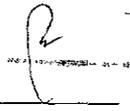


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SENATE
P.S. RES. NO. 157

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Introduced by Senator Manny B. Villar

RESOLUTION

URGING THE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE REPORTED DESTRUCTION OF THE SIERRA MADRE MOUNTAIN RANGE ON ACCOUNT OF DOCUMENTED DEVELOPMENTAL AGGRESSIONS CARRIED AGAINST IT

Whereas, the 1987 Philippine Constitution states that "[t]he 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 Philippines is endowed with rich natural resources such as the Sierra Madre which is a 500km long mountain range covering 1.4 million hectares of land situated in Luzon that starts in Cagayan and ends in Quezon Province;

Whereas, the Sierra Madre is home to at least 10 million people which include 11 indigenous groups like the Dumagats, Kalingas, Gaddangs, and Bugkalots that make their home in its upland, lowland and coastal areas;

Whereas, the Sierra Madre's environment is an interweave of forests, rivers, waterfalls, caves, ocean, parks, and heritage sites;

Whereas, the mountain range has the largest remaining old-growth forest cover in the Philippines, representing 50 percent of the remaining forests in the country, and a species diversity accounting for nearly half of the country's natural wealth;

Whereas, the mountain range provides the area for growth and development of unique habitats and their associated flora and fauna;

Whereas, for its flora, among the various species that abound in the mountain range are mahogany varieties of red lauan, tanguile, mayapis, apitong, bagtikan and some 3, 500 species of other plants, 58 percent of which are endemic to the area;

Whereas, for its fauna, it is a habitat of the Philippine Eagle (*Pithecophaga jefferyi*), Golden Crowned Flying Fox (*Acerodon jubatus*), Philippine Eagle-Owl (*Bubo philippensis*), Isabela Oriole (*Oriolus isabellae*), Green Sea Turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), Loggerhead Turtle (*Caretta caretta*), Hawksbill Turtle (*Erethmochelys imbricata*), Philippine Crocodile (*Crocodylus mindorensis*) and Dugong (*Dugong dugon*) among others;

Whereas, despite its richness in flora and fauna, it tops the list of 17 critical conservation priority areas in the Philippines according to a report of the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR);

Whereas, in fact the plants therein represent 42 percent of threatened Philippine floral species while some 50 percent of its fauna are of threatened status, whereby a number of which are in the "critically endangered" list;

Whereas, Sierra Madre is classified as a critical conservation priority area in the Philippines because of over-harvesting of resources, mostly by loggers and miners, and land use conversion from forest to village caused by increasing population and other developmental aggressions such as creation of dams, landfills and garbage dump projects;

Whereas, logging activities apparently still abound despite an existing logging ban in the areas of Sierra Madre as seen in recent news reports where truckloads of illegally cut hardwood were seized in the towns of Ilagan and San Mariano, Isabela and the presence of operational saw mills in some portions of Sierra Madre i.e. Agos Riverbank in the mountain village of Magsaysay;

Whereas, there are reported nighttime quarrying activities that threaten the mountain range and the dams situated therein particularly those quarrying activities within the immediate vicinity of Bustos Dam which are perpetrated despite the suspension of all quarrying and mining operations in the area as stated in Executive Order 01-2010;

Whereas, the revival of the creation of the Laiban dam allegedly threatens to submerge nine *barangays* in the municipality of Tanay, Rizal and one in General Nakar and is said to destroy more than 27,800 hectares of agricultural land, and also will cause the mandatory dislocation of more than 10,000 families of farmers and ethnic minorities;

Whereas, as reported by the Save Sierra Madre Network, there are about 45 open dumpsites, 21 control dumpsites and 7 sanitary landfills found in Sierra Madre provinces which they claim to potentially destroy the integrity of the forest, biodiversity, and capacity to support sustainable development;

Whereas, the damage to the Sierra Madre has caused billions of pesos to the country, for example reforestation alone costs 3billion, landslides and flash floods triggered by heavy rains or typhoon such as Ondoy costs us billions of pesos of destroyed infrastructures and crops;

Whereas, considering the impact to the country's natural resources, its biodiversity, and costs resulting from landslides and flashfloods caused by the destruction of our the Sierra Madre, it is necessary that the government address these impending threats from all fronts of developmental aggression to arrest the continued demise of our flora and fauna, denudation of our the mountain range and abrupt negative alteration of biodiversity therein;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, to urge the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources to conduct an inquiry in aid of legislation, on the reported destruction of the Sierra Madre mountain range on account of documented developmental aggressions carried against it.

Adopted,

