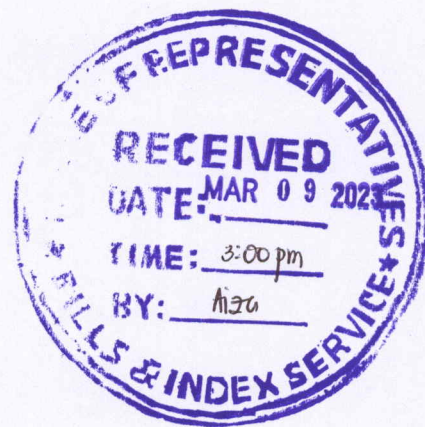


Republic of the Philippines  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS  
First Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. **850**



Introduced by **Representative Wilbert T. Lee**

**RESOLUTION**

**DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE HOUSE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE IMPACT TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND LIVELIHOOD OF FISHERFOLKS OF THE REPORTED OIL SPILL IN NAUJAN, ORIENTAL MINDORO, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF IMPLEMENTING URGENT INTERVENTIONS AND ASSISTANCE TO HELP AFFECTED FISHERMEN AND IDENTIFYING POSSIBLE ACCOUNTABILITY AMONG THOSE INVOLVED IN THIS ACCIDENT**

1       **WHEREAS**, Article II, Section 16 of the 1987 Constitution states that "[t]he State shall  
2 protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with  
3 the rhythm and harmony of nature";

4  
5       **WHEREAS**, Article XIII, Section 7, of the same states that "[t]he State shall protect  
6 the rights of subsistence fishermen, especially of local communities, to the preferential use of  
7 the communal marine and fishing resources, both inland and offshore. It shall provide support  
8 to such fishermen through appropriate technology and research, adequate financial, production,  
9 and marketing assistance, and other services. The State shall also protect, develop, and  
10 conserve such resources. The protection shall extend to offshore fishing grounds of subsistence  
11 fishermen against foreign intrusion. Fish workers shall receive a just share from their labor in  
12 the utilization of marine and fishing resources";

13  
14       **WHEREAS**, Presidential Decree No. 600, Section 2 states: "It is hereby declared a  
15 national policy to prevent and control the pollution of seas by the dumping of wastes and other  
16 matter which create hazards to human health, harm living resources, and marine life; damage  
17 amenities; or interfere with the legitimate uses of the sea within the territorial jurisdiction of  
18 the Philippines;

19  
20       **WHEREAS**, MT Princess Empress, a motor tanker owned by RDC Reield Marine  
21 Services (RDC) carrying 800,000 liters of industrial oil, sailed from Limay, Bataan en route to  
22 Iloilo with 20 crew members on board;<sup>1</sup>  
23

<sup>1</sup> Rappler (7 March 2022) MT Princess Empress insured for \$1 billion, says MARINA official. Accessed last 8 March 2023 from: <https://www.rappler.com/nation/luzon/marina-official-says-mt-princess-empress-insured/>



1       **WHEREAS**, on 28 February 2023, MT Princess Empress capsized off the coast of  
2 Naujan, Oriental Mindoro and submerged two days after experiencing engine trouble;

3  
4       **WHEREAS**, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources said that the MT  
5 Princess Empress is thought to be lying at about 1,200 feet or 400 meters below sea level in  
6 which a remotely operated vehicle will be deployed to determine the exact location of the  
7 sunken tanker<sup>2</sup> and threatens to harm at least 21 marine protected areas in the province;<sup>3</sup>

8  
9       **WHEREAS**, the sinking released emulsified black and thick industrial oil, which  
10 affects the marine ecosystem as it contaminates the resources and destroy their habitat, posed  
11 health hazards to residents and disrupts their livelihood;

12  
13       **WHEREAS**, marine scientists warned that it could affect around 20,000 hectares of  
14 coral reefs, 9,900 hectares of seagrass in municipalities across Oriental and Occidental  
15 Mindoro, Palawan, and Antique;<sup>4</sup>

16  
17       **WHEREAS**, the province of Oriental Mindoro declared a state of calamity in 76  
18 coastal barangays across nine municipalities (Naujan, Pola, Pinamalayan, Gloria, Bansud,  
19 Bongabong, Roxas, Mansalay and Bulalacao), in the wake of the oil spill from MT Princess  
20 Empress which sank off Naujan town;

21  
22       **WHEREAS**, the municipality of Caluya, province of Antique likewise declared a state  
23 of calamity after about 8 kilometers of its shoreline covering the villages Semirara, Tinogboc  
24 and Sibolo were affected by the spill;<sup>5</sup>

25  
26       **WHEREAS**, the issuance of fishing and swimming restrictions on the coastal of  
27 Oriental Mindoro not only disrupt the livelihood of fishermen, but also other sectors relying  
28 on coastal activities such as tricycle drivers, vendors, and tourism workers;<sup>6</sup>

29  
30       **WHEREAS**, the communities in the said province and nearby coastal areas are  
31 seriously threatened by the oil spill with environmental risks, health hazards and impact to their  
32 livelihood ;

33  
34       **WHEREAS**, the prohibition on fishing forced Oriental Mindoro's 18,000 fishermen to  
35 halt their fishing activities, resulting to loss of income and means to afford their basic needs;

36  
37       **WHEREAS**, in a media interview, Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA)  
38 spokesperson Sharon Aledo said the MT Princess Empress owner RDC Reield Marine Services

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<sup>2</sup> Cabico, Gaea Katreena. 2023. *Oriental Mindoro oil spill leaves fishers short on cash and food*. March 8. Accessed March 8, 2023. <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2023/03/08/2250158/oriental-mindoro-oil-spill-leaves-fishers-short-cash-and-food>.

<sup>3</sup> Sadongdong, Martin. 2023. *PCG tells 4 Mindoro towns to stop fishing activities as oil spill spreads*. March 3. Accessed March 8, 2023. <https://mb.com.ph/2023/03/03/pcg-tells-4-mindoro-towns-to-stop-fishing-activities-as-oil-spill-spreads/>.

<sup>4</sup> Valente, Catherine S., Red Mendoza, Moises Cruz, and Bella Cariaso. 2023. *Mindoro oil spill could spread to 2 provinces*. March 5. Accessed March 8, 2023. <https://www.manilatimes.net/2023/03/05/news/regions/mindoro-oil-spill-could-spread-to-2-provinces/1881345>.

<sup>5</sup> Inquirer. 2023. *Mindoro fishers bear brunt of oil spill*. March 8. Accessed March 8, 2023. <https://cebudailynews.inquirer.net/492401/mindoro-fishers-bear-brunt-of-oil-spill>.

<sup>6</sup> Cabico, Gaea Katreena. 2023. *Oriental Mindoro fishing ban also hurts other sectors relying on coastal activities*. March 7. Accessed March 8, 2023. <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2023/03/07/>

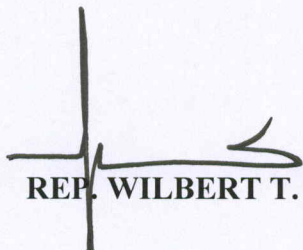


1 (RDC), is covered by a \$1 billion Protection and Indemnity Insurance for “every incident”  
2 including an oil spill;<sup>8</sup>  
3

4 **WHEREAS**, a sizeable portion of the Philippine economy relies on the marine  
5 resources of the country and it is imperative upon the House of Representatives to determine  
6 the extent of the damage to marine resources, hold those responsible for both the short-term  
7 and long-term consequences of the oil spill and its environmental repercussions accountable.  
8 Likewise, Congress must ensure that immediate aid and temporary employment are  
9 expeditiously provided to all communities affected especially to the fishermen;  
10

11 **NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, to direct the appropriate House  
12 Committee to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the impact to the environment and  
13 livelihood of fisherfolks of the reported oil spill in Naujan, Oriental Mindoro, with the end in  
14 view of implementing urgent interventions and assistance to help affected fishermen and  
15 identifying possible accountability among those involved in this accident.

Adopted,

  
REP. WILBERT T. LEE

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<sup>8</sup> Supranotes no. 1