



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session
House Resolution No. **854**



Introduced by Oriental Mindoro First Districts Representatives Arnan C. Panaligan

RESOLUTION CALLING FOR AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE POSSIBLE VIOLATIONS OF MARITIME SAFETY LAWS AND MARINE ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS RELATIVE TO THE SINKING OF MT PRINCESS EMPRESS OFF THE COAST OF NAUJAN, ORIENTAL MINDORO RESULTING TO A MASSIVE OIL SPILL THAT IS THREATENING THE MARINE BIODIVERSITY OF THE PROVINCE

WHEREAS, on February 28, 2023, an environmental catastrophe occurred in the waters of the Province of Oriental Mindoro when MT Princess Empress carrying 800,000 liters of industrial oil, sank off the coast of the town of Naujan facing Pola Bay that resulted to a massive oil spill in the waters of Oriental Mindoro;

WHEREAS, Oriental Mindoro, an island province that is blessed with blue coastal waters, rich fishing grounds teeming with marine life and pristine beaches, is now in grave danger because of the environmental degradation brought about by the oil spill resulting from the sinking of MT Princess Empress.; the main industries of Oriental Mindoro, notably the agriculture, fisheries and tourism sectors, have been severely affected; the oil spill has affected the livelihood of 30,042 families or 137,230 individuals living in the coastal areas;

WHEREAS, the area affected by the oil spill are not ordinary sea lanes but waters that are teeming with rich marine biodiversity since the waters of Mindoro Island are connected to the Verde Island Passage (VIP) that is considered as the center of the center of marine biodiversity; thus, the stakes in this environmental disaster are enormous,

WHEREAS, according to the Marine Science Institute of the University of the Philippines, more than 36,000 hectares of coral reefs, mangroves and seagrass may be at risk due to the oil spill broken down into 20,000 hectares of coral reefs, 9,900 hectares of mangroves and 6,000 hectares of seagrass;

WHEREAS, the oil spill poses serious hazards to the health and safety of the people living near the coastal areas contaminated by this pollution;

WHEREAS, the latest reports indicate that the oil spill has reached the waters near Taytay, Cuyo and Coron Islands in the northern part of Palawan and some areas of Panay; every day that oil spills from the sunken tanker means that wider areas of our fragile marine ecosystem will be devastated if left uncontrolled or unmanaged; The famous white beaches of Boracay in the Western Visayas may also be in danger depending on changes in the flow of the current;

WHEREAS, the oil spill in Oriental Mindoro is now threatening to reach the VIP based on the latest bulletin of the Marine Science Institute of the University of the Philippines (MSI-UP) due to the weakening Amihan; the VIP has the highest concentration of coastal fish, corals, crustaceans, mollusk, sea grass and mangroves and serves as home to endangered and threatened species including the critically endangered hawk bill turtle, whale sharks, manta rays, dugongs, humphead wrasses, giant growlers and clams;

WHEREAS, the oil spill crisis is no longer a local concern but of national interest considering its adverse impact on food security due to the expected decrease in the country's fisheries output; the Philippine Statistics Authority cites that Palawan and Oriental Mindoro contributed 86.7 percent and 2.57 percent which translates to 59,895.53 metric tons to regional fisheries production, respectively, in the second quarter last year;

WHEREAS, the owner of MT Princess Empress, RDC Reield Marine Services (RDC) has the primary obligation and liability in this environmental disaster; therefore, RDC should be compelled to carry out the immediate clean-up and rehabilitation of the waters and coastal areas ravaged by oil pollution;

WHEREAS, to ensure the protection of the right of the affected residents to a healthful ecology and the protection of the environment, an investigation of the possible violation of our existing maritime laws dealing with safety standards and marine environmental laws in connection with the sinking of MT Princess Empress and its consequent impact on the marine diversity of Oriental Mindoro is deemed timely;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE POSSIBLE VIOLATIONS OF MARITIME SAFETY LAWS AND MARINE ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS RELATIVE TO THE SINKING OF MT PRINCESS EMPRESS OFF THE COAST OF NAUJAN, ORIENTAL MINDORO RESULTING TO A MASSIVE OIL SPILL THAT IS THREATENING THE MARINE BIODIVERSITY OF THE PROVINCE.

March 13, 2023



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