

15 May 2023 Monday



**DENR**

# **NEWS ALERTS**

# **NEWS CLIPPINGS**

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**





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## Bohol LGU wants neighboring town's water facility removed

The municipal government of Sevilla in Bohol has asked its neighboring town Balilihan to remove a P95-million water facility built on its property.

The municipal council of Sevilla passed Resolution 2023-75 asking its counterpart in Balilihan to remove all existing structure, facilities, machinery and equipment that are connected to Bugwak Spring, which is located in Barangay Magsaysay.

The *Sangguniang Pambayan* of Sevilla said the municipal government of Balilihan and its representatives built a water pumping station in Bugwak Spring without first securing its consent and approval.

"Repeated requests by Sevilla officials, both verbal and in writing, to remove or dismantle the facility have been ignored by the local government of Balilihan," the resolution read.

The councilors said it is their duty to protect the interest of their municipality over Bugwak Spring against all illegal intruders, violators and usurpers.

"The officials of Balilihan remain deaf to our request and plea. They refused to recognize our rights over Bugwak Spring, to the detriment of our municipality and our people. Balilihan's actions on matters relating to the Bugwak Spring shows total disregard for the rights and authority of Sevilla over all lands and resources located within its territorial jurisdiction," the councilors said in the resolution.

Records at the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) show that the National Irrigation Administration provided wrong area coordinates, which resulted in claims that the spring is located in Barangay Sto. Nino in Balilihan instead of Barangay Magsaysay in Sevilla.

Sevilla officials said the NWRB approved the Balilihan water project despite the error in the location due to wrong coordinates.

The case started in May 2022 when residents of Barangay Magsaysay complained to Sevilla Mayor Juliet Dano about the then ongoing installation of water lines in their community.

The dispute has been raised to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Office of the Ombudsman and the courts, which have yet decide on the matter.

— Bella Cariaso





# 'Water wastage mostly comes from households'

By **BELLA CARIASO**

An official of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) said that households are the biggest contributors of water wastage, amid the call from the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) to regulate the operation of car wash, golf courses and swimming pools.

In a radio interview, DILG Central Office Disaster Information Center director Edgar Allan Tabell cited the results of the assessment on the previous task forces created to address the impact of the El Niño, which showed that bulk of the unnecessary use of water comes from residential areas.

"Based on the assessment, the water wastage from the water recreational centers, car wash, swimming pools was not that big as most of them practice recycling and they purify water. It showed that the

consumption is bigger due to unnecessary use of water in the households," Tabell yesterday said.

MWSS Deputy Administrator Jose Dorado Jr. has urged Metro Manila mayors to pass ordinances to regulate the use of golf courses, car wash and swimming pools to address dwindling water from the Angat Dam.

"We are preparing now with the help of PCO (Philippine Communications Office), the content of the campaign to educate families on how to conserve water," he said.

Interior and Local Government Secretary Benjamin Abalos Jr. has earlier directed all governors, mayors, barangays, including the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao and regional directors to prepare for the El Niño phenomenon to mitigate its impact in their respective areas.

The DILG heads the new El Niño Team created by President Marcos amid the threat of the dry spell.





## Editorial

### Microplastics: Breathing in a new menace

**T**HERE is an emerging menace in the air. It's called microplastics — minute bits of plastic debris that result from the disposal and breakdown of consumer products and industrial waste.

Microplastics, or MPs, are smaller than 5 millimeters, according to the generally accepted classification of the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Microplastics are a relatively new area of concern; very little is known about their impact on the environment and human health. But the research that is available heavily suggests that MPs loom as a threat that could be as frightful as global warming.

MPs are the offshoot of our overdependence on plastic products and utter failure to properly dispose of plastic waste. The presence of MPs in the oceans is already well-documented. Every year, tons of plastic debris wash ashore, including MPs. Heavy concentrations of microplastics have also turned up in the stomachs of fishes, turtles and other marine life.

The presence of MPs in the air is only beginning to be studied, but the early results are worrying. More than 60 million metric tons of plastic fibers were produced in 2016. These fibers are the basic component in manufacturing not only everyday plastic items like bags, bottles and styrofoam boxes but polyester clothing as well. The annual production of plastic textile fibers is rising by more than 6 percent per year, or 60 million metric tons, making up 16 percent of world plastic production.

The volume of disposable plastic waste spiked during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic as demand for vinyl gloves, face masks, plastic ventilator components, visors, gowns and bags grew.

In China alone, 14.8 million masks were being produced daily in 2020. Disposing of these throwaway items became an environmental concern.

Most of the world's plastic waste is properly disposed of or recycled. But according to one study, as much as 18 percent linger in the environment.

"We found a lot of legacy plastic pollution everywhere we looked; it travels in the atmosphere and it deposits all over the world," said one researcher. "This plastic is not new from this year. It's from what we've already dumped into the environment over several decades."

The Philippines is the world's third biggest contributor of plastic marine debris. The Tañon Strait, the country's largest marine reserve located between Cebu and Negros islands, has been found to have a relatively high microplastic content.

The country is also the global leader in dumping riverine plastic into the ocean.

Now a recently published study indicates that airborne MPs have blanketed Metro Manila.

The study, conducted in 2021 by students from Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology, collected air samples from 17 street stations in Metro Manila. The cities of Mandaluyong and Muntinlupa yielded the biggest volume of microplastics, and Malabon, the smallest.



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### Pollution from clothing

One particularly interesting finding is that almost 90 percent of the sampled air contained polyester microplastic, "so we can infer that they came from clothing," the study team's leader Rodolfo Romarate 2nd said.

"Fashion itself is causing microplastic pollution," Romarate noted. "When you wash the clothes, that could lead to microplastic pollution in water. When you dry it, that could lead to microplastic pollution in the air."

The study also found MPs from the usual sources — water bottles, styrofoam and plastic packaging.

The team also raised the possibility that the alarming volume of airborne microplastics could become a public health concern. When inhaled, MPs could give bacteria and viruses a free ride into human bodies when they are inhaled.

There are no definitive studies that microplastics have toxic effects on human health, but many researchers acknowledge that the risk is there.

"Our relative ignorance of the consequences despite rapidly rising plastic concentrations in our environment highlights the importance of improving plastic waste management or, indeed, capturing ocean plastics and removing them from the system," one study rued.

This early, the government needs to take a close look at the environmental and health threats that MPs pose. It may have to tighten its policies on plastic waste disposal and single-use plastic and come up with a more effective holistic approach to plastic pollution.





## Greencycle Innovation Solutions leads plastic program for large firm

**I**N a recent event held in Pampanga, Unilever Philippines announced its partnership with Greencycle Innovations Inc. with the ambition to deliver above the 20 percent plastic waste diversion target for the EPR law's first year implementation.

Under the Extended Producer Responsibility Act of 2022 or Republic Act No. 11898 (also known as the EPR Law), obliged companies are required to adopt and implement policies for the proper management of post-consumer plastic packaging waste.

Unilever seeks not just to meet the targets set by law but also surpass them with the help of Greencycle Innovative Solutions and Shine and Fine—two partners that oversee consolidation and processing of post-consumer plastic waste from the Greater Metro Manila area and nearby regions.

"In order to achieve our goal at Unilever to make sustainable living commonplace, we need to work together and foster a multi-sectoral approach to address the issue of plastic waste. Greencycle has been helping us to collect and process flexible plastic waste like sachets and wrappers. This year, we're proud to expand collection to include rigid plastics, to be upcycled with the help of Shine and Fine," said Joseph Fabul, Philippines Communications and Corporate Affairs Head, Unilever.

The expanded partnership is the latest in Unilever Philippines' long-running waste management and education program Misis Walastik, which started in 2012 even before the implementation of the EPR law. Under Walastik since 2012 until end-2022, over 4.6 thousand metric tons of post-consumer flexible plastic waste



**A PARTNERSHIP FOR A WASTE-FREE WORLD:** Joseph Fabul (left), Philippines Communications and Corporate Affairs Head, Unilever, and Roland Vera Cruz (right), President and General Manager, Greencycle Innovative Solutions, celebrate Earth Day by stepping up plastic program under Misis Walastik, Unilever's long-standing plastic collection and education program.

have been diverted out of landfills and waterways. Through efforts such as Misis Walastik, Unilever seeks to achieve several milestones by 2025, including the shift to 100 percent reusable, recyclable, or compostable plastic packaging; cutting the use of virgin plastics 50 percent; and even collecting more plastic than they sell.

"We've been working with Unilever since 2018 to support the Walastik program as their plastic waste aggregator. We are confident in yet another year of partnership as they commit to step up their plastic waste collection and processing to more than the 20 percent diversion target under the EPR law at the end of 2023", says Roland Vera Cruz, President and General Manager, Greencycle Innovative Solutions.

Unilever courses all EPR compliance reporting and documentation through

the Philippine Alliance for Materials Sustainability Alliance (PARMS), an organization that brings together the private sector, non-profits, academic institutions, and the public sector in finding systemic solutions in waste management.

"While we in the private sector can drive innovation and investments in technologies and new practices, we look to the support and guidance of government to foster an enabling environment for a circular economy to scale up. We see that the recently passed EPR Law as a good start for this to happen, and we are grateful that our partners are with us in this shared journey," adds Rondell Torres, Philippines Sustainability Lead, Unilever.

For more information about Unilever's Waste-Free World commitment and other efforts, visit [www.unilever.com.ph](http://www.unilever.com.ph)





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## Filipino-made foam tested on Mindoro oil-spill areas

BY MANUEL T. CAYON

*@awimailbox*

*Mindanao Bureau Chief*

**I**LIGAN CITY—A bio-based polyurethane foam has been successfully tested on its oil absorption in the oil spill in Mindoro and the head of the team from the Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology (MSU-IIT) said the technology would be refined further to absorb the oil that has dried a bit on sea.

The polyurethane foam labeled as "CocoFlexSorb" was successful in absorbing the oil spilled at sea by the MT Princess Empress when it sunk in March this year, said Hernandez Bacosa, professor of Environmental Science of the College of Science and Mathematics at MSU-IIT.

Bacosa said the technology uses coconut oil tweaked to absorb other oils but this was rushed to respond to the oil spill. While it did show the capacity to absorb the crude oil, he said much of the oil spilled had been weathered, or dried up and had to be scooped manually.

"We would be researching again on how this technology would be able to absorb the bigger-sized weathered oil," Bacosa said.

According to the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), the CocoFlexSorb was one of three new innovations in foam products that were developed from the "DOST-Niche Centers in the Regions for R&D," or "Nicer" program by the Center for Sustainable Polymers at the MMSU-IIT.

Also called "Superoleophilic Foams," the technology "has shown potential to absorb numerous types of oil."

"The material has been proven to have high affinity and sorption capacity in bunker oil, fresh and used engine oil, kerosene and vegetable oils," the DOST said. "It is hydrophobic in both fresh and salt water and has superior reusability as its oil sorption capacity does not diminish with use."

The research team was almost to give up on further research on this particu-

lar foam product after several tests in the past 18 months always exhibit the coconut oil to absorb water, aside from other oils, thus filling up the buckets that were supposed to store any other oils that were targeted to be absorb.

"This technology was rushed because of the oil spill and so, the research was quicken," Bacosa added.

The technology would require only a small bucket size to fit the storage and its other gadgets less than a one cubic meter, when it was tested. In commercial use, there would be several of this package, which would be placed alongside the oil spill boom. Bacosa said the technology "is still in its technology stage and is not commercialized yet."

This foam technology is unlike those available in the market: it has superior oil absorption, capacity and can absorb different types of oil from light, vegetable, kerosene, engine and bunker oil.

The "Superoleophilic Foams," of the foams labeled CocoFlexSorb, was presented late last week to the public during the inauguration of three DOST-financed laboratories inside the MSU-IIT. These are: the Research Institute for Engineering and Innovative Technology (RIE-IT); and, the two research centers under it, the Nicer-Center for Sustainable Polymers (CSP) and the Center for Energy Research and Technology (CERT).

The other foams include the Rigid Insulation Foam Panels, designed specifically for the building and construction industry, targeting the segment who prioritize sustainable and eco-friendly materials and the first of its kind to use polyol derived entirely from coconut oil, without any petroleum-based substitutes. Another is the "Viscoelastic Foam," a bio-based alternative to commercially available "memory" foams, which has higher density than conventional foams and possesses the signature feature of memory foams—slow recovery.





# LLDA warns vs fish kills

BY WILLIAM B. DEPASUPIL

**P**ROLONGED hot weather brought by El Niño will have debilitating effects on the livelihood and health of fishermen and residents of communities around Laguna de Bay, the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) warned.

Engineer Jun Paul Mistica, manager of the agency's Resource Management and Development department, said that a long hot season could lead to fish kill and respiratory diseases. The water quality in the lake, a source of drinking water, could also deteriorate.

These problems could be caused by algae bloom or overgrowth of so-called "blue-green algae." Mistica said algae are natural food

for the fishes, and combined with environmental conditions such as sufficient sunlight and high water temperature algae can grow at a very fast rate.

Problems occur when the algae starts to decompose, which uses much of the oxygen in the water, resulting in fish kills.

"Actually, fish don't die when they eat the algae but when they ingest too much, they taste like

mud. It's a natural food for them," he said.

Decomposing algae emits a stench that could pose health risks like lung problems.

The decomposing algae, Mistica said, also make it harder for water treatment facilities to absorb water.

"Algae affects the water filtration system. The water being absorbed would not be that much in areas that used the water. They have to resort to back washing before it could be distributed to household consumers," he said.

The water level in the lake is normal but the agency continues to monitor the lake, watching out for indicators of algae bloom.

The LLDA plans to procure more than 100 paddle wheel aerators to agitate the water to introduce dissolved oxygen.

The agency may have to procure 100 more paddle wheels if the volume of wilting blue-green algae spikes due to El Niño, he said.

The LLDA, Mistica said, is also pushing a project with the government of Hungary on the deployment of automatic sensors that would be able to determine and monitor beforehand the overgrowth of algae.

It advised operators of aquaculture structures in the lake area not to overstock their fish cages and fishponds and to keep a close watch on their fish stocks whenever there is an algal bloom.

It said unusual behavior of fish at the lake surface could be an indication of the shortage of oxygen in the water.

"Once this is observed, operators must immediately undertake

aeration of the water either by running a motorized boat in the affected area or by using paddle wheels or gas-powered aerators," it added.

The LLDA has sought the help of local government units around the lake to intensify the implementation of their environmental programs, projects, activities and other interventions to keep the lake safe.

Meanwhile, Malacañang gave assurances that the government is exerting all efforts to significantly reduce the risk and negative impacts of the El Niño phenomenon.

The Presidential Communications Office cited the creation of an El Niño team led by the Department of the Interior and Local Government.

The move was in accordance

with the order of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. for a whole-of-government approach to address the dry spell through the mechanisms of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council.

The body will oversee the implementation of measures to mitigate the impact of El Niño on the economy, natural resources, environment, disaster response, and peace and order.

Moreover, local government units and officials were mandated to work closely with other offices and gather the necessary data to be consolidated by the National Economic and Development Authority while the private sector was encouraged to help in the government's initiatives.

WITH KRISTINA MARALIT





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# Gov't working double time to mitigate effects of El Niño – PCO

By ARGYLL CYRUS GEDUCOS

The Marcos administration is working double time to significantly reduce the risks and negative impact of the El Niño phenomenon, the Presidential Communications Office (PCO) said.

The PCO, citing a three-page report submitted by the Department of National Defense to the President, said that the government had reconstituted an "El Niño team" led by the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) with other member agencies.

The team is tasked to implement measures to mitigate the impact of El Niño on the country's economy, natural resources, environment, climate change, disaster response, and peace and order.

In his report, Defense Senior Undersecretary Carlito Galvez Jr. said the reconstituted team is in

response to President Marcos' directive to implement a "Whole-Of-Government" and a "Whole-Of-Nation" approach to prepare for the possible impact of the extensive dry spell.

He added that the reconstituted team aligns with the President's order to revive the existing protocols and Task Force for El Niño as he emphasized that the current Expanded Roadmap for Addressing the Impact of El Niño (E-RAIN) will also be updated and enhanced.

Galvez suggested that Marcos issued a resolution indicating the adoption of the existing E-RAIN framework and, if needed, create a technical working group.

"The monitoring of resources, the recommendations of the concerned agencies, and the strategies employed by the previous administrations shall be taken as inputs to enhance the E-RAIN framework," his report read.

Galvez emphasized that the reconstituted El Niño team has agreed to update and improve the E-RAIN, specifically the areas of concern such as food security, water security, energy security, health, and public safety. He added that they have agreed to continue the existing structure of the El Niño Task Force.

The local officials will work closely with other offices and gather the necessary data to be consolidated by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) while private sectors and other organizations must be involved in adopting a "Whole-of-Nation" approach.

As part of the government's efforts to address the possible impact of El Niño, Galvez said he would visit Cagayan Valley to personally assess the situation in the region, being one of the most likely affected by the dry spell.





LETTERS

## PREPARING FOR EL NIÑO: THE HEAT IS ON AND OUR HEALTH IS AT RISK

WHILE the end of the COVID-19 global emergency had recently been declared by the World Health Organization albeit with emphasis on continuing vigilance and practice of public health measures to avert another major surge of cases, a new dimension of health threat is emerging and requires serious attention.

We are on the cusp of another El Niño phenomenon that on one hand can cause dry spells and droughts and on another hand can trigger floods, typhoons, and landslides.

According to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration, this will happen with a

very high probability soon, and its effects are projected to last until the first quarter of 2024.

Amidst our water crisis, food security issues, climate emergency, other health woes notwithstanding the pandemic, El Niño can be detrimental to the health and well-being of Filipinos in three ways:

First, extreme heat in the physical environment can cause heat-related illnesses such as heat cramps, heat stroke, and heat exhaustion. It can increase deaths due to cardiovascular diseases, respiratory diseases, and other chronic medical conditions. It can even take its toll on our mental health.

Second, increasing tempera-

ture, precipitation, and humidity compounded by food and water issues can increase the cases and amplify the risks of infectious diseases like malaria, dengue, leptospirosis, typhoid fever, and cholera among others.

Third, El Niño can induce extreme weather events causing deadly and destructive disasters like floods, typhoons, and landslides.

Local government units, the private sector, civil society, vulnerable groups, and communities must be poised to respond to these anticipated threats which can overburden our fragile health system and hurt our economy further.

Because some health issues

will emerge with the interaction of El Niño with other sectors, e.g., agriculture, water, energy sectors, it is also crucial to sit down with these key players to develop preparedness and contingency measures in order to guarantee the continuity of health services and prevent outbreaks of diseases.

As heat-related extreme events can set in, it is also important to factor in El Niño and climate change as major risk modifiers in our disaster preparedness and response plans not only for health but for other sectors as well. The complex issues and response arrangements that El Niño may bring and imply would require a mul-

tisectoral, whole-of-society approach to pull off.

On the part of the public, it is important to take the following measures:

1. Keeping ourselves informed by following the latest weather forecasts and heeding warnings coming from national and local authorities to prepare for any weather-related health risks.

2. Planning in advance for emergencies and contingencies during power outages, water crises, and food and supply chain disruptions.

3. Protecting ourselves from extreme weather conditions by wearing appropriate clothing and staying hydrated during hot weather.

4. Staying healthy by having a healthy lifestyle—balanced diet, enough sleep, and physical activity to boost our immune system and reduce risks of illness.

5. Seeking medical attention in the event of extreme weather conditions, especially for those with chronic medical conditions.

As we celebrate our COVID-19 wins and continue to keep our guard up because the pandemic is still here with us, let us also be prepared for El Niño. The next public health emergency is just around the corner and we can't afford to lose our good momentum.

RONALD LAW,  
public health specialist





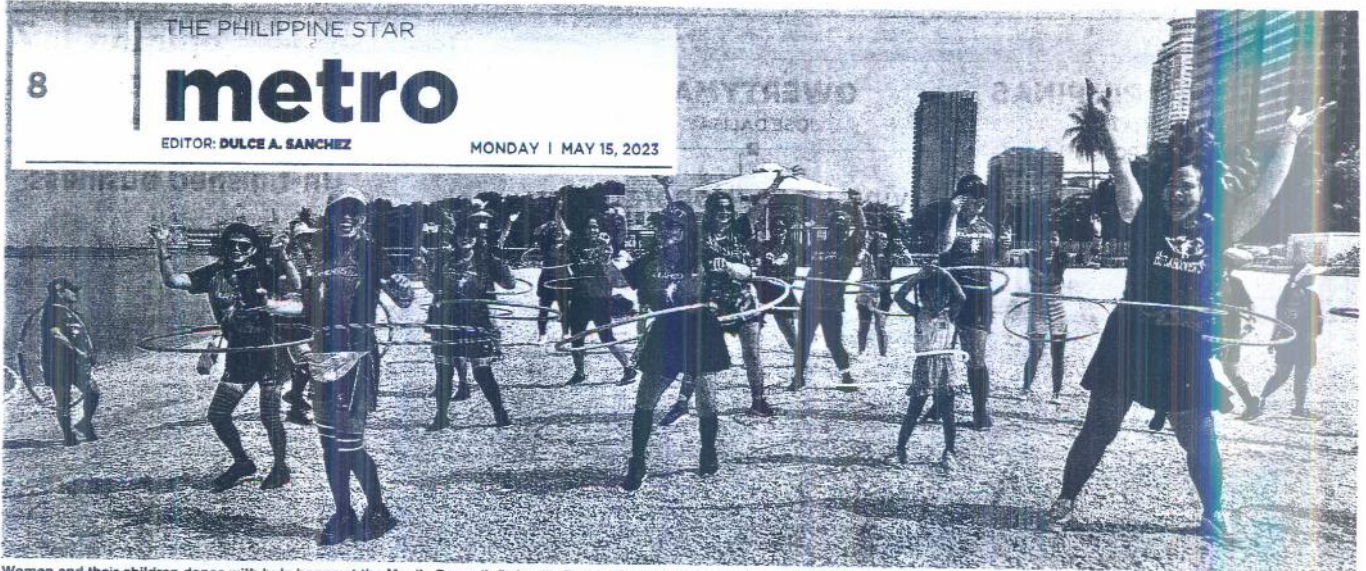
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Women and their children dance with hula hoops at the Manila Baywalk Dolomite Beach ahead of Mother's Day on Saturday.

ERNE PERARODONCO





# Bulacan folk see no end to flooding

**Houses of over 1,000 residents in Calumpit town submerged in 2-meter-high water for over a decade now, even during summer, with no relief in sight**

By Carmela Reyes-Estropo  
@crestropeINQ

CALUMPIT, BULACAN—Residents of two villages in this town have been dealing with floodwater inundating their homes all year round that showed no sign of receding even during the summer months.

The three days of intermittent strong rains last week only deepened the almost 2-meter deep floodwaters that has been inconveniencing about 1,000 residents in four sitios (subvillages) in Barangays (villages) Meysulao and San Miguel for years now.

Alberto Oraa, 68, from Sitio Nabong in Barangay Meysulao, had to buy a boat to bring to school his 18-year-old senior high school daughter Althea and ferry her home every day, as their house is submerged in almost 2 m deep flood for about six years now.

His wife Zenaida said the recent rains and high tide further increased the floodwaters in their place.

## 'Floating' sitio

Oraa is just one of the around 400 residents in Sitio Nabong who were forced to live in a "water world" condition all year round.

"We do not have a choice, we don't have any relatives to move to or money to build a house in safer sitios," Oraa told the Inquirer in an interview on May 9.

At Sitio Malindig in adjacent Barangay San Miguel, Alma de Leon and her family left their house since 2010 and temporarily sought shelter in upper Sitio Dike. She is waiting for the completion of a road dike in Malindig so that they can go back to their place.

Only two of the five sitios in San Miguel—Danga and Dike-River Side—are safe from floods as the three other sitios of Bagong Barrio, Malindig and Cabu are affected by the year-round 1.5- to 2-m deep stagnant floodwaters.

Completion of the road dikes in Sitios Malindig and Cabu and portions of Bagong Barrio are under way, according to San Miguel Barangay Captain Dave Braian Sambilay, who's village council began the infrastructure projects more than five years ago to remedy the year-round flooding.

Sambilay said there are 2,153 families in all the five sitios in San Miguel and only 10 percent from sitios Dike and Danga were not affected by flood during rains and typhoons.

But 200 families, with about 600 individuals, in Cabu, Malindig and Bagong Barrio have been living in stagnant water for more than 10 years now.

## Catch basins

Sambilay, in an interview on May 7, said the four subvillages in Calumpit and Sitio Cadwang Tete in the boundary

town of Macabebe in Pampanga province have been submerged in floodwater for a decade now.

The four sitios in Calumpit are the catch basins of floodwater from Pampanga and from some other areas of Bulacan, he said.

Sambilay said since the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo in 1991, when tons of ashes and debris covered the lowlands, the topography of San Miguel and Meysulao had drastically changed. The rice farms of the two villages had since disappeared and are now underwater.

"I was in elementary school then, these sitios up to Nabong are farmlands. They would be flooded during the rainy days but the farmers can still plant rice. But when Mt. Pinatubo erupted, their areas became unsuitable for rice production," he said.

Sambilay said waters brought by rains, typhoons and high tide that flows in toward the sitios have not receded.

## Dike

The village has pumping stations but not adequate to drain the water in flooded areas.

"What we need here is a road dike similar to what the national government [had] earlier built in adjacent areas. These dikes will prevent the entry of high tide waters and the waters from Pampanga and even from tributaries in Bulacan," he said.

Sambilay told the Inquirer he has started drafting a joint reso-

lution with Barangays Meysulao and Cadwang Tete addressed to President Marcos to appeal for funds to build the dike.

San Miguel Councilman Randy Cabildo said they backed the resolution initiated by Sambilay, as they considered it their last hope to end the flooding in their villages.

Manuel Lukban, head of the Bulacan Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office, said in an interview on May 8 that the flooding in the villages of Calumpit started 15 to 20 years ago when the town failed to benefit from the dike projects of the national government.

Lukban affirmed Calumpit is geographically the catch basin of waters from Pampanga and Bulacan and that a dike project of the national government years ago should have resolved the flooding.

However, there were also residents in Calumpit, backed by local officials, who had prevented the project because of threats that their houses and properties would be covered in water if the dike was built, he said.

Lukban said during strong rains and typhoons, the families in the four sitios have been their priority for forcible evacuation.

He said there were efforts to relocate the affected households but they declined to leave, with some residents saying they had become used to living in stagnant water. INQ





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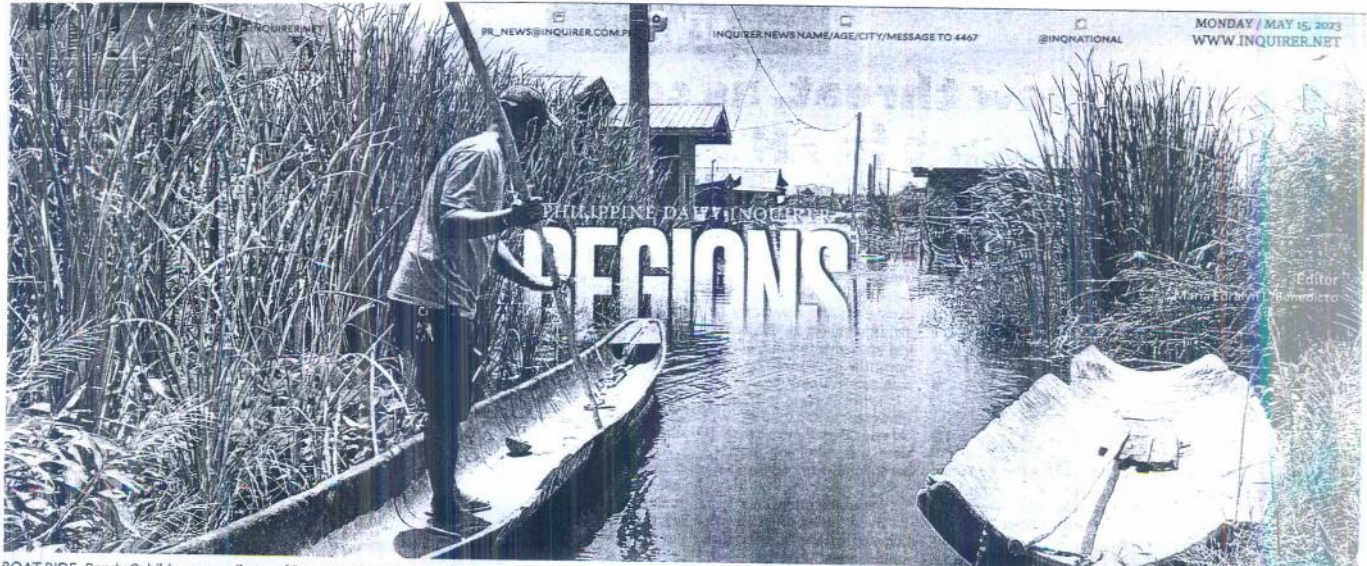
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BOAT RIDE Randy Cabildo, a councilman of Barangay San Miguel in Calumpit, Bulacan, rides his small boat to visit a resident in the sunken sitio of Malindig, in this photo taken on May 7. —CARMELA REYES-ESTROPE





## Alternative lumber sources in Region 2 identified

**TUGUEGARAO CITY:** Under the National Greening Program, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Region 2 (Cagayan Valley) has reported more than 4,401 hectares of established bamboo sites in the region as a good source of lumber.

DENR Region 2 Executive Director Gwendolyn Bambalan said these sites planted with 636,264 bayog, kawayang tinik and killing since 2011 included those areas covered by the Regional Build Back Better Task Force initiative of the government.

With this, Bambalan also said the Cagayan Valley Bamboo Industry Development Council (CVBIDC) is even eyeing bamboo as a potential lumber alternative to escalate the bamboo industry in the region.

She added that the DENR is also promoting bamboo as a better source of lumber alternative aside from the benefits they provide as a solution to climate change.

Bambalan said growing bamboo is important in mitigating the effects of climate change as it can sequester more carbon than any other type of tree and can aid in riverbank stabilization.

"We have been strengthening our efforts in incorporating in our nursery establishment the production of bamboo aside from the indigenous tree species that we are producing," she added.

In 2022, the DENR partnered with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Region 2 and the Department of Labor and Employment to ensure the survival of the bamboo planted earlier in the same year.

The DTI Region 2 said bamboos are a good source of material in designing and manufacturing engineered bamboo house kits.

It said the Cubo Modular is in need of 6,000 tons of bamboo (giant bamboo and kawayang tinik species) in the next three years.

Cubo Modular is an award-winning Filipino company that uses innovative building technologies and rapidly renewable engineered bamboo to manufacture smart and sustainable Filipino homes.

According to Mona Lisa Valle, DTI Region 2 Resource Generation officer, all models of the Cubo Modular such as Sarangani and Bulacan are all made from bamboo.

Valle said this opportunity is assessed to be providing at least P215 million in potential sales for local e-bamboo processors.

Meanwhile, Winston Singun, DTI Region 2 assistant regional director, said bamboo is a viable economic and natural resource.

"With the effort of the CVBIDC, we can enhance our bamboo enterprise and make the livelihood of our local farmers more profitable," he added.

In a recent meeting, Bambalan said the CVBIDC discussed several interventions such as the crafting of a convergence plan among bamboo stakeholders, review of the bamboo bills filed in Congress, management of the bamboo database and presentation of bamboo best practices.

The meeting was highlighted by the presentation of various bamboo project accomplishments of the 12 council members present comprising government agencies, academe and the provincial bamboo industry development councils of Cagayan, Isabela, Quirino and Nueva Vizcaya.

**LEANDER C. DOMINGO**





## Lawmaker urges planting trees vs El Niño's impact

BY JOVEE MARIE N. DELA CRUZ

[@joveemarie](#)

WITH the country again experiencing El Niño, a lawmaker has urged Filipinos to continue planting trees to help mitigate the harsh effects of the weather phenomenon.

Rizal 4th District Rep. Juan Fidel F. Nograles underscored the need to "aggressively restore the country's forest cover" as a measure against El Niño and long-term climate change.

"Our forests serve as a buffer against weather-related disasters. They release moisture into the atmosphere to counter droughts and shield us against typhoons and prevent flooding," Nograles said. "We encourage our citizens to continue planting trees in their communities to mitigate the effects of El Niño."

The lawmaker added that "tree planting is an excellent communal activity that has a positive effect and I hope more local leaders will organize and engage in this activity so that we can restore our country's greenness."

Last month, Nograles led the town of Montalban in a tree-planting activity to commemorate the town's 152nd founding anniversary. Around 4,000 saplings were planted along the Wawa riverbank and mountainside.

More than 6,000 students, senior citizens and women from the town participated in the activity, which also included the "Forward Nature" advocacy walk.

Nograles has been advocating for the government and communities to be active in implementing measures that would protect against climate change.

El Niño increases the likelihood of unusually low rainfall conditions that could cause the water hoard in dams to fall below functional levels.

According to PAGASA, there have been seven severe El Niño events since 1980, with the last one lasting from 2015 to 2016, inflicting \$327 million in agricultural losses.

In the previous El Niño event that persisted from the last quarter of 2018 to the third quarter of 2019, up to 61 percent of the country endured a drought while the other 39 percent underwent a dry spell.

A drought means three consecutive months of greater than 60 percent reduction from average rainfall, or five consecutive months of 21-percent to 60-percent reduction from average rainfall.

A dry spell means three consecutive months of 21 to 60 percent reduction from average rainfall, or two consecutive months of greater than 60-percent reduction from average rainfall.





STRATEGIC  
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AND  
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# Manila Standard



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## IN BRIEF

### Offshore mining firms back PBBM climate call

A GROUP of deep-sea offshore mining organizations on Sunday backed President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s call to all members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations on the urgent issues on worldwide critical minerals supply and concerns on climate justice.

The Offshore Mining Chamber of the Philippines Inc., led by Dr. Michael Raymond Aragon, said: "We fully support our President's timely call to all ASEAN nations to start enhancing regional cooperation to boost the supply of strategic industrial metals and mineral value chain in the Asia Pacific region because the future of clean energy is anchored on the crucial supply of critical minerals for mankind to achieve the clean energy transition goal needed in our common fight versus global climate change."

During the 42nd Summit of the ASEAN in Indonesia, the President said "recognizing that the cleaner energy future is anchored on the supply of critical minerals... ASEAN should start enhancing regional cooperation toward boosting the region's strategic industrial metal and mineral value chain." **Rio N. Araja**





# Black sand mining threatens Aparri's cultural landscape

Local fishermen are leading protests against dredging and other destructive activities affecting their livelihood as well as the integrity of the estuary

By Edgar Allan M. Sembrano  
@Inq\_Lifestyle

In the late 1970s, Ricardo Umoso was fighting the separatist group Moro National Liberation Front in Basilan as a soldier of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Now in his 60s, Umoso still fights, albeit on a different front line in his native Aparri in Cagayan Province.

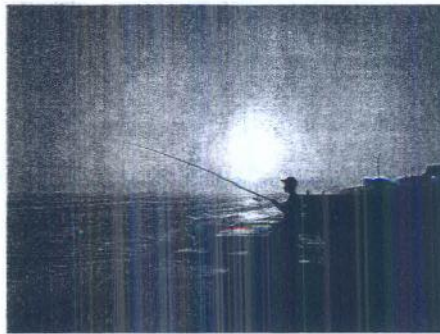
After going back to his hometown in the 1990s and working as a fisher again, Umoso, now the president of the Aparri Aramang Stakeholders Association, said his group in the parish of San Pedro Telmo and concerned residents are up in arms against the dredging of the Cagayan River estuary and a portion of the Aparri coastal waters, which they said is a black sand mining operation.

The operation, which started in 2021, Umoso said, has already affected their livelihood with less catch, and has disturbed shrimp and other marine species on the Aparri coast and the estuary, located in Aparri's Punta village.

He said he lost two-thirds of his catch in 2022, compared to the previous year, when venturing out to sea yielded much more.

During the Earth Day celebration last year, Umoso, Fr. Manuel Catral, the town's parish priest, and more than a thousand residents protested in town against the black sand mining.

Black sand is primarily used



Early morning fishing—PHOTOS BY EDGAR ALLAN M. SEMBRANO

for industrial products such as steel, ink and toner, cosmetics, jewelry, paint and paper.

### Environmental protection

Sitting in a makeshift hut on top of the natural sand barrier on Aparri's shore and feeling dismayed, Umoso said the dredging of the Cagayan River's estuary and the black sand mining should stop because it affects the environment and the livelihood of local fishermen.

The activities, he said, also affects the estuary; estuaries are called the nurseries of the sea, where many marine species nest and breed.

Cagayan Gov. Manuel Mamba has repeatedly denied allegations of black sand mining operations in Aparri.

In a report by the Philippine Center for Investigative Jour-

nalism (PCIJ) last year, Mamba disproved claims that black sand mining is happening off the Cagayan River estuary and off the coast of Aparri.

He was quoted as saying that what is being undertaken in Aparri is a flood control and river restoration project aimed at the reopening of Aparri port and of an international seaport in town.

Historically, the town was the center of commerce in the province more than a hundred years ago.

In the same PCIJ report, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources regional office said the dredging of the Cagayan River in the towns of Lal-lo, Camaianiugan and Aparri of two private companies are part of the flood mitigation project of the government, fol-



Soldier-turned-fisherman Ricardo Umoso

lowing the devastation brought about by Typhoon Ulysses (Vamco) in the province in 2020.

The governor, in the same report, said the disturbance claimed by the fisherfolk is "minimal" and "temporary," and said everything will eventually settle.

Umoso and his group remain unconvinced to this day, and vow to continuously fight their cause of preserving Aparri's natural beauty and the livelihood of its fisherfolk.

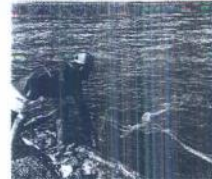
### Cultural landscape

In 2019, a bill was filed by then-Sen. Leila de Lima prohibiting black sand mining in the coastal waters of the Philippines, but it was not passed into law.

Located in the area where the Cagayan River meets the



Parish patron saint San Pedro Telmo



Net fishing with a dredging ship in the background

sea, Aparri is not just a fishing village, but could be considered a cultural landscape, defined by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization as "embracing a diversity of manifestations of the interaction between humankind and its natural environment and reflecting specific techniques of sustainable land-use, considering the characteristics and limits of the natural environment they are established in, and a specific

spiritual relation to nature."

The town's coast faces the Babuyan Channel, and has a wide area of black sand where fishing, its major industry, has been carried out since time immemorial.

Here, fisherfolk practice sustainable resource extraction, using proper fishing materials and cyclical fishing activities based on the direction of the wind.

During the dry months, for example, beach seine fishing called *daklis* is almost a daily activity, but is not practiced during the *amihan* (northeast wind) season due to strong and big waves.

During the latter, hook and line fishing called *bannit* is done just off the shore if the waves and weather are favorable, and local fisherfolk gather shellfish along the shore using a contraption made from wire and wood.

The other fishing methods used by local fishers include *sigay* or gillnet, as well as bottom gillnet fishing.

Trawl fishing has long been abandoned in the area due to its bad effects to the environment.

Consistent with the residents' spiritual relationship with nature, the fishers always pray prior to casting their nets to sea, and every first of January, they hang their nets on a *sungaban* (something like a bamboo pole) and make offerings such as liquor, water and food, a precolonial practice that endures to this day.

—CONTRIBUTED INQ





## Heat index hits 'dangerous' level in 14 areas – Pagasa

At least 14 areas experienced "danger" heat index on Saturday, ranging from 42 to 46 degrees Celsius, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration.

PAGASA said that topping the list with the highest heat index on May 13 was Dipolog City in Zam-

boanga del Norte with 46 degrees Celsius recorded at 1 p.m.

Other areas with "danger" heat included Butuan City in Agusan del Norte and Zamboanga City with 45 degrees Celsius; Dagupan City and Davao City, 43 degrees Celsius; Pasay City, Nueva Ecija

Turn to Page 2

## Heat From Page 1

province, Hinatuan in Surigao del Sur, Juban in Sorsogon, Iba town in Zambales, Maasin City in Southern Leyte, Laguindingan Airport in Misamis Oriental, Roxas City in Capiz and San Jose town in Occidental Mindoro—all with 42 degrees Celsius.

The state bureau added that among the effects of "danger" heat index on the body are heat cramps and exhaustion and possible heat stroke with continued exposure.

On Friday, the heat index in Legazpi City reached 50

degrees Celsius, the highest so far from March 1 to May 13, 2023.

The other top five highest heat index were in Agusan del Norte's Butuan City and Guiuan town in Eastern Samar, 49 degrees Celsius; Catbalogan City in Western Samar, 48 degrees Celsius; and San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, 47 degrees Celsius.

PAGASA weather specialist Obet Badrina said that the intertropical convergence zone would affect southern Mindanao.

Badrina added that high temperatures would prevail

in Metro Manila and the rest of the country, adding that localized thunderstorms will bring rains.

According to him, the state agency does not expect a tropical cyclone in the next days.

"We don't monitor any low-pressure area or possible tropical cyclones in the next few days. For this week, there is a small chance that we will have a typhoon," Badrina said.

PAGASA expects at least two typhoons in May and June, and two to three typhoons in July, August and September 2023.

— Bella Cariaso





STRATEGIC  
COMMUNICATION  
AND  
INITIATIVES  
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THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS  
SINCE 1900  
**MANILA BULLETIN**  
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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Republic of the Philippines  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City  
Tel. No. 929-66-26

FEB 06 2023

**DENR ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER**  
No. 2023 - 03

**SUBJECT : TRANSFER OF THE SUPERVISION OF THE  
STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT AND CONFLICT  
RESOLUTION DIVISION FROM THE STRATEGIC  
COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE TO  
THE FIELD OPERATIONS GROUP**

In view of the continuing organizational development in the Department, the supervision, operations and management of the Stakeholder Management and Conflict Resolution Division (SMCRD) is hereby transferred from the Strategic Communication and Initiatives Service (SCIS) to the Offices of the Undersecretaries for Field Operations.

All personnel, functions, records, appropriations and funds of the SMCRD are hereby included in the transfer, except those pertaining to the Youth Desk, Persons with Disability (PWD) Desk, Volunteer Desk, and Senior Citizens Desk, which shall be under the Strategic Communication and Initiatives Service.

This Order takes effect immediately and hereby amends/revokes all other previous orders and administrative issuances inconsistent herewith.

*Maria Antonia Yulo Loyzaga*  
MARIA ANTONIA YULO LOYZAGA  
Secretary



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VILLAGES WATER SUPPLY SYSTEM, INC.  
Applicant.

Case No. 23-3612

**NOTICE OF HEARING**

Applicant, an authorized operator of the waterworks system within FCI-Limay Subdivision, Barangay St. Francis II, municipality of Limay, province of Bataan, applies for the renewal or Certificate of Public Convenience and authority to increase water rates as follows:

**PROPOSED TARIFF**

Residential and Institutional

Pipe Size	0-5 m3 (min)	6-10 m3	11-20 m3	21-30 m3	31-40 m3	Over 40 m3
½"	P 230.00	49.20	52.70	56.30	60.30	64.50
¾"	P 368.00	78.70	84.20	90.10	96.50	103.20
1"	P 736.00	157.50	168.50	180.30	192.90	208.40
1 ½"	P 1,839.50	393.70	421.20	450.70	482.30	516.00

Commercial and Industrial

Pipe Size	0-15 m3 (min)	16-30 m3	31-500 m3	500-1000 m3	Over 1000 m3
½"	P 1,380.00	115.00	138.00	138.00	138.00
¾"	P 2,208.00	184.00	220.80	220.80	220.80
1"	P 4,414.50	367.90	441.50	441.50	441.50
1 ½"	P 11,037.00	919.80	1,103.80	1,103.80	1,103.80
2"	P 22,594.00	2,299.50	2,759.40	2,759.40	2,759.40
3"	P 49,069.50	4,139.10	4,966.90	4,966.90	4,966.90
4"	P 99,339.00	8,278.20	9,933.80	9,933.80	9,933.80

Bulk

Pipe Size	Per cu.m.	Pipe Size	Per cu.m.
1"	P 294.30	¾"	P 147.20

Others

This application will be initially heard by the Board on **5 June 2023**. The hearing will start at **9:00 o'clock in the morning** at the NWRB-WUD Conference Room, 8th Floor, NIA Building, EDSA, Quezon City, at which time applicant shall present its evidence.

At least fifteen (15) days prior to the scheduled hearing, applicant shall publish this notice once in a newspaper of general circulation in the province of Bataan and serve by personal delivery or registered mail a copy of the (i) application and its attachments, and (ii) this notice, to all affected parties appearing on page 2 hereof.

Parties opposed to the granting of the application must file their written opposition supported by documentary evidence on or before the above scheduled date of hearing, furnishing a copy of the same to the applicant.

Failure on the part of any person affected to file its opposition on time and to appear at the hearing will be construed as a waiver of their right to be heard. The Board will proceed to hear and decide the application based on the evidence submitted.

Likewise, failure by the applicant to appear at the hearing shall amount to lack of interest on its part and the instant application shall be dismissed accordingly.

Witness the Honorable Executive Director of the National Water Resources Board this 26<sup>th</sup> day of April 2023.

By Authority of the Board:

**Dr. SEVILLO D. DAVID, Jr., CESO III**  
Executive Director

Affected Parties:

The Secretary  
Sangguniang Bayan  
Limay, Bataan

The Barangay Chairman  
Barangay St. Francis II  
Limay, Bataan

The Homeowners Assn. President  
FCI-Limay Subdivision  
Barangay St. Francis II  
Limay, Bataan

The General Manager  
Limay Water District  
R. Ambrosio St., Townsite  
Limay, Bataan 2103

MT - May 15, 2023



VILLAGES WATER SUPPLY SYSTEM, INC.  
Applicant.

Case No. 23-3611

**NOTICE OF HEARING**

Applicant, an authorized operator of the waterworks system within FCI-Keppel Subdivision, Barangay Asinan, municipality of Subic, province of Zambales, applies for the renewal or Certificate of Public Convenience and authority to increase water rates as follows:

**PROPOSED TARIFF**

Residential and Institutional

Pipe Size	0-5 m3 (min)	6-10 m3	11-20 m3	21-30 m3	31-40 m3	Over 40 m3
½"	P 240.50	50.50	53.00	55.80	58.40	61.30
¾"	P 384.50	80.70	84.80	89.00	93.40	98.10
1"	P 769.00	161.40	169.50	178.00	186.90	196.20
1 ½"	P 1,922.00	403.60	423.80	445.00	467.20	490.60

Commercial and Industrial

Pipe Size	0-15 m3 (min)	16-30 m3	31-500 m3	500-1000 m3	Over 1000 m3
½"	P 1,441.50	100.90	108.00	111.20	118.80
¾"	P 2,307.00	161.40	169.50	178.00	186.90
1"	P 4,612.50	322.90	339.00	356.00	373.80
1 ½"	P 11,532.00	807.20	847.60	890.00	934.50
2"	P 28,830.00	2,018.10	2,119.00	2,225.00	2,336.20
3"	P 51,894.00	3,632.60	3,814.20	4,004.90	4,205.20
4"	P 103,788.00	7,265.40	7,628.40	8,009.80	8,410.30

Bulk

Pipe Size	Per cu.m.	Pipe Size	Per cu.m.
1"	P 307.50	¾"	P 153.80

Others

This application will be initially heard by the Board on **5 June 2023**. The hearing will start at **9:00 o'clock in the morning** at the NWRB-WUD Conference Room, 8th Floor, NIA Building, EDSA, Quezon City, at which time applicant shall present its evidence.

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**Dr. SEVILLO D. DAVID, Jr., CESO III**  
Executive Director

Affected Parties:

The Secretary  
Sangguniang Bayan Subic, Zambales

The Barangay Chairman  
Barangay Asinan  
Subic, Zambales

The Homeowners Assn. President  
FCI-Keppel Subdivision Barangay Asinan  
Subic, Zambales

The General Manager  
Subic Water District  
#22 Mangan-Vaca, Subic  
Zambales 2209

MT - May 15, 2023