establishments with three or more stores, sales offices or branches nationwide or those with capitalization of more than P5 million are mandated to utilize reusable and environment-friendly shopping bags.

After three years of effectivity of the Act, the use of environment-friendly bags is mandated in all commercial establishments and shall be mandated as a requirement of registering or operating a business or commercial endeavour.

Violation of this act will mean a penalty of revocation of license or permit to operate a business and a fine of not less than P100,000. Fines collected as penalties shall be constituted as a special environment fund that will be used to disseminate information geared towards the protection on Mother Earth.