

11 March 2023 Saturday



**DENR**

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## Legarda urges Senate to probe Mindoro oil spill

By MARIO CASAYURAN

Senate President Pro Tempore Loren Legarda called on the upper chamber to immediately conduct an inquiry into the environmental, health, and tourism impacts of the oil spill in Oriental Mindoro.

The oil spill left a widespread problem to many locals in the area and its neighboring provinces, including Antique, Legarda's home province.

Legarda expressed concern over the serious detrimental

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## Legarda urges Senate to probe Mindoro oil spill ◀

effects of the recent environmental disaster on dozens of designated marine sanctuaries, including thousands of acres of mangroves, reefs, and seagrass beds, the region's tourism, and the residents' health, as well.

In a Senate resolution that she is set to file, Legarda seeks a whole-of-government approach through the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Health (DOH), Department of Tourism (DOT), Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), Maritime Industry Authority, Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, and other responsible government agencies, in addressing the adverse effects of the oil spill.

"I call on all our government agencies to implement speedy actions on the harm caused by the recent oil spill to reduce damage to our ecosystems and fishing grounds, to ease off its effects to coastal towns, which are reliant on fishing and tourism for income, and most importantly, to secure our kababayans' (countrymen) health and safety," she said. "It is imperative that we immediately provide residents with basic needs such as water, food, face masks, and medicines while our local government units (LGUs) and agencies are conducting clean-up activities in the

affected areas."

Legarda noted the necessity of revising or reviewing the Oil Pollution Compensation Act of 2007, which covers liabilities of the owner and insurer of the shipping company responsible for the damage committed.

Likewise, she encouraged coastal communities to be apprised of health hazards to safely contribute to containment efforts, preserving evidence and documenting damages during disasters to avail of any reimbursement for clean-up assistance or payment for harm suffered.

On Feb. 28, around 800,000 liters of industrial oil spilled in the waters near Naujan, Oriental Mindoro, after MT Princess Empress capsized and sank off the coast of the municipality.

This prompted the provincial government to place 77 coastal villages under a state of calamity. The tragedy affected approximately 19,100 families, which disrupted their source of income and posed several health risks.

Based on news reports, the oil spill might affect thousands of hectares of coral reefs, mangroves, seagrass, and marine protected areas in the provinces of Oriental Mindoro, Occidental Mindoro, Antique, and Palawan.



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# FRASCO: OIL SPILL AFFECTING TOURIST SITES

By CRISTINA LEE-PISCO



**DOT SEC. CHRISTINA GARCIA FRASCO:** "Ahead of this, the DOT notes with seriousness the oil spill incident and its grave impact on the tourism industry, including disruptions in the livelihood of the affected communities, tourism-dependent businesses, and recreational activities. If unmitigated, the oil spill can have adverse impacts on three of the world-class dive destinations in the Philippines, specifically the Verde Island passage and Apo Reef in Mindoro, and Coron's World War II Wrecks and Philippine Dugong."

**THE** Department of Tourism (DOT) on Friday said the oil spill in Natuan, Oriental Mindoro has affected several Marine Protected Areas and beaches in nearby areas and provinces.

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## FRASCO

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Affected is the Municipality of Pola in Oriental Mindoro, where the protected areas such as the King-Fisher Reserve, St. John the Baptist Marine Sanctuary, Song of the Sea Fish Sanctuary, Biella Mariz Fish Sanctuary, Bacawan Fish Sanctuary, St. Peter the Rock Fish Sanctuary, and the San Isidro Labrador Fish Sanctuary are located.

In addition, beach resorts such as Bihiya Beach, 3 Cottage, Long Beach K.L. Aguada Beach Resort, Oloroso Beach Resort, Munting Buhangin Tagumpay Beach Resort, and Bulay na Tubig White Beach Resort in Oriental Mindoro have also been affected.

Immediately following the incident, Tourism Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco ordered the DOT Regional Offices in MIMAROPA and Western Visayas to closely monitor the situation and coordinate with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Environmental Management Bureau (EMB), Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), and concerned local government units (LGUs).

Coastal cleanup is now being done in the affected areas as an immediate solution to prevent further damage.

Effects of the oil spill have also reached the Municipality of Caluya in the Province of Antique, particularly along the shorelines of Sitio Sabang,

Barangay Tinogbo, Liwagao Island, Barangay Sibolo, and Sitio Tambak in Barangay Semirara. At present, none of the tourist attractions have been affected. But the LGUs, together with the PCG, have been conducting clean-ups, with the support from the private sector who provided Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs).

Boracay Island in the Municipality of Malay, Aklan is already preparing for the possibility of the effects of the oil spill reaching its area of jurisdiction.

The PCG and the Malay Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office (MDRRMO) are continuously conducting roving and monitoring along the coasts of Boracay, and have prepositioned oil slick booms in strategic areas around the island in anticipation of the oil spill.

The DOT Western Visayas Office is also actively coordinating with the LGU of Malay on extending possible assistance to tourists in Boracay in case the spillage reaches the island's coastal area, and has likewise issued advisories on the areas affected by the oil spill.

"Anent this, the DOT notes with seriousness the oil spill incident and its grave impact on the tourism industry, including disruptions in the livelihood of the affected communities, tourism-dependent businesses, and recreational activities," Frasco said.

"Scuba diving, beach, and cruise tourism depend on the region's coastal resources,

and are also its major tourism products. If unmitigated, the oil spill can have adverse impacts on three of the world-class dive destinations in the Philippines, specifically the Verde Island passage and Apo Reef in Mindoro, and Coron's World War II Wrecks and Philippine Dugong, she added.

Frasco said cruise tourism in the region could also be affected, with 31 cruise ships expected to call in Mindoro, Romblon, Marinduque, and Palawan for the year.

"The DOT, in coordination with its regional offices, commits to continuously coordinate with agencies such as the DENR, EMB, PCG, and concerned LGUs on any update concerning the oil spill, and in searching for urgent mitigating measures to address the harmful effects of the incident to marine life, world-class dive sites, and

tourist attractions," the tourism chief assured.

Meanwhile, the DOT reported that none of the tourist attractions in the municipalities of Naujan, Victoria, and Pinamalayan in Oriental Mindoro have been affected so far by the oil spill. The Naujan Lake, a major tourist attraction, has no connection with the ocean and will not be affected by the oil spill.

The DOT is also in close coordination with officers of the Tubbataha Management Office who are monitoring the situation in Tubbataha Reef, which is along the Municipality of Cagayancillo in Palawan. Based on the latest update from the Tubbataha Management Office, there are no reported effects yet of the oil spill in the area.

The DOT is set to issue succeeding advisories once pertinent updates and new information are available.



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## FISHERS GROUNDED BY OIL SPILL MOBILIZED IN CLEANUP DRIVE

FISHERMEN in Oriental Mindoro deprived of their livelihood by the massive oil spill will be hired to clean up oil-polluted beaches.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) said it is implementing a cash-for-

work (CFW) program to provide temporary jobs to fishermen who cannot go out to sea because the waters and marine life have been contaminated by the oil that has been leaking from the tanker MV Princess Empress.

➤ **CleanupA2**

### FISHERS GROUNDED

The ship sank off Pola town on February 28 while sailing to Iloilo from Bataan with 800,000 liters of industrial oil.

The oil has fouled up coastlines in Oriental Mindoro, forcing the provincial government to declare a state of emergency.

In a public briefing on Friday, DSWD spokesman Romel Lopez said DSWD Secretary Rex Gatchalian has ordered that assistance to the affected fishermen be made a priority.

The fishers mobilized for the cleanup drive will get an emergency cash transfer equal to the prevailing minimum wage in the Mimaropa (Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon and Palawan) region, the DSWD said.

The DSWD has budgeted more than P84.4 million for 14,220 cleanup workers who will be employed for 15 days.

The cash-for-work program will begin as soon as the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) gives the green light to the DSWD.

"We are now in the validation process so that we can determine who the beneficiaries are, and we expect to begin mobilizing them as early as March 15 as we consider the people's safety," Lopez said.

Among the provinces threatened by the spreading oil slick is Antique.

On Friday, the DENR said it has deployed a 1,363-meter spill boom in Barangay Tinogboc, Caluya, Antique, to protect the coastline in the area.

Aside from the Environmental Management Bureau Region 6, local government units and other concerned agencies helped the DENR in building the boom.

Already, at least 20 drums of oily wastes have been collected in nearby Barangay Sibolo, the department reported.

An aerial surveillance was also conducted on Semirara Island, the DENR said.

Simultaneous sediment collection and coastal cleanup efforts were being done to assess the impact of the oil on the marine environment in Pola.

The cleanup started in Pola and Naujan Friday, with the Department of Health limiting work time to two hours.

According to the Philippine Coast Guard, Pola is the catch basin of the oil from the Princess Empress.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has said the oil spill cleanup must be finished in at least four months.

In the related development, Liza Osorio, legal and policy director of the environmental group Oceana, has said that under Republic Act 9483 or the "Oil Pollution Law," the affected residents can file a class suit against the tanker's owner for damages.

"There is a possibility of filing a class suit. Under our laws, class suit only requires two conditions, one it has a common or general interest for many persons, second, the parties are so numerous that it is impracticable to bring them all before the courts," Osorio said.

She said the owner of the Princess Empress is also liable under other laws, including the "Fisheries Code" or Republic Act (RA) 8550 as amended by RA 10654, and the "Clean Water Act" or RA 9275.

**MOISES CRUZ AND BELLA CARIASO**



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# Mindoro oil spill has reached Palawan

**T**HE oil spill from a sunken tanker in Mindoro has reached the shores of Taytay, Palawan, according to the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) on Friday.

SOME 14,000 needy fisherfolk and other individuals affected by the oil spill in Oriental Mindoro are targeted as beneficiaries of the government's cash-for-work to be implemented through the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

In another development, the PCG led a massive cleanup of the affected shorelines in Pola, Oriental Mindoro.

In a Facebook post, the PCG said they received information from Barangay Casian captain Norbert Lim and the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office of Taytay that traces of oil were seen on their coastline.

PCG checked on the area and confirmed that the oil were from the oil spill in Naujan, Oriental Mindoro.

After an assessment, clean-up was started to protect the residents from any health concerns.

There is more than 159 nautical miles or 295 kilometers distance between shores of Barangay Casian in Taytay, Palawan and the water of Naujan, Oriental Mindoro.

Meanwhile, the Japanese government sent eight disaster response team personnel to aid in the clean-up of the oil spill incident in Mindoro, the Japanese Embassy in Manila said.

A courtesy call was requested by the Japan Disaster Relief Expert Team to the Philippine Coast Guard to address the needs for oil spill response operations for the sunken oil tanker in Oriental Mindoro.

It will be led by Nihei Daisuke, Minister of the Embassy of Japan in the Philippines.

The eight personnel of the Japanese disaster relief team is composed of two members of the embassy, five from the Japan Coast Guard and one from Japan International Cooperation Agency.

Additional equipment such as oil soaks, oil blotters, and oil-proof working gloves

also arrived together with the Japanese disaster relief team.

The PCG briefed the volunteers about the risk associated with the oil spill and the proper attire to wear, and handling of the spillage.

The Philippine Army, the Philippine Maritime Group, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Provincial Health Office, and the volunteers supported the joint simultaneous oil spill shoreline clean-up at Barangays Tagumpay, Misong, Buhay na Tubig, and Calima in Pola.

Approximately 30 bags of oil debris were collected during the initiative.

DSWD spokesperson Assistant Secretary Romel Lopez said the government will prioritize fisherfolk affected by the current fishing ban, Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) members, and other indigent individuals.

"Mag-start ito ng March 15. Ngayon nasa validation and verification tayo ng mga isinumite na pangalan na maaaring mapasama sa ating programa," said Lopez at a televised public briefing.

(It will start on March 15. We're now validating and verifying the names submitted for the program.) "Maaari po natin itong i-extend kung talagang kakailanganin dahil ang mahalaga dito hangga't di nagnormalize ang situation ng ating mga kababayan ay naalalayan natin sifa," he added.

(We can also extend the program if needed. It is important for us to aid the residents until the situation in their area normalizes.)

Participants will receive P355 per day, the minimum wage in Mimaropa, according to the DSWD official.

"Bukod sa cash-for-work program, mayroon din po tayong emergency cash transfer sa higit 1,000 na indibidwal para sa Agutaya, Palawan, na appektado rin ng nangyaring oil spill sa parte ng Naujan sa Oriental Mindoro," he said.

(Apart from the cash-for-work program, we also conducted an emergency cash transfer to over 1,000 individuals in Agutaya, Palawan, who were affected by the oil spill off Naujan, Oriental Mindoro.)

**Macon Ramos-Araneta**



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# Manila Standard

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**NOW IN PALAWAN.** Philippine Coast Guard personnel examine a beach in Barangay Casian, Taytay, Palawan – about 159 nautical miles or 295 kilometers away from the waters of Naujan, Oriental Mindoro where a tanker sank and spilled 800,000 liters of oil that is proving to be an environmental catastrophe. **PCG Photos**



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# PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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Robert Jaworski L. Abaño



HEALTH HAZARD Volunteers in hazmat or protective suits help in the cleanup of the oil spill that continues to affect at least 77 coastal villages in nine towns of Oriental Mindoro province in this photo taken on Thursday. —PHOTO COURTESY OF NOEL GUYARA OF GREENPEACE





# Malawakang fish kill sa oil spill sa Mindoro, ibinabala

Nababahala ang militant fisher group na Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) sa posibleng malawakang pagkamatay ng mga isda dahil sa pagkalat ng oil spill mula sa Oriental Mindoro.

Ayon sa Pamalakaya, dahil sa malawakang

pagtagas ng langis mula sa lumubog na barko, nagbabanta ang fish kill sa kalapit na lugar gaya ng Occidental Mindoro, Antique at Palawan.

Git ng grupo, dapat magkaroon na ng contingency plan ang pama-

## NI ANGIE DELA CRUZ

halaan upang maiwasan ang ecological disaster na tiyak na magsasahing pagkukulang sa supply ng isda at higit na magpapataas sa presyo nito.

Kilala ang Antique at Palawan kung saan nahuhuli ang mga ledang

tulingan at sambakol gayundin ang malatawak na taniman ng sea weeds.

Nauna nang nalulat na aabot sa P79 milyon ang halaga ng mga seaweeds ang apektado ng oil spill sa talawigan ng Antique, kung saan mahigit 10,000 na mangingisda ang nakaasa sa nasabing industriya.



Ininspeksyon ng mga tauhan ng Philippine Coast Guard ang baybayin ng Brgy. Casian sa Taytay, Palawan matapos makumpirma na umadot na rito ang oil spill mula sa lumubog na MT Princess Empress oil tanker sa Naujan, Oriental Mindoro. Muy kaugnay na istorya sa pahina 2. (Photo: PCG-PIO)



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## Halos 30K pamilya apektado ng oil spill sa Mindoro

HALOS 30,000 pamilya ang naapektuhan ng tumagis na langis mula sa lumubong na oil tanker sa Oriental Mindoro.

Sa pinakahuling datos ng Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), apektado na ng oil spill ang 29,432 pamilya o 131,996 indibidwal.

Mula ang mga ito sa 121 barangays sa Oriental Mindoro, Palawan at Antique.

Umabot na sa P7 milyong halaga ng tulong ang naipagkaloob ng DSWD, mga local government unit at mga pribadong organisasyon sa mga apektadong residente.

Naglaan din ang ahensya ng P778 million na standby funds.

Samantala, sinimulan na nitong Biyernes ng Philippine Coast Guard, Local Government Unit at mga volunteer ang massive cleanup drive sa bayan ng Pola, isa sa pinakaapektado ng oil spill.



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# Mindoro oil spill reaches Palawan town

By ROBERTZON RAMIREZ

The oil spill from the motor tanker *MT Princess Empress*, which sank off the coast of Oriental Mindoro, has reached Taytay town in Palawan, according to the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG).

*"Umabot na sa baybay-dagat ng Barangay Casian, Taytay, Palawan ang epekto ng oil spill,"* the PCG told reporters in a Viber message yesterday. *"Nang makumpirma ito, agad na sinimulan ng PCG ang assessment at paglilinis para maitaguyod ang kaligtasan ng mga residente."*

PCG personnel visited the affected area after receiving reports from barangay officials and the Taytay Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office.

Barangay Casian is around 295 kilometers away from the waters off Naujan in Oriental Mindoro.

PCG spokesman Rear Admiral Armand Balilo said four barangays in Pola town were severely affected by the oil spill.

*"Dahil na rin iyong barko ay nag-drift sa tapat ng bayan ng*

*Pola,"* Balilo said during yesterday's public briefing.

He said the oil spill has affected seven towns in Oriental Mindoro.

Meanwhile, the installation of an oil spill boom covering 1,363 meters in the waters off Barangay Tinogboc in Caluya, Antique has been completed, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) reported yesterday.

The oil spill had also reached Caluya town.

The DENR said the Environmental Management Bureau office in Western Visayas, concerned local government units and other agencies helped in the installation of the oil spill boom.

*"At least 20 drums of oily wastes in Barangay Sibolo were collected,"* the DENR said.

Simultaneous coastal clean-up drives were conducted in Pola and Naujan yesterday.

## Japan disaster relief team arrives

As this developed, an eight-member Japan Disaster Relief (JDR) expert team arrived in the country yesterday.

Japanese Ambassador Koshikawa Kazuhito said part of the team are five Japan Coast Guard personnel, three of them belonging to the National Strike Team, another from an expert unit in oil removal and a member of the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

In line with the request of the Philippine government, Koshikawa said oil blotters, oil snares and oil-proofing gloves are also set to be transported to the country.

*"The Japanese government is ready to consider providing additional supplies once the JDR expert team confirms the need for more material and equipment,"* he said.

## Senate probe set

Meanwhile, Senate President Pro Tempore Loren Legarda is set to file a resolution calling for a Senate inquiry into the incident.

Legarda expressed concern over the detrimental effects of the oil spill on marine sanctuaries, including mangroves, reefs and seagrass beds as well as on tourism and the health of residents in the affected areas.

*"I call on all government agencies to implement speedy action on the harm caused by the recent oil spill to reduce damage to our ecosystems and fishing grounds, to ease off its effects to coastal towns, which are reliant on fishing and tourism for income, and most importantly, to secure our kababayans' health and safety,"* she said.

*Empress* was carrying 800,000 liters of industrial fuel when it sank off the coast of Naujan town on Feb. 28.

- With DM, Paolo Romero, Michael Punongbayan



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# More fall ill due to spill; oil slick reaches Palawan

## Health execs in Oriental Mindoro say 81 people, many of them kids, sick due to fumes, foul odor

**By Madonna Virola,  
Dexter Cabalza  
and Geraldford Ticke  
@Team\_Inquirer**

CITY OF CALAPAN—At least 81 residents in the coastal villages of Pola town in Oriental Mindoro have fallen ill due to the industrial oil spilled by the sunken tanker MT Princess Empress that has washed to the shores of the province and has spread to as far as the waters of Palawan.

In a report on Friday, the Oriental Mindoro provincial health office (PHO) said most of those getting sick suffered from nausea, vomiting, loose bowel movement, sore throat, eye irritation, back pain, fever, difficulty in breathing and headaches believed to have been caused by the fumes and foul odor coming from the spilled oil.

According to the PHO, most of the patients were children ages 2 to 17 and elderly residents ages 60 to 75.

Pola was the first among the nine towns in the province to declare a state of calamity last week due to the widespread oil spill, which was still being contained by the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) and other government agencies and private organizations.

Officials of the affected towns and villages have been asking villagers to stay away from the coastline where the waters have been covered by thick and black oil due to the health risks posed by the industrial oil spilled by MT Princess Empress when it sank on Feb. 28 in the waters off Naujan town in Oriental Mindoro.

### Legal action

The spillage, which has also endangered marine protected areas in Oriental Mindoro, has since spread to its neighboring provinces, first in Antique and now in Palawan.

On March 6, the Oriental Mindoro provincial board passed a resolution declaring

77 coastal villages from nine municipalities under a state of calamity to immediately help some 19,000 affected families, most of them fishermen.

Task Force Pola was also activated to pursue legal actions against RDC Reield Marine Services Inc. (RDC), the operator of the sunken tanker, due to the oil spill's impact on the environment and livelihood of the town and the entire province, according to the PCG.

In a chat message on Thursday, Pola Mayor Jennifer Cruz said the task force has discussed moves to sue the tanker's owner "for the damage incurred" by the town, adding that the local government was "serious" about holding the tanker's operator responsible for the ill effects of the spillage.

The Maritime Industry Authority (Marina) has already issued a show cause order to RDC to explain what happened. It also suspended RDC's safety certificate.



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## Slick reaches Palawan

According to Sharon Aledo, spokesperson for Marina, MT Princess Empress is covered by a \$1-billion protection and indemnity insurance for "every incident" including an oil spill.

The oil tanker was carrying 800,000 liters of industrial oil, also called "black oil," considered to be highly toxic and harmful to the environment, when it sank.

### **Palawan, too**

The Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office said it had started hard assessments and fuel fingerprinting in all of the affected villages to determine the extent of the environmental damage.

In Palawan, Capt. Dennis Rem Labay, Coast Guard Palawan district commander, confirmed the presence of an oil slick in Casian, an island village of Taytay town north of the province, noting that it was likely from the MT Princess Empress.

"A few hours ago, we verified the presence of oil in the

area. But as to the volume of oil and how long it has been affected, we are still checking," Labay told the Inquirer on Friday.

Citing photos captured from the affected area, Labay said the volume was "not really alarming" and a cleanup operation was underway.

"At a distance of about 300 kilometers from where the tanker sank and considering that it has been 10 days, there is a big possibility that it is from there," he said.

The barangay is 159 nautical miles or 295 km south of the waters of Naujan.

The PCG said it has deployed personnel to Casian to clean up the oil slick along its beaches.

### **Company's commitment**

The PCG has previously installed booms in the waters off Naujan as part of its containment and recovery operations.

In a statement on Monday, Fritzie Tee, RDC vice president

for external affairs, expressed "the company's commitment to address the cleanup and containment of the oil spill."

RDC said it tapped two contractors, Harbor Star Shipping Services and Malayan Towing and Salvage Corp., to assist in the cleanup. Both companies helped in the aftermath of the oil spill in Quimaras province in August 2006, considered the worst in Philippine history.

The PCG said Japan would send a disaster relief expert team on oil removal and control to augment the country's manpower and assets. The United States and South Korea also committed to help the country.

PCG spokesperson Rear Adm. Armando Balilo earlier admitted it would be difficult for responders to conduct salvage operations because the vessel sank at a depth of 400 meters and the agency has no submersible mechanical equipment that can reach the area to siphon off the industrial fuel. **INQ**



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# Oil spill reaches Palawan

Naujan, Oriental Mindoro is 295 kilometers away from Taytay, Palawan.

BY RAFFY AYENI  
*@tribunephl\_1st*

Oil leaking from a sunken tanker in Naujan, Oriental Mindoro has spread to Palawan, the Philippine Coast Guard said on Friday.

The PCG said its personnel immediately proceeded to the Barangay Casian, Taytay, 295 kilometers away from Naujan, after village Captain Norbert Lim reported the oil spill to the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office.

Meanwhile, PCG spokesperson Rear Admiral Armand Balilo said their personnel conducted a simultaneous

massive cleanup in the coastal municipalities of Naujan and Pola upon the orders of PCG commander Admiral Artemio Abu.

Balilo also confirmed that the oil spill caused massive damage to a mangrove area and fish sanctuaries that are affecting residents' livelihoods in Pola.

"It's a fishing season in Pola. Aside from tourism, their livelihood is really affected," Balilo said during the Laging Handa Public Briefing on Friday.

He said residents of Pola are now contemplating of suing the owner of *MT Princess Empress* for the economic losses that the oil spill has caused them.



### Oil spill umabot na sa Palawan

Kinumpirma kahapon ng Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) na umabot na sa lalawigan ng Palawan ang epekto ng oil spill dulot ng paglubog ng oil tanker na MT Princess Empress sa Naujan, Oriental Mindoro.

Ayon sa PCG, namataan na sa baybayin ng karagatan ng Barangay Casian sa Taytay, Palawan ang oil spill. Inulat ito ni Barangay Captain Norbert Lim.

Agad namang umaksyon ang PCG na nagpadala ng tauhan sa naturang barangay habang nagtungo na rin ang mga opisyal ng Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office ng Taytay sa appektadong lugar.

Humigit-kumulang 159 nautical miles o 295 kilometro ang layo ng Brgy. Casian, Taytay, Palawan sa katubigan ng Naujan, Oriental Mindoro.

Nang makumpirma ito, agad na sinimulan ng PCG ang assessment at paglilinis para maitaguyod ang kaligtasan ng mga residente.

Noong Pebrero 28 nang lumubog ang barko sa karagatan ng bayan ng Naujan habang may kargang 800,000 litro ng industrial oil.

Nagpapalano ngayon ang mga lokal na opisyal ng Oriental Mindoro partikular na ang bayan ng Pola na magsampa ng kaso laban sa may-ari ng barko dahil sa pinsalang idinulot nito sa kalikasan at maging sa kabuhayan at kalusugan ng mga residente.

Nabatid naman sa Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) na naka-insure ang barko sa halagang \$1 bilyon na dapat na umanong i-claim ng may-ari nito na RDC Reield Marine Services (RDC) upang makatulong sa pagresponde sa insidente at pag-ako sa kanilang responsibilidad. (Danilo Garcia)



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# Japan helps in Mindoro oil spill

'We hope that the support from the Japanese government will contribute in preventing further oil contamination and restoring the marine environment in the affected areas.'

**J**apan dispatched a disaster-relief expert team to the Philippines to look into the oil-spill disaster in Oriental Mindoro.

Arriving in Manila on 10 March, the team collaborated with the Philippine Coast Guard to assess the extent of damage and guide its ongoing oil removal and control.

"We hope that the support from the Japanese government will contribute in preventing further oil contamination and restoring the marine environment in the affected areas," Japanese Ambassador Kazuhiko Koshikawa said.

The team consists of eight members: two from the Embassy of Japan in the Philippines; five, Japan Coast Guard; three, National Strike Team (an expert unit in oil removal); one, Japan International

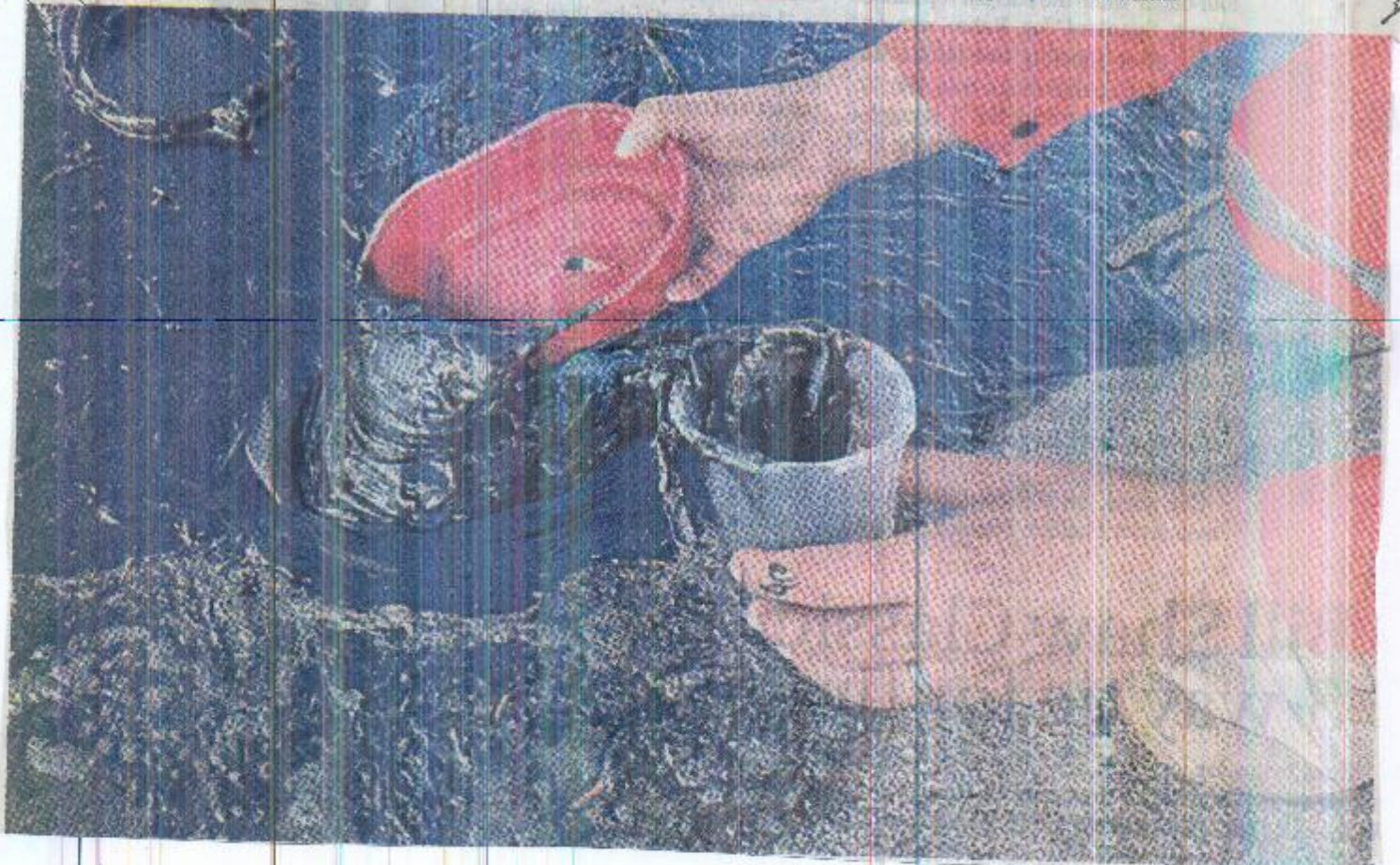
Cooperation Agency.

Also, granting the amicable request of the Philippine government, equipment (such as oil blotters, oil snares, and oil-proof working gloves) were transported to the Philippines.

The Japanese are considering providing additional supplies.

The disaster was caused by a small tanker that submerged off the coast of Mindoro Island on 28 February, leaking cargo fuel and diesel oil into the waters in the area.

Coastal regions, such as the Oriental Mindoro, have banned fisheries and observed oil sludge reaching the shores of fishing villages and mangrove forests, the damages gravely affecting the livelihood of approximately 65,000 residents.







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THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS SINCE 1900  
**MANILA BULLETIN**  
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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**JAPAN HELP** — Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) Vice Admiral Deputy Commandant for Administration Ronnie Gil Gavan (left) welcomes the officers and men of the Japanese Coast Guard Special Team at the PCG National Coast Watch Center in Manila on March 10, 2023. The Japanese Disaster Relief Team will help in cleaning up the oil spill caused by the sinking of an oil tanker in the waters off Oriental Mindoro on Feb. 28, 2023. (Juan Carlo de Vela)



## Liabilities of common carriers

Is the charterer of a sea-going vessel liable for damages resulting from a collision between the chartered vessel and a passenger ship?

This was the issue which the Supreme Court had to resolve when the High Tribunal was asked to decide who was ultimately liable for the damages claimed by the heirs of some of the passengers who perished in the tragic collision between MV Vector, a tramping motor tanker owned and operated by Vector Shipping Corp., and MV Doña Paz, which was owned and operated by Sulpicio Lines.

### HIDDEN AGENDA



MARY ANN  
LL. REYES

On Dec. 19, 1987, MT Vector left Limay, Bataan for Masbate, carrying barrels of petroleum shipped by Caltex Philippines by virtue of a charter contract between Vector Shipping as the shipowner and Caltex as the charterer.

Meanwhile, on Dec. 20, 1987, passenger ship MV Doña Paz left the Port of Tacloban headed for Manila, carrying with it 59 crew members and 1,493 passengers as indicated in the Coast Guard clearance.

At about 10:30 pm of Dec. 20, the two vessels collided. All the crew members of MV Doña Paz died while two from MT Vector survived. Of the 4,000 passengers which Doña Paz actually carried, most of whom were not in the passenger manifest, only 24 survived.

The heirs of two passengers who perished sued Sulpicio Lines, which in turn filed a third-party complaint against Vector Shipping and Caltex.

Here, the Supreme Court held that Caltex as the charterer was not liable for damages under Philippine maritime laws.

In this particular case, what Caltex and Vector Shipping entered into is what is known as a contract of affreightment which is a kind of charter party.

A contract of affreightment is one by which the owner of a vessel leases the whole or part of the vessel to a merchant or other person for the conveyance of goods in consideration of the payment of freight. It can either be a time charter, wherein the vessel is leased for a fixed period of time, or a voyage charter, wherein the ship is leased for a single voyage.

But whether it be a time charter or a voyage charter, the ship owner supplies the ship's store, pays for the wages of the master and the crew, and pays for the expenses for the maintenance of the ship.

In a contract of affreightment, the shipowner remains the owner in possession and control of the ship and the navigation. The charterer is free from liability to third persons as a consequence of that particular voyage of the vessel covered by the charter party or contract.

In a voyage charter, the master and crew remain in the employ of the owner of the vessel while in a bareboat charter, the master and crew are employees of the charterer.

The High Court also explained that in a voyage charter such as the one entered into between Caltex and Vector Shipping, the shipowner remains as a common carrier which impliedly warrants the seaworthiness of the vessel as a consequence of which, a passenger or a shipper of goods has no obligation to conduct an inspection of the ship and its crew.

It pointed out that a charterer of a vessel has no obligation before transporting its cargo to ensure that the vessel it chartered is seaworthy or complied with all legal requirements since the law requires common carrier for simply being engaged in public service to observe extraordinary diligence in the carriage of both passengers and goods.

Because of this implied warranty of seaworthiness, the court emphasized that shippers of goods, when transacting with common carriers, are not expected to inquire into the vessel's seaworthiness, genuineness of its licenses, and compliance with all maritime laws.

Such a practice, it emphasized, would be an absurdity in a business where time is always of the essence.

As a mere voyage charterer, Caltex, the SC noted, had the right to presume that the ship was seaworthy as even the Philippine Coast Guard itself was convinced of its seaworthiness, allowing it to undertake the voyage in the first place.

In this particular case, the court concluded the Caltex is not liable to reimburse Sulpicio Lines for the damages which the latter is adjudged to pay the heirs.

As a common carrier, the shipowner is presumed negligent unless it can prove that it exercised extraordinary diligence in the transport of passengers and goods, or that the loss or damage was due to fortuitous events or other exempting circumstances as enumerated in the Civil Code.

Just recently, oil tanker MT Princess Empress, owned by RDC Reield Marine Services sank off Oriental Mindoro while carrying 800,000 liters of industrial fuel oil under a voyage charter contract with the shipper or charterer. The resulting oil spill has since then reached the shores of several nearby fishing villages and is now threatening coral reefs, mangroves, and marine life.

Since it remains as a common carrier by virtue of the charter party, RDC is presumed to be negligent and liable for the damages resulting from the sinking of the ship unless it can prove that it exercised extraordinary diligence which includes maintaining the seaworthiness of the vessel or that the sinking was due to fortuitous events or exempting circumstances such as unusually violent actions of the sea or other natural disasters.

The charterer or owner of the industrial fuel oil, as the Supreme Court has repeatedly explained, has no liability under a voyage charter.

Meanwhile, if RDC as a shipowner and common carrier was just carrying the industrial oil by virtue of a bill of lading or other shipping documents on behalf of the shipper to be delivered to the consignee, then all the more the owner of the goods cannot be held liable for any damage which the vessel may cause as a result of the voyage, unless of course an act of the owner of the goods was the proximate and only cause of the damage. And more so if by virtue of a special provision in the shipping contract, ownership of the goods is transferred to RDC, in which case RDC is again solely liable.

For comments, e-mail at: [mareyes@philstarmedia.com](mailto:mareyes@philstarmedia.com)



# Hold owner of ship accountable in Oriental Mindoro oil spill, gov't urged

**SENATOR Christopher "Bong" Go** expressed his concern for the health and safety of those affected by the oil spill caused by the sinking of a motor tanker off Naujan town in Oriental Mindoro on February 28.

He also urged authorities to hold accountable those responsible for the incident.

In an ambush interview after aiding fire victims in Barangay Tataon in Quezon City, Go, Chair of the Senate Committee on Health, highlighted that the impact of the spill extends far beyond just the affected individuals, as fish and other marine life could be contaminated by the oil, potentially harming anyone who consumes them and the ecosystem as a whole.

"Dapat po ay gawin ng gobyerno ang lahat. Hindi lang po ang mga kababayan natin ang appektado dito. Yung mga isda, kakainin 'yun, kung safe pa bang kainin ang mga isda," expressed Go.

Go noted that the extent of the spill makes it difficult to clean up, requiring the involvement of entities with the necessary expertise and resources.

"Haba ng oil spill na 'yan, napakahirap pong linisin 'yan so dapat po ay gawan ng paraan kung sino po ang may kakayah-an," Go said.

"Who caused the oil spill, kayo po ang gumastos at tulun-



**SENATOR BONG GO**

gan po, of course, ng gobyerno para mapabilis," he added.

He then called for the government to ensure resources are maximized for the cleanup effort, as well as to hold the responsible party accountable for their actions.

"Dapat gawan ng paraan at managot ang nag-cause ng oil spill. Gastusan n'yo po para malinis 'yan. Kawawa ang mga ordinaryong mamamayan," urged Go.

"Tayo nga, nililinis natin ang coastal, bawal nga magtapon dapat ng plastic sa karagatan, ito pa oil, ang hirap nitong linisin," he added.

The affected towns in Oriental Mindoro include Naujan, Pola, Pinamalayan, Gloria, Basud, Bongabong, Roxas, Mansalay, and Bulalacao, according to a report from the Provin-

cial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office.

Seventy six municipalities have been declared under a state of calamity due to the damage caused by the oil spill.

On March 4, the Philippine Coast Guard reported that the oil spill has reached the island town of Caluya in Antique. Consequently, it was declared under a state of calamity on March 6.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has instructed the concerned agencies to keep a close watch on the situation and take necessary measures to prevent the oil spill from spreading especially to tourist spots.

For her part, Senate President Pro Tempore Loren Legarda also called on the concerned Senate committee, with the cooperation of all government agencies, to immediately conduct an inquiry on the environmental, health, and tourism impacts of the oil spill in Oriental Mindoro.

Legarda expressed concern over the serious detrimental effects of the recent environmental disaster on dozens of designated marine sanctuaries, including thousands of acres of mangroves, reefs, and sea-grass beds, the region's tourism, and the residents' health, as well.

In a Senate Resolution that she will file, she is urging a

whole-of-government approach through the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Health (DOH), Department of Tourism (DOT), Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), Maritime Industry, Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, and other responsible government agencies, in addressing the adverse effects of the oil spill.

"Let us all our government agencies to implement speedy actions on the harms caused by the recent oil spill to reduce damage to our ecosystems and fishing grounds, to ease off its effects to coastal towns, which are reliant on fishing and tourism for income, and most importantly, to secure our kababayan's health and safety," said Legarda.

"It is imperative that we immediately provide the residents with basic needs such as water, food, face masks, and medicines while our local government units and agencies are conducting clean-up activities in the affected areas," she added.

Legarda noted the necessity for revisions or review of the Oil Pollution Compensation Act of 2007, which covers the liabilities of the owner and insurer of the shipping company responsible for the damages committed. *Camille P. Balagtas*



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### Bong Go: May-ari ng barko, panagutin sa oil spill

Nagpahayag ng pagkabahala si Senator Christopher "Bong" Go sa kalusugan at kaligtasan ng mga apektado ng oil spill dulot ng paglubog ng isang motor tanker sa bayan ng Naujan sa Oriental Mindoro noong Pebrero 28.

Kaugnay nito, hinimok ni Go ang mga awtoridad na panagutin ang mga responsable sa insidente.

Sa isang panayam matapos tulungan ang mga biktima ng sunog sa Barangay Tatalon sa Quezon City, idinirig ni Go, chair ng Senate committee on health, na ang epekto ng oil spill ay higit pa sa mga apektadong indibidwal.

Ang mga isda at iba pang marine life aniya ay maaaring malason ng langis at posibleng makapinsala sa sirumang makakonsumsi sa kanila at sa ecosystem sa kabuuan.

"Dapat po ay gawin ng gobyerno ang lahat. Hindi lang po ang mga kababayan natin ang apektado dito. Yung mga isda, kakainin 'yun, kung safe pa bang kainin ang mga isda," ani Go.

Sinabi ni Go na ang lawak ng spill ay nagpapahirap sa paglilinis, na nangangailangan ng paglahok ng mga entity na may kadalubhasaan at kakayahan sa problemang ito.

"Haba ng oil spill na 'yan, napakahirap pong lirisin n'yan so dapat po ay gawan ng paraan kung sino po ang may kakayahan," sabi ni Go.

"Who caused the oil spill, kayo po ang gumastos at tulungan po, of course, ng gobyerno para mapabilis," dagdag niya.

Nanawagan siya sa gobyerno na tyakin na ang resources ay maima-maximize sa cleanup effort at panagutin ang responsableng partido sa kanilang mga aksyon.



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“Civic groups said the owners of the vessel, RDC Reield Marines Services, and of the oil, it was carrying should be held accountable.”

Swift action by the government is needed to head off what is shaping up to be a disaster the economic effects of which residents said could be worse than the just-ended coronavirus pandemic.

On 28 February, the fuel tanker *MT Princess Empress* carrying 800,000 liters of industrial fuel oil sunk off the coast of Oriental Mindoro. An ecological nightmare unfolded before the nation in the days that followed.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources estimates it will take up to four months to clean up the oil spill while the economic backlash will last longer.

The oil has spread to more than 130 kilometers from the site where the ship sank after its engine died in rough weather. Strong currents have rendered useless the oil booms put in place to contain the slick.

Thick oil from the vessel has contaminated the waters and beaches of nine municipalities along the coast of Oriental Mindoro province and threatens to afflict Palawan next.

Reports said the oil has reached the Visayan province of Antique, with fears of it heading further south.

Ecology groups said oil spills like the Guimaras incident in 2006 have long-term impacts on the environment, including the biodiversity of affected ecosystems.

Oil spills can sometimes be felt even 30 years after the tragedy, causing irreparable damage to corals, seagrass, and mangroves.

The economies of communities that depend on marine resources for their livelihood consequently are expected to suffer for the same duration.

Environmental group Center for Energy, Ecology, and Development cited captured images showing livelihood uncertainties for the residents of Oriental Mindoro whose lives are now on pause.

Fishermen worry the impact will be “worse than Covid,” after the local government issued a no-fishing order, leaving them with no alternative livelihood to tide them over the next months.

Fish vendors and other residents whose sources of income are jobs generated by tourism are also reeling from the impact and are asking for an immediate government response.

Waters within and beyond the country’s marine treasure, the Verde Island Passage or VIP, are being threatened.

VIP is a biodiversity hotspot known to have the highest concentration of marine species in the world.

Latest estimates reveal that over 36,000 hectares of mangroves, coral reefs, and seagrass will potentially be affected by the man-made disaster.





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Overnight, at least 18,000 fisherfolk in Oriental Mindoro alone have been robbed of their livelihood as fishing activities are forcibly put on hold, cleric Edwin Gariguez, lead convenor of Protect VIP, said.

Over half of the households in Oriental Mindoro suffer from various levels of food insecurity, CEED said the prolonged suffering in the local fishing industry will cost the provinces affected by the spill at least P11.8 billion.

**“ Ecology groups said oil spills like the Guimaras incident in 2006 have long-term impacts on the environment, including the biodiversity of affected ecosystems.**

The tourism sector, which raked in P3.5 billion for the province of Oriental Mindoro alone in 2019, also faces severe disruption.

Tourism workers as well as provincial revenues are bound to suffer billions of pesos in losses with the oil spill occurring near the peak summer months.

Civic groups said the owners of the vessel, RDC Reield Marines Services, and of the oil, it was carrying should be held accountable.

“This is not the first time that a vessel carrying highly polluting fuels leaked its contents into the VIP’s waters, yet no sufficient measure is in place that could have prevented this latest oil spill from occurring or causing as massive a devastation as it already

has,” Fr. Gariguez said.

Yet, the owner of the industrial oil remains unknown. Companies involved in the transport of the fuel should be made to pay reparation to the communities and shoulder the environmental rehabilitation requirements.

Needless to say, the government response should also be resolute and quick to mitigate the frightening effects of the mega disaster.



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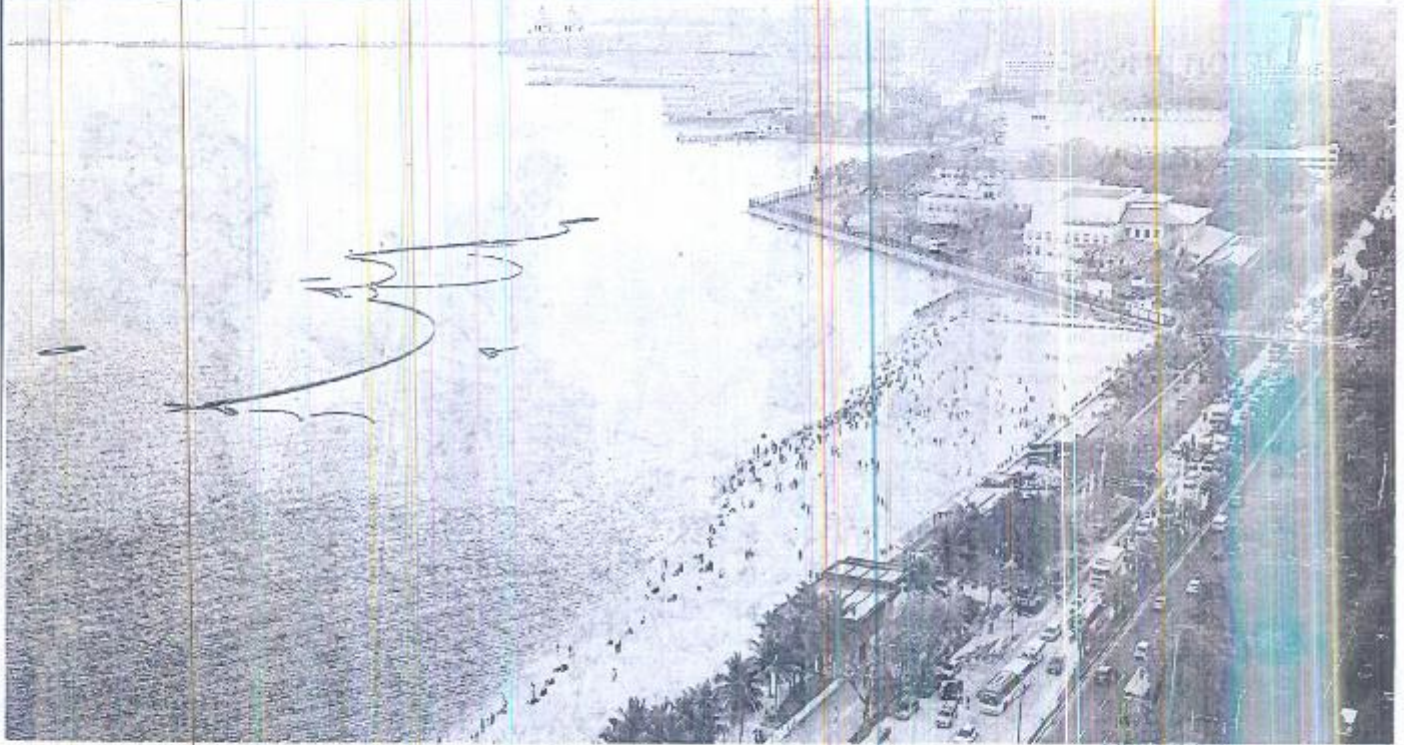
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## Metro

A7



RAIN or shine, the so-called D'Amonte Beach at Manila Bay attracts people who would otherwise have to travel to the outskirts of Metro Manila to enjoy beachcombing.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIMMY ESPINOSA FOR THE DAILY TRIBUNE



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# QC hosting Phl Earth Hour '23

BY JING VILLAMONTA

Quezon City will host this year's Earth Hour celebration in the Philippines on 25 March at the Quezon City Memorial Circle in partnership with the World Wide Fund for Nature-Philippines.

Mikee Cojuangco-Jaworski, the country's Earth Hour ambassador said, that from the lights' "symbolic switching-off," Earth Hour has become the largest grassroots movement

to which the Philippines is the top participant among 193 countries.

She said that since Quezon City joined Earth Hour in 2015, it has always been a finalist in the international One Planet Challenge.

On 25 March, at exactly 8:30 p.m. the city government will switch off the lights of the Quezon City Memorial Circle pylon and other city government buildings for an hour.

Residents and business owners will also be encouraged to switch off their

non-essential lights.

Before the actual Earth Hour, the QC Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability Department and the Gender and Development Council Office will host the Padyak ng Kababaihan para sa Kalikasan cycling event and a scavenger hunt for the youth.

Booths from various non-government organizations and social enterprises with climate and environment advocacies will also be set up around the premises of Liwasang Aurora.

During the lights-off proper, a symbolic run spearheaded by fitness and environmental conservation enthusiasts will take place at the QCMC, signifying the power of collective action in achieving a future where Filipinos live in harmony with nature.

QC has been working with WWF-Philippines and Earth Hour for several years and was also the city host of Earth Hour in 2015 which also took place at QCMC.





■ The 400-hectare Lower Magat Tourism Park managed by the provincial government of Nueva Vizcaya will soon have its Wildlife Rescue Center. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

## Nueva Vizcaya watershed management lauded

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Region 2 (Cagayan Valley) has lauded the Nueva Vizcaya provincial local government (PLGU) for effective management of the 400-hectare Lower Magat Ecotourism (LMET) Park in the town of Diadi.

To further improve their region's watershed management, the DENR-Region 2 committed to extend its assistance for the PLGU's renewal of the 25-year Lower Magat Forest Reserve (LMFR) co-management agreement which has effectively managed the LMET park.

This memorandum of agree-

ment (MoA) was signed by the former Environment secretary and then-Nueva Vizcaya governor Rodolfo Agbayani in 1997.

In an LMFR Steering Committee meeting, DENR 2 Executive Director Gwendolyn Bambalan recommended the conduct of a joint DENR-PLGU performance evaluation in preparation for the submission of the complete staff work to include the 25-year project accomplishment report.

She also encouraged the Environmental Management Bureau to facilitate the processing of the application of the forest reserve's environmental compliance certificate.

### Wildlife resource center

The LMFR steering committee agreed to formalize a MoA for the establishment of a Wildlife Rescue Center within the park.

Nueva Vizcaya Gov. Carlos Padilla said the PLGU has recorded approximately 50 wildlife species including 39 individuals within the ecotourism site including the Philippine serpent eagle, green rat snake and peacock.

Bambalan said the PLGU-LMET park will ensure sustainable wildlife habitat and

biodiversity conservation, and soon will cater to the medical needs of rescued faunal species for their immediate recovery before they will be released into the wild.

"Wildlife is important in maintaining the ecological balance of nature. We need them to sustain life," she said, adding that the facility will cater to wildlife monitoring activities in the southern part of the region.

Bambalan said this will strengthen biodiversity action against the presence of endangered and threatened wildlife species, and even their extinction.

LEANDER C. DOMINGO



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# BARMM backs Mindanao climate resilience plan

**CAGAYAN DE ORO:** The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to promote the Mindanao climate resilience plan.

Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga and BARMM Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Energy Minister Akmad Brahim entered a partnership to share their expertise in conserving the rich resources

of Mindanao and ensuring that the DENR's policies are culturally sensitive to the needs of the diverse communities and Indigenous groups in the region.

The MoU is part of DENR's effort to establish partnerships toward common environment and natural resources goals.

A 2022 World Bank Country Climate and Development Report warned that Mindanao will experience drought in the coming decades, while flooding has also increased, endangering the rich resources and food security, and

threatening the livelihood of Filipinos in the south.

## Localized approach

Yulo-Loyzaga said that the Mindanao region requires a localized and contextualized approach as she assured stakeholders that the DENR will continue its extensive consultations across all local communities.

"The Mindanao region is blessed with a rich, complex, social and natural history. It is in the intersection of this social and physical

geography that both risk and opportunities reside," Yulo-Loyzaga said.

"Creating and building these opportunities, and mitigating the risks require partnerships that lead to a new type of agency based on competent and committed leadership that prioritizes human development, sustainable local economies, resilient infrastructure and underpinning all of these ecosystems that support human security, food, water, energy, peace and equity," she added.

**BELLA CARIASO**



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## 'Green movement faces painful confrontation with reality'

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low this column because of my dili-  
gent monitoring of the climate debate  
may be misled by my recent focus on  
the South China Sea, Unclos (United  
Nations Convention on the Law of the  
Sea), and the rivalry between China  
and the United States.

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# 'Green movement faces painful confrontation with reality'

This is a temporary change in perspective, dictated by events. I remain an unreconstructed skeptic on climate change and renewable energy.

I want to introduce readers today to the work of Rupert Darwall, a German policy analyst and corporate strategist who I have sometimes quoted in my columns on climate issues. Mr. Darwall is the author of the book *Green Tyranny: The Totalitarian Roots of the Climate Industrial Complex*.

On March 3, 2023, in the UK *Spectator*, Mr. Darwall wrote an article that will force green energy advocates to sit up: "The green movement faces a painful confrontation with reality."

The article is brief, incisive and penetrating in its arguments. I quote it in full here:

"Environmentalism is the ruling ideology of our times. Forget neoliberalism. That peaked around 2000 and was definitively dethroned by the financial crisis in 2008, the same year Parliament passed the Climate Change Act which paved the way for net zero. "Since then, environmentalism has won victory after victory, so it might appear paradoxical that one of the founders of the British green movement struck a defeatist note. Speaking at an event to celebrate the Green Party's 50th anniversary, Michael Benfield suggested that the 'battle for the world's environmental survival is, at this moment, lost.' The Greens had succeeded in raising consciousness, Benfield said, 'but we have failed in dealing with the battle for environmental survival.'

"Any ideology claiming to represent the sole path to salvation from an otherwise inevitable apocalypse — in this case a planetary one — is bound to have a sobering confrontation with reality. As Benfield admits, the scale of the solutions he believes necessary are too unpalatable for any political party.

### Internal contradiction

"In terms of economics, environmentalism is a more radical ideology than classical Marxism. Whereas Marxism was about changing the ownership of the

means of production, environmentalism aims to change the means of production themselves. Greens want to reverse the Industrial Revolution, which they see as the original sin of modern civilization for unleashing global, self-sustaining economic growth they claim is destroying the planet. Growth, though, is something people want. At a minimum, maintaining people's living standards is something every political party other than the Greens, with their one MP, must promise voters, even if their policies won't or can't deliver it.

"Though triumphant, environmentalism harbors an internal contradiction. Its favored energy policy of replacing nuclear and fossil fuels that power modern society with wind and solar requires the industrialization of nature, with energy production taking a vastly expanded environmental footprint.

"Earlier this week, Greta Thunberg was detained by Norwegian police in a protest demanding the removal of 151 wind turbines from reindeer pastures used by Sami herders in central Norway. Such clashes are likely to become more frequent. Compared to nuclear and fossil fuel energy, wind and solar are low density energy sources. This necessitates a massive land take, impacting the integrity of local habitats, the destruction of birds of prey by the blades of wind turbines and the mass killing of bats from the pressure waves of wind turbines, all in the name of saving the planet. The local is sacrificed for the global.

"This contradiction was the subject of Michael Moore's 2020 movie 'Planet of the Humans.' The film sparked outrage for showing how environmentalism morphed into a tool of green corporate power. Josh Fox, maker of the tendentious anti-fracking movie 'Gasland,' denounced Moore for touting 'blatantly untrue fossil fuel industry talking points,' even though they were being made by left-leaning academics. Fox organized a petition demanding an apology and retraction of Moore's film. YouTube complied and took down 'Planet of the Humans,'

purportedly on the grounds of copyright infringement for using a few seconds of footage of rare earth minerals being transported from Inner Mongolia. Attacked by climate scientist Michael Mann for containing 'distortions, half-truths and lies,' and for serving as 'a wedge to divide the environmental community,' the ban was subsequently lifted.

"Economic growth is the biggest wedge dividing committed greens from their more pragmatic fellow travelers and the vested interests supporting and often financing them. In his recent 'Net Zero Review,' Tory MP Chris Skidmore calls net zero 'the growth opportunity of the 21st century.' Instead of analyzing the costs of net zero, the Skidmore report is little more than a wish list drawn up by rent-seeking renewable energy interests ('the prize on offer to UK industry').

"True believers, on the other hand, don't want growth of any kind. De-growth is what they seek. One of the foremost advocates of renewable energy is Amory Lovins, who in 1982 founded the Rocky Mountain Institute as a renewable energy think tank.

"It'd be a little short of disastrous for us to discover a source of clean, cheap, abundant energy because of what we would do with it,' Lovins said in a 1977 interview. 'We ought to be looking for energy sources that are adequate for our needs.' Adequacy, not abundance, is the true green goal. For committed greens, the virtue of renewable energy is that it is neither cheap nor abundant because replacing fossil fuels with renewables helps push economic growth into reverse.

"The net-zero target was adopted on the basis of the Committee on Climate Change's fairy tale of ever cheaper renewable costs. The realization is now dawning that, like everything else, renewables need cheap fossil fuels. With news that Ørsted, the Danish wind energy company, could shelve the Horns Rev 3 offshore wind project unless the government provides more subsidy, it is becoming clearer each day that this particular fairy tale is shaping up to be one with a

dark, unhappy ending."

### Green tyranny

I want to bookend Mr. Darwall's article with the comments of a German book reviewer, Wolfgang Muller, on Darwall's book, *Green Tyranny* (Acton.org, Jan. 8, 2018). He wrote:

"The subtitle of Rupert Darwall's book about 'the totalitarian roots of the climate-industrial complex' seems designed to appeal to readers who are already skeptical about current climate change and environmentalist policies. *Green Tyranny* is a must-read for every person who cherishes freedom and who wants to know how environmentalism could become so powerful that, in some countries, it seems like a new state religion.

"Darwall presents a wealth of detail to explain how a powerful Green/Left network managed to occupy key political positions in Europe and the US, and to establish (or gain control of) institutions that give them unquestioned authority over the subject. Learning about this development, it is particularly frustrating to read how these institutions were often created by financing from very wealthy donors.

"Darwall also examines individual policies designed to stave off climate change. In the case of Germany with its 'Energiewende,' the effort to decarbonize the economy, he proves that even after billions of dollars in government spending and ever-rising electricity costs for consumers, Germany's CO2 emissions remain basically the same. Meanwhile, the grid's stability has continuously deteriorated. Despite its obvious absence of success, Germany relies more heavily upon wind farms and photovoltaic solar power systems.

"Darwall is adamant when he regards environmentalism as a serious threat to freedom and cites alarming examples of how the Green agenda managed to influence not only politics, but public opinion and industrial policy as well."

Let's see if green propagandists will dismiss Rupert Darwall's writings as fake news. The charge of "de-growth" is devastating.



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# Summit protects West PH biodiversity

BY BELLA CARIASO

**T**HE United States, in partnership with more than 60 civil society organizations (CSOs), hosted a summit in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan to coordinate action for marine biodiversity conservation and protection in the coastal areas of Northern Luzon, Mindoro and Palawan that face the South China Sea.

United States Agency for International Development (USAid) Mission Director Ryan Washburn highlighted the US government's continued commitment to supporting local stakeholders in conserving marine resources from illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities of domestic and foreign fleets.

He said that the United States as "an enduring friend, partner and ally" will "support sustainable fishing practices, strengthen food security and advance the conservation of marine ecosystems as we work toward achieving our shared goal of inclusive growth, and a free, prosperous and secure Indo-Pacific region."

The CSOs' summit was organized as a follow-up to the visit of US Vice President Kamala Harris to Palawan in November 2022 where

she underscored the importance of the US-Philippines partnership in creating economic opportunities and protecting coastal ecosystems throughout the region.

Palawan Third District Rep. Edward Hagedorn acknowledged that "the protection and preservation of the West Philippine Sea is a herculean task that requires collective, whole-of-nation action."

He added that the gathering of representatives from universities, nongovernmental organizations, municipal fisherfolk peoples' organizations, commercial fishers' associations, the private sector, cooperatives and alliances can help "prepare a common agenda and action plan protecting West Philippine Sea resources, and addressing food security and livelihood issues."



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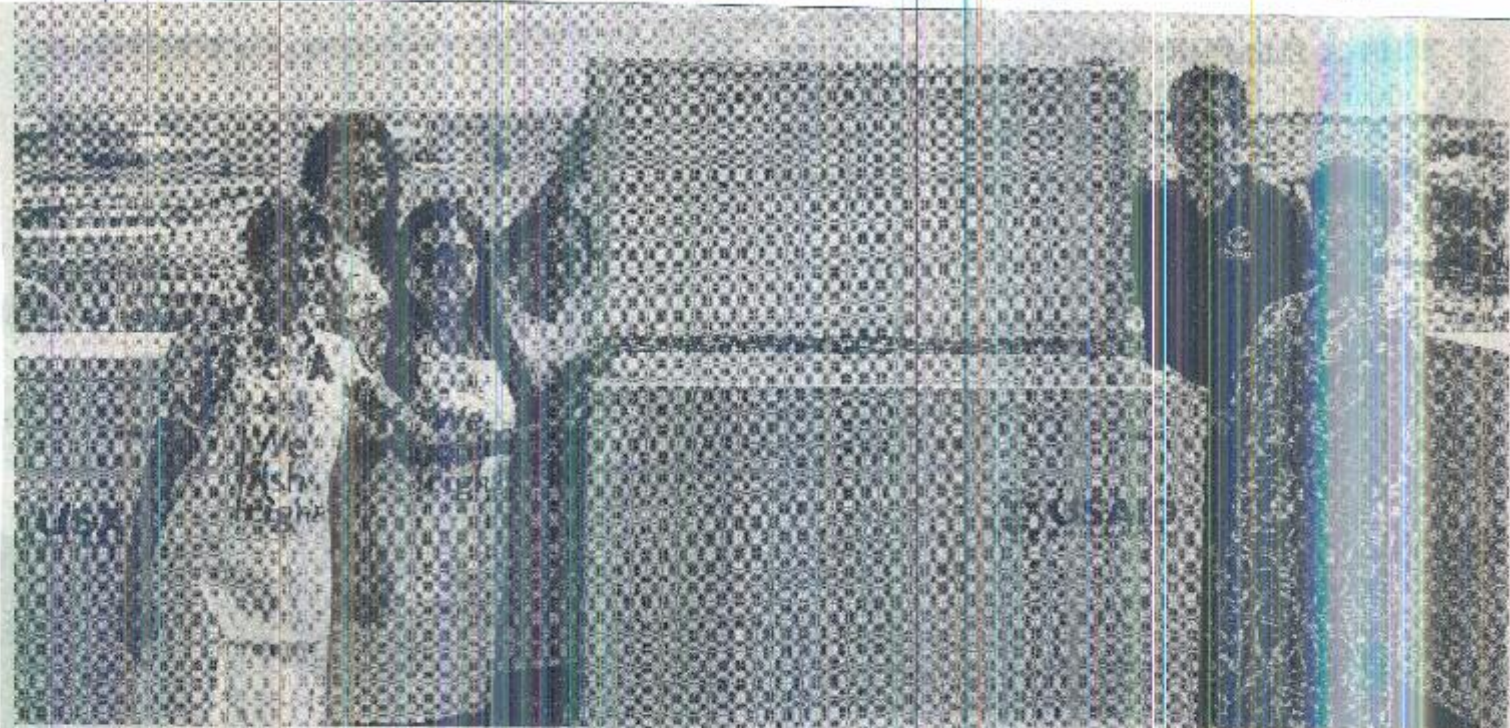
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USAid Philippines Mission Director Ryan Washburn and USAid Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility Senior Adviser Kathryn Booker-Veloz turn over three fish dryers and freezers to the women of the Tagburos fishing village in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**Equipment and environment grants**

While in Puerto Princesa City, Washburn and USAid Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility Senior Adviser Kathryn Booker-Veloz handed over freezers and other fish drying materials valued at P300,000 to women associations

in the fishing village of Tagburos.

The two USAid officials also joined partners from the Getry Roxas Foundation to award environment grants valued at P64 million to four local organizations: Nagkakaisang Tribu ng Palawan, Palawan Biodiversity Conservation Advocates, World Wide Fund for Nature and Community-Centered

Conservation. Through these grants, the CSOs will implement Palawan-based projects on biodiversity conservation, wildlife protection, natural resource management and local climate actions.

The USAid is implementing three biodiversity conservation projects covering the Philippine waters in the South China Sea,

including Fish Right; the Sustainable Interventions for Biodiversity, Oceans and Landscapes; and Investing in Sustainability and Partnerships for Inclusive Growth and Regenerative Ecosystems. These three projects have a combined value of P4.3 billion in development assistance from the US government.



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## Rise in ocean plastic pollution 'unprecedented' since 2005

PARIS, France (AFP) – Plastic pollution in the world's oceans has reached "unprecedented levels" over the past 15 years, a new study has found, calling for a legally binding international treaty to stop the harmful waste.

Ocean plastic pollution is a persistent problem around the globe – animals may become entangled in larger pieces of plastic like fishing nets, or ingest microplastics that eventually enter the food chain to be consumed by humans.

Research published on Wednesday found that there are an estimated

170 trillion pieces of plastic, mainly microplastics, on the surface of the world's oceans today, much of it discarded since 2005.

"Plastic pollution in the world's oceans during the past 15 years has reached unprecedented levels," said the study, published in open-access journal PLOS One.

The amounts were higher than previous estimates, and the study found that the rate of plastic entering the oceans could accelerate several-fold in the coming decades if left unchecked.

Researchers took plastic samples

from over 11,000 stations around the world focusing on a 40-year period between 1979 and 2019.

They found no trends until 1990, then a fluctuation in trends between 1990 and 2005. After that, the samples skyrocketed.

"We see a really rapid increase since 2005 because there is a rapid increase in production and also a limited number of policies that are controlling the release of plastic into the ocean," contributing author Lisa Erdle told AFP.

The sources of plastic pollution in the ocean are numerous.

Fishing gear like nets and buoys often end up in the middle of the ocean. Dumped or dropped by accident, while things like clothing, car tires and single-use plastics often pollute nearer to the coast.

They eventually break down into microplastics, which Erdle said can look like "confetti on the surface of the ocean."

### 'Flood of toxic products'

On current trends, plastic use will nearly double from 2019 across G20 countries by 2050, reaching 451 million tons each year, according to the report, jointly produced by Economist Impact and The Nippon Foundation.

In 1950, only two million tons of plastic were produced worldwide.

Recycling, even in countries with advanced waste management systems, has done little to help the pollution problem since just a small percentage of plastics are properly recycled and much often ending up in landfills instead.

If landfills are not properly managed, plastic waste can leech into the environment, eventually making its way to oceans.

"We really we see a lack of recycling, a flood of toxic products and packaging," Erdle said.

The rates of plastic waste were seen to recede at some points between 1990 and 2005, in part because there were some effective policies in place to control pollution.



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Republic of the Philippines  
Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
**NATIONAL WATER RESOURCES BOARD**  
1000 Alabang Rd., Alabang, Muntinlupa City, Philippines, 1500

CYRIL L. TAMARION,  
Applicant

Case No. 22-3426

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### THIRD NOTICE OF HEARING

This is an application for Certificate of Public Convenience to operate and maintain a waterworks system within Barangay Talongadian, municipality of San Miguel, province of Iloilo, with the following proposed rates:

#### 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 |
|-----------|--------------|---------|----------|----------|----------|------------|
| 3/4"      | P 75.00      | 16.60   | 17.40    | 18.20    | 19.00    | 19.00      |
| 5/8"      | P 127.00     | 26.60   | 27.90    | 29.20    | 30.40    | 31.70      |
| 1"        | P 253.00     | 53.30   | 55.80    | 58.30    | 60.80    | 63.40      |

##### Residential and Commercial

| Pipe Size | 0-5 m3 (min) | 6-10 m3 | 11-20 m3 | 21-30 m3 | 31-40 m3 | Over 40m3 |
|-----------|--------------|---------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| 3/4"      | P 75.00      | 16.60   | 17.40    | 18.20    | 19.00    | 19.00     |
| 5/8"      | P 127.00     | 26.60   | 27.90    | 29.20    | 30.40    | 31.70     |
| 1"        | P 253.00     | 53.30   | 55.80    | 58.30    | 60.80    | 63.40     |

##### Commercial and Industrial

| Pipe Size | 0-15 m3 (min.) | 16-30 m3 | 31-500 m3 | 501-1000 m3 | Over 1000 m3 |
|-----------|----------------|----------|-----------|-------------|--------------|
| 3/4"      | P 661.00       | 79.20    | 86.10     | 126.80      | 158.50       |
| 5/8"      | P 1,521.00     | 126.60   | 152.10    | 302.80      | 253.00       |
| 1"        | P 3,043.00     | 253.00   | 304.30    | 605.70      | 507.20       |

This application will be initially heard by the Board on **27 March 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 daily newspaper of general circulation in the province of Iloilo 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 25<sup>th</sup> day of January 2023.

By Authority of the Board:

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

#### Affected Parties:

The Secretary  
Sangguniang Bayan,  
San Miguel, Iloilo

The Barangay Chairman  
Barangay Talongadian  
San Miguel, Iloilo