Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 1587

Introduced by Honorable Representative
ARLENE D. BROSAS (Gabriela Women’s Party)

A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE TRANSPORTATION RESTRICTIONS ON LOCALLY SOURCED PORK AND INCREASED IMPORTATION OF PORK AMID THE DIRE STATE OF THE LOCAL LIVESTOCK INDUSTRY

WHEREAS, the first African swine fever outbreak in the Philippines was reported last September 2019 in a backyard farm in Rizal. The virus spread rapidly in Luzon, including Manila. More than 7,000 pigs within one-kilometer radius of the affected areas were culled. The Department of Agriculture underestimated the virus and did not take immediate comprehensive measures to suppress the spread of the disease;

WHEREAS, the hog disease is now present in 11 regions, 34 provinces, 392 municipalities and 2,061 barangays in the Philippines. During the senate hearing last February 2, DA states that 4.158 million hogs has been wiped out by ASF that triggered to a loss of P134 billion to the hog industry;

WHEREAS, authorities imposed measures to overcome the virus including restricted movement, surveillance within and outside containment and protection zones; screening; isolation; destruction of animal products; disposal of carcasses, byproducts and waste; disinfection; and ante and post-mortem inspections;

WHEREAS, central and southern provinces were coerced to enforce ban on pork and pork-based products from areas hit by African swine fever. Restrictions on pig movements were imposed in Central Luzon. ASF task force were created in Cebu. Bohol banned transport of undocumented live pigs and pork products. Pangasinan set up animal checkpoints and Batangas had a temporary ban on the entry of live hogs, pork, and swine feed from outside the province;

WHEREAS, the implementation of community quarantine because of COVID-19 worsened the transport of agricultural products because of checkpoints. Moreover, the series of typhoons caused a damage worth P12.3 billion to the agriculture sector;

WHEREAS, African swine flu, bird flu, lockdown, series of typhoons, further liberalization of Philippine agriculture and lack of support from the government resulted to high prices of agricultural commodities in the market;

WHEREAS, Luzon, being the most affected area, is now dependent on the pork meat supply from Visayas and Mindanao. The high cost of transportation of agricultural products is an additional burden to the farmers and raisers;

WHEREAS, amid the decline on the local production of pork and chicken, the Department of Agriculture, sought to import 54,000 MT of pork from Europe, United States and other countries with no ASF case;
WHEREAS, as shown in the latest data of Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI), last 2020, the volume of meat products imported by the Philippines reached 894.698 million kilograms from 844.971 million kg recorded in 2019. This surpassed the record-high import volume of 848.647 million kg in 2018;

WHEREAS, the Philippine Chamber of Agriculture and Fisheries Inc. (PCAFI) and United Broilers Association (UBRA) have complained on the entry to the Philippines of the African swine flu (ASF) and avian flu due to infected and poorly inspected meat imports;

WHEREAS, the Department of Agriculture proposed for the lowering of tariff for pork imports. From the existing pork tariff rate of 30% under the minimum access volume (MAV), they recommended to lower it to 5% for the next six months and 10% for the subsequent six months. For outside MAV, from 40% current rate, they suggested to lower it to 15% for the next six months and 20% in the following six months;

WHEREAS, the Department of Agriculture said that importation is in the last priority of their “Whole-of-Nation” measures to revive hog industry and reduce pork prices but instead of supporting the Philippine local production and giving immediate assistance to our farmers and raisers, the government opted to import pork and meat from other countries;

NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved as it is hereby resolved, that the House Committee Agriculture and Food conduct an investigation, in aid of legislation, on the transportation restrictions on locally sourced pork and increased importation of pork amid the dire state of the local livestock industry.

Adopted,

ARLENE D. BROSAS
Gabriela Women’s Party