

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Res. No. 57

Introduced by Rep. BERNADETTE "BH" HERRERA-DY



RESOLUTION

URGING THE APPROPRIATE HOUSE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT COMPELLED ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION (ERC) DIRECTOR FRANCISCO JOSE VILLA JR. TO COMMIT SUICIDE, INCLUDING ALLEGED PRESSURE FROM ERC CHAIR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER JOSE VICENTE B. SALAZAR TO APPROVE CONTRACTS WITHOUT PROPER BIDDING AND DUE ADHERENCE TO PROCEDURE, AS WELL AS ALLEGATIONS OF CORRUPTION BEHIND ERC DEALS, IN ORDER TO EXACT ACCOUNT ACCOUNTABILITY AND FORMULATE REMEDIAL LEGISLATION IN THE NAME OF TRANSPARENCY AND INTEGRITY.

WHEREAS, reports confirm that ERC Director Francisco Jose Villa Jr. committed suicide in the evening of November 9, 2016, by taking a .38-caliber revolver and shooting himself fatally in his Parañaque City residence which he shared with his sister, veteran broadcast journalist Charie Villa;

WHEREAS, according to his sister, Charie Villa, the ERC director was pressured to approve contracts for procurements and hiring consultants without proper bidding and procedure as bids and awards committee chairman;¹

WHEREAS, in a series of suicide notes, the 54-year-old ERC director wrote three months before his suicide: "My greatest fear in the bids and awards committee is the AVP by Luis Morelos which the chairman and CEO, Jose Vicente B. Salazar, chose through a rigged selection system. That will be a criminal act."

WHEREAS, Villa in his suicide notes expressed other fears about his role as bids and awards committee chair of ERC, including "mistakes [which] may bring on [Commission on Audit] observations and disallowances" and which, in the words of Villa, will "affect me financially."

WHEREAS, aside from heading the ERC bids and awards committee, Villa was also one of the top legal advisers of the energy watchdog when it came to energy supply issues;

¹<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/845298/suicide-case-linked-to-corruption-in-erc>

WHEREAS, Villa is said to have loved and needed his job, and had dedicated 13 years of his career to the ERC, often working 12-hour days he rose to the rank of director;

WHEREAS, Villa's suicide has brought about greater scrutiny over the severity and far reaching implications of ERC activities which he wrote about and which may have led to his demise--- the alleged shady deals and preferential distribution of utilities, including power supply negotiations, which implicate key ERC officials;

WHEREAS, various consumer protection groups have battled for investigation into the alleged web of corruption behind ERC deals, adding that Villa's death had opened a can of worms that could lead probers to uncover the reasons for unfair and unconscionable ERC contracts;

WHEREAS, there arises the need to promote and protect the transparency and integrity of all bidding and procurement processes in the ERC, including the suspension of key ERC officials implicated in Villa's suicide notes pending the results of any criminal investigation of the incident;

BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, by the House of Representatives of the Philippines, urging the appropriate House Committee to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, into the circumstances that compelled Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) Director Francisco Jose Villa Jr. to commit suicide, including alleged pressure from ERC chair and chief executive officer Jose Vicente B. Salazar to approve contracts without proper bidding and adherence to procedure, as well as allegations of corruption behind ERC deals, in order to exact accountability and formulate remedial legislation in the name of transparency and integrity.

Adopted.


BERNADETTE "BH" HERRERA-DY