WHEREAS, on December 18, 2008, the Supreme Court issued a writ of continuing mandamus for the rehabilitation of Manila Bay. The mandamus ordered certain government agencies to “clean up, rehabilitate and preserve Manila Bay, and restore and maintain its waters to SB level (Class B sea waters per Water Classification Tables under DENR Administrative Order No. 34 [1990]) to make them fit for swimming, skin-diving, and other forms of contact recreation”;

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court mandamus further ordered the improvement and restoration of marine life and the development of fisheries and aquatic resources, stating: “the DA, through the BFAR, is ordered to improve and restore the marine life of the Manila Bay. It is also directed to assist the LGUs in Metro Manila, Rizal, Cavite, Laguna, Bulacan, Pampanga, and Bataan in developing, using recognized methods, the fisheries and aquatic resources in the Manila Bay”;

WHEREAS, on August 25, 2021, the Department of Natural Resources (DENR) – CALABARZON posted on its official Facebook page of installation of billboards by the Cavite Task Force Group for Manila Bay in the municipalities of Noveleta, Kawit, and cities of Cavite and Bacoor in Cavite province notifying the public regarding the demolition of alleged illegal fishing structures in Manila Bay on September 7, 2021;

WHEREAS, according to the said post by the DENR, the activity was to be undertaken in compliance with the directive of Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu to regulate illegal fishing structures along Manila Bay and its tributaries due to the huge amount of bamboo poles from fish pens, fish cages, and baklads/sapras, which were washed from Cavite waters into the shore of Manila Bay due to the recent southwest monsoon;
WHEREAS, on August 26, 2021, fisherfolk organization Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (PAMALAKAYA) issued a statement condemning the DENR order to dismantle the fishing and aquaculture structures in coastal towns of Cavite. According to PAMALAKAYA, the order would lead to the loss of livelihood of 15,000 fisherfolk and coastal residents in affected towns who directly depend on Manila Bay by culturing mussels and oysters. They added that the bamboo poles washed along the shore due to the monsoon were not pollutants harmful to the marine ecosystem like plastic and other solid wastes. They also pointed out that the structures caters to the food needs of thousands of residents along Manila Bay;

WHEREAS, the PAMALAKAYA believes that the DENR order to dismantle the mussel farms in Cavite is a precursor to the massive reclamation plan in Cavite, such as the 420-hectare Bacoor Reclamation Project and the 1,331-hectare Cavite Five-Island Reclamation Project. The Bacoor Reclamation Project has already been granted an Environmental Compliance Certificate by the DENR since last year. Fisherfolk communities have been opposing the said reclamation project due to the threat of irreversible destruction not only on the livelihood of fisherfolk and coastal residents but also on Manila bay’s marine biodiversity and ecosystem;

WHEREAS, according to reports gathered by PAMALAKAYA from affected fishing communities, small fisherfolk opposed the order but the strict lockdown in several barangays caused a delay in their protests against the said DENR order. On September 6, 2021, fisherfolk protested in front of the DENR Central Office to oppose the order to dismantle the mussel farms in Cavite. On September 7, fisherfolk and urban poor communities carried out a community protest to guard against the planned demolition of tabungan, talabahan, or any fisheries structures in the area. International food sovereignty groups such as the People’s Coalition on Food Sovereignty also supported the calls of Cavite fisherfolk and urban poor and carried out its online protest against the demolition order;

WHEREAS, the schedule of the dismantling of fishing structures in Manila Bay was reset from September 7 to September 25, 2021;

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court mandamus for the rehabilitation of Manila Bay orders the development of fisheries and aquatic resources. The recent DENR order to dismantle fisheries structures in Cavite seemingly goes against this provision. Further, the move poses a threat to the livelihood of thousands of fisherfolk and coastal residents and negatively impacts our country’s food security. It is imperative for members of Congress, as representatives of our people, to defend the rights of our people, especially those belonging to the most vulnerable sectors of society. There is an urgent need to conduct an inquiry on the matter to ensure the livelihood and welfare of our fisherfolk and coastal communities;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the House of Representatives, through the Committee Aquaculture and Fisheries Resources to conduct an investigation, in aid of legislation, on the compliance of concerned agencies to the writ of continuing mandamus for the rehabilitation of Manila Bay in light of the recent DENR order to dismantle mussel farms and fisheries structures in Cavite.
Adopted,

REP. EUPHEMIA C. CULLAMAT  
Bayan Muna Partylist

REP. CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE  
Bayan Muna Partylist

REP. ARLENE D. BROSAS  
GABRIELA Women’s Party

REP. SARAH JANE I. ELAGO  
Kabataan Partylist

REP. FERDINAND R. GAITE  
Bayan Muna Partylist

REP. FRANCE L. CASTRO  
ACT Teachers Partylist