Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Eighteenth Congress
Second Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 1351

Introduced by the Honorable Representative Dan S. Fernandez

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE HOUSE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN IMMEDIATE INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE RECENT QUESTIONABLE RELEASES OF WATER FROM DAMS AND RESERVOIRS WHICH PURPORTEDLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE MASSIVE FLOODING TRIGGERED BY TYPHOON ULYSSES (VAMCO)

WHEREAS, recently massive flooding triggered by Typhoon Ulysses (Vamco) caused the loss of many lives and heavy damage to property in Metro Manila (especially Marikina), the Bicol Region, Southern Luzon (particularly Rizal province), Central Luzon, and the Cagayan Valley (notably in the Cagayan and Isabela provinces);

WHEREAS, it is widely believed that the raging floods were the cumulative effect of recent typhoons and release of water from dams and other water reservoir;

WHEREAS, it is a fact that during heavy and continued downpours, if water is suddenly released into our river systems which are already overburdened by too much rainfall, that decision or act would certainly cause massive inundation of low-lying areas;

WHEREAS, there appears to be no single government agency or central authority managing multi-dam discharges during heavy rainfall, and that discharge protocols are left entirely to the discretion of dam operators;

WHEREAS, the real issue on dam water releases is not whether dam operators can open the dam floodgates or spillways before breaching spilling levels, but whether these operators can manage the proper and timely or programmatic discharge of water from these dam facilities;

WHEREAS, in at least one instance in the past, in the case of the massive flooding in Norzagaray town in Bulacan on October 26-27, 1978 at the height of Typhoon Kading, the operator of the Angat Dam was found liable for “patent gross and evident lack of foresight, imprudence and negligence in the management and operation” of the dam;
WHEREAS, in the said Norzagaray case, the decision of the trial court exemplified the meaning of a well-planned or systematic release of water when it ruled that “had the opening of all the three spillways been made earlier and gradually, there would have been no need to open the same suddenly xxx.”

WHEREAS, it has also been observed that had the dam operators made sufficient water drawdown days prior to Ulysses (the landfall of which was already anticipated by our weather forecasters), the damage would not have been as severe;

WHEREAS, there is therefore an urgent need to review protocols and standards on dam water releases, and to establish and implement an effective national dam safety program; and

WHEREAS, unless these dam-related concerns are properly addressed, the problems on widespread flooding are bound to recur inasmuch as the Philippines is visited, on the average, by twenty (20) tropical cyclones every year: NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED TO DIRECT THE APPROPRIATE HOUSE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN IMMEDIATE INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE RECENT QUESTIONABLE RELEASES OF WATER FROM DAMS AND RESERVOIRS WHICH PURPORTEDLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE MASSIVE FLOODING TRIGGERED BY TYPHOOON ULYSSES (VAMCO).

Adopted,

[Signature]
HON. DAN S. FERNANDEZ
First District of Laguna