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SENATE

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P.S. Resolution No. 504

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INTRODUCED BY SENATOR VILLAR

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**RESOLUTION**

**DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD TO CONDUCT A STUDY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE EFFECTS OF THE REPORTED FISHKILLS TO FISHERSFOLKS WITH THE END IN VIEW OF HAVING AN ASSESSMENT OF THE PHILIPPINE FISHERIES CODE AND FORMULATE POLICY MEASURES FOCUSED ON IMPROVING THE LIVES OF THE RURAL POPULATION DEPENDENT ON THE FISHING INDUSTRY**

**WHEREAS**, Sec. 7, Article XIII of the 1987 Constitution provides that:

*“The State shall protect the rights of subsistence fishermen, especially of local communities, to the preferential use of the communal marine and fishing resources, both inland and offshore. It shall provide support to such fishermen through appropriate technology and research, adequate financial, production, and marketing assistance, and other services. The State shall also protect, develop, and conserve such resources. The protection shall extend to offshore fishing grounds of subsistence fishermen against foreign intrusion. Fishworkers shall receive a just share from their labor in the utilization of marine and fishing resources.”;*

**WHEREAS**, Republic Act No. 8550 otherwise known as the *“The Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998”* declares it the policy of the State to :

*“achieve food security as the overriding consideration in the utilization, management, development conservation and protection of fishery resources in order to provide the food needs of the population”;*

**WHEREAS**, it has been reported that hundreds of tons of fish harvest was lost due to the massive fishkills in Batangas and Pangasinan provinces;

**WHEREAS**, officials of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources have identified the decrease in the amount of oxygen levels in the water as the cause of the fishkills;

**WHEREAS**, the abundance of seaweeds whose growth was encouraged by the settling of fish feeds in the lake bed and the rise in the number of fish pens

generated a surge in competition for the waters oxygen resources resulting in an upset of the ecological balance;<sup>1</sup>

**WHEREAS**, these incidents will clearly have an effect on the lives of fisherfolks, 22.7 percent of whom suffer abject poverty according to the figures of the National Statistical Coordination Board;<sup>2</sup>

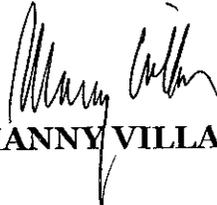
**WHEREAS**, according to Gerry Corpuz of Pambansang lakas ng Kilusang Mamalakaya ng Pilipinas, fisherfolks earn an average of one hundred fifty pesos to one hundred eighty pesos a day, way below the minimum wage set by the government for workers in rural areas;<sup>3</sup>

**WHEREAS**, this despite the fact that **Republic Act No. 8550 otherwise known as the known as "The Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998"** has been enacted in order to aid in the modernization of the country's fishing and aquaculture industry;

**WHEREAS**, it is necessary to conduct a review of Philippine Fisheries Laws in order to forestall further incidents of fishkills through the proper regulation of fish pens and aquaculture technology and focus any new legislation on improving the lives of those who are dependent on the fishing industry.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, as it is hereby resolved by the Senate of the Philippines to direct the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Food to conduct a study, in aid of legislation, on the effects of the reported fishkills to fishersfolks with the end in view of having an assessment of the Philippine Fisheries Code and formulate policy measures focused on improving the lives of the rural population dependent on the fishing industry.

Adopted,

  
**MANNY VILLAR**

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<sup>1</sup> Let Taal oxygen levels rise, fishers told "The Philippine Daily Inquirer" June 1, 2011 A4 print

<sup>2</sup> Militants tag fisheries law as useless "The Philippine Daily Inquirer" June 1, 2011 A17 print

<sup>3</sup> ibid