Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

Eighteenth Congress
Second Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 1346

Introduced by Rep. Bernadette Herrera

A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, OF THE CONTINUOUS AND LONG-STANDING ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES SUCH AS LOGGING AND QUARRYING IN THE MARIKINA WATERSHED AND OTHER PROTECTED RESERVES

WHEREAS, year after year, the Philippines suffers the ravages of storms and typhoons.Flooding has almost become a norm, especially to those citizens living in low-lying areas.

After Typhoon Ondoy’s massive rainfall extensively submerged Metro Manila in 2009, efforts were made to rehabilitate the Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape. This led to the creation of the Marikina Watershed by virtue of Presidential Proclamation 296 Series of 2011. There, the Marikina Watershed was proclaimed a protected area which means that the 126,125-hectare area is placed under government protection, and that various commercial and economic activities within the watershed would be banned to protect the tree species and wildlife living there;

WHEREAS, after almost a decade from its declaration as protected area, the Marikina Watershed is at the verge of a "forest death". In 2017, former Environment Secretary Gina Lopez shared a photo on social media of the balding Marikina Watershed, calling for its immediate reforestation and environmental rehabilitation. The state of the area was so bare, devoid of trees and wildlife due to rampant illegal activities such as illegal logging,
land grabbing, and quarrying that were conducted in the vicinity. Recently, an incident was reported wherein armed guards working for a quarrying firm fenced off a quarter of the 2,000-hectare Masungi Georeserve in Rizal Province, a part of Marikina Watershed and is under the Masungi Wildlife Sanctuary and Strict Nature Reserve;¹

WHEREAS, in the statement of Secretary Gina Lopez in 2017, she emphasized the adverse effect of quarrying in watersheds by saying that “As long as there is quarrying there and the Marikina Watershed is denuded, the Pasig River water will be brown!! And it will become more and more shallow - and it will cause flooding in Metro Manila!”

WHEREAS, this unabated and blatant conduct of illegal economic activities in the Marikina Watershed area is a continuing indicator of the lack of respect for the rule of law, resulting in flooding that costs lives and property damage.

WHEREAS, just a few days ago the Philippines was battered by Typhoon Ulysses, the 21st typhoon to hit the country this year;

WHEREAS, Typhoon Ulysses left Metro Manila with 40,000 houses submerged in floodwater in the City of Marikina alone, and left the the provinces of Bulacan, Rizal, Cavite, and Cagayan submerged in water in what local authorities described as the “worst” flooding in the region since the 1980s;

WHEREAS, the rehabilitation of the Marikina watershed is of utmost importance as it serves as the first line of defense against rainwater coming from the uplands of Luzon. It also serves as home to various endangered wildlife species like Narra, red and white Lauan, Kamagong, Molave; Fauna birds like black-naped Oriole and jungle fowl; mammals like Philippine Deer, wild pig, Philippine monkey, among many others;

WHEREAS, efforts to rehabilitate and reforest the deforested watershed is present.

Several private organizations like Masungi Georeserve and Philippine Business for Social ¹ https://news.abs-cbn.com/spotlight/11/14/20/environmentalist-diminished-marikina-watersheds-condition-similar-to-stage-4-cancer
Progress (PBSP) are making active effort to restore the Marikina Watershed to its former condition. But the flashflood caused by the recent typhoon proved that such efforts are severely lacking;

WHEREAS, according to the River Basin Control Office of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Philippines has 142 Critical Watersheds with 21 catchment basins (8 in Luzon, 5 in Visayas, 8 in Mindanao). This data only proves the lack of catchment basins in the country which contributes to the flooding of low-lying areas;

WHEREAS, the lack of sufficient watersheds and catchbasins compounded by the increasing and unabated illegal activities in the area of the Marikina Watershed all prove that immediate and swift action must be taken to better prepare the country for the repetitive yet strengthening onslaught of typhoons and storms;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT HEREBY RESOLVED, to direct the appropriate committee of the House of Representatives to conduct an investigation, in aid of legislation, of the continuous and long-standing illegal activities such as logging and quarrying in the Marikina Watershed and other protected reserves.

BERNADETTE HERRERA-DY