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S E N A T E

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INTRODUCED BY SENATOR VILLAR

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**RESOLUTION**  
**URGING THE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO**  
**CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE REPORTED**  
**OVERFISHING IN PHILIPPINE SEAS WITH THE END IN VIEW OF FORMULATING**  
**PROGRAMS AND POLICIES TO ADDRESS SMALL PELAGIC FISH SHORTAGE AND**  
**RESTORE ITS POPULATION TO NORMAL LEVEL**

*Whereas*, Section 16 Article II of the 1987 Constitution states that, “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*, small pelagic fishes like *galunggong* (scad) and sardines are those that live near the surface or in the water columns of coastal, ocean and like waters<sup>1</sup>;

*Whereas*, these small pelagic fishes are getting fewer and smaller as major marine grounds have become heavily exploited over the years<sup>2</sup>;

*Whereas*, the average size of sardines caught presently is 13 centimeters which means that the fish is less than a year old and are being caught while they are still young contrary to the ideal 15 to 20 centimeters size of a 2 to 3 year old fish which is mature enough to be caught;

*Whereas*, according to the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), the population and size of small pelagic fish species such as sardines, *matambaka* (ox-eye scad) and *galunggong* are dwindling due to overfishing;

*Whereas*, of 13 fishing grounds that have been mapped, 10 areas are “very heavily exploited,” and accommodate over 70 fishermen per square kilometer<sup>3</sup>;

*Whereas*, these heavily exploited waters are located in the Lingayen Gulf, northern Zambales, Visayan Sea, Camotes Sea, Honda Bay, Babuyan Channel, Lagonoy Gulf, Sorsogon Bay, Hinatuan and Dinagay Bay, and Davao Gulf;

*Whereas*, the Philippines’ fishing industry employs 1.5 million people and exports an estimated \$769 million worth of fish every year<sup>4</sup>;

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<sup>1</sup> Page 8, “The Pacific Islands: An Encyclopedia,” University of Hawaii Press

<sup>2</sup> “No more big fish; overfishing blamed,” by Kristine L. Alave, Philippine Daily Inquirer, September 13, 2011

<sup>3</sup> National Stock Assessment Program of BFAR

<sup>4</sup> Data provided by Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission

*Whereas*, possible ways of preserving fish stocks are to impose a closed season to let the parent stock breed and to establish fish sanctuaries to allow the fish population to grow;

*Whereas*, the population of these small pelagic fishes should be preserved as they are the most common source of protein for ordinary Filipinos and a failure to reduce the fishing activity which causes a decrease in their number would pose a serious threat to food security;

*Whereas*, the State should find different ways to manage fishing in the exploited areas to ensure that Filipinos would have enough fish supply in the future while supporting the employment in the fishing industry;

**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 overfishing in Philippine seas with the end in view of formulating programs and policies to address small pelagic fish shortage and restore its population to normal level.

Adopted,

  
MANNY VILLAR  
Senator