Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Resolution No. 332

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE ARGEL JOSEPH T. CABATBAT

RESOLUTION
DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD AND OTHER
APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO
CONDUCT AN INQUIRY AND INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION,
RELATING TO INCREASING NUMBER OF RICE CARTELS AND RICE
SMUGGLING IN THE COUNTRY

WHEREAS, the constitution provides that State shall develop a self-reliant
and independent national economy effectively controlled by Filipinos and shall
promote comprehensive agricultural reform.

WHEREAS, the Philippines is generally known to competitively participate
with rice production globally. It has vast plains, various rice producing areas and rich
agricultural lands which make it perfect for agricultural farming and production.

WHEREAS, over the past decades, we have seen a dwindling production of
rice all over the country due to various factors. Recently, Filipinos mostly hinge on
rice importation to sustain the food requirement of the nation.

WHEREAS, rice is an important part of the Filipino Culture. It is our food
staple that drives the Filipino forward. Hence, activities relating to Rice Cartels and
Rice Smuggling should not be treated like any ordinary offense.

WHEREAS, imported rice entering the country through legal and illegal
means, continue to flood the local market including the presence of Rice Cartels and
Rice Smuggling. It is also costing the government billions of pesos in unpaid duties
and taxes and also killing the local producers.

WHEREAS, rice smuggling and rice cartels does not only deny the
government of revenues but also puts out poor Filipino families at the edge of
hunger and poverty, forcing them to resort to criminality in order to survive.

WHEREAS, the NFA has been officially stripped of its powers over the import
and export of rice and its functions over the domestic rice industry as the Rice
Tarrification Law takes effect. This includes the licensing and registration of persons
and entities engaged in the grains business, collection of regulatory fees, issuance of
negotiable warehouse receipts, warehouse inspection, and authority to seize
hoarded stocks and enforce rules and regulations in the grains business, among
others.

WHEREAS, rice smuggling and the presence of rice cartels remain a bane to
local rice production because smuggled rice released in the local market and the
controlling of the price of rice by cartels further pull down the price of palay
(unhusked rice) produced by local farmers.

WHEREAS, there is a need to conduct a the alarming increase of Rice
Importation, the presence of Rice Cartels and Rice Smuggling incidents that directly
affect our farmers. And investigate as to the occurring reasons that hamper the
government to completely eradicate them.

WHEREAS, there is an overwhelming need to determine and investigate the
procedures undertaken and reasons that prompted the rapid increase of rice
importation and rice smuggling; and activities of the Rice Cartels that directly
impinge on the income of our local rice farmers.

BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Committee on
Agriculture and Food and other appropriate Committees in the House of
Representatives to immediately conduct an investigation in aid of legislation on the
above-mentioned issues and circumstance in order to explore possible options on
how to alleviate the status and welfare of farmers, and to come out with the
necessary legislation for this purpose.

Adopted,

Rep. ARGEL JOSEPH T. CABATBAT
MAGSASAKA Partylist