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Maynilad eyes lifting of water service interruptions

By DANESSA RIVERA

West zone concessionaire Maynilad Water Services Inc. is eyeing to lift its water service interruptions within the week after the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) cleared the request to increase raw water allocation from Angat Dam.

The higher allocation will improve the volume of water supply reaching in the west zone, according to Maynilad president and chief executive

officer Ramoncito Fernandez.

"We have been monitoring the releases and it has been stabilizing at 52 cubic meters per second (CMS). We're also monitoring the La Mesa Portal, which will be the basis of our 60-40 sharing with Manila Water. Once that stabilizes, we expect the suspension of our set A-set B service interruption which we announced since the end of March," Fernandez said at a briefing yesterday.

From up to 19 hours of

water service interruption, some customers are now only experiencing up to 10 hours of no water from taps.

"The statement of 10 hours is a very conservative statement. The objective is zero or set A and set B will be suspended. Whether it will be totally from the portal or together with Manila Water, that will be discussed on our level. That is our commitment to NWRB," Fernandez said.

"We would just like to make sure before we announce that

that sked will be followed religiously, but definitely, customers are already experiencing improvements," he added.

Maynilad said it would inform its customers within the next 24 hours of the lifting of the service interruptions.

At the same briefing, Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) administrator Leonor Cleofas said the additional two CMS allocation is specific to the Maynilad concession area and will be up to May, subject

to documentary submissions.

"The additional (allocation) which is specific to the area of Maynilad is to minimize water interruption, and that is the instruction. That is also the reason why Manila Water is helping Maynilad. So, it's clear that the two CMS will not be approved if there will still be interruptions," Cleofas said.

Last month, Maynilad said some of its customers could experience water interruption of up to 14 to 19 hours due to the suspension of the cross-

portal sharing arrangement with Manila Water.

Manila Water was earlier forced to suspend the cross-portal supply sharing as the water elevation at La Mesa Dam has been going down in recent weeks.

MWSS-Regulatory Office chief regulator Patrick Ty said the regulator would constantly monitor the situation to ensure that the proper services are given to consumers.

- With Bella Cariaso, Diana Lhyd Suelto



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Maynilad sees less water cutoffs in West Zone

By Othel V. Campos

HAVING been given bigger allocation by the National Water Regulatory Board (NWRB), the Maynilad Water Services, Inc. said consumers in its west zone franchise area can expect less water interruptions during this summer.

However, the same could not be said for an estimated 79,000 residents of Bacoor, Kawit, Noveleta, and Rosario in Cavite provinces who may experience frequent water service cut offs.

The NWRB has agreed to increase the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System's (MWSS) raw water allocation from Angat-Ipo reservoirs to

52 million liters per day (MLD) from 50 MLD starting last Sunday and may extend it up the May.

"There was a clear directive from the NWRB that we will suspend the water interruption because of additional allocation that will be devoted to Maynilad. We are also gearing up our preparations in case there will El Niño as pre-

dicted by PAGASA by July or August this year, the impact of which will be later this year or early next year," said MWSS administrator Leonor Cleofas.

The NWRB earlier predicted massive water shortage next year if the El Niño phenomenon would longer than expected.

The MWSS, along with the two water concessionaires, Maynilad and Manila Water Co., have prepared short to medium water contingency plans such as the portable water treatment package plants in Marikina and Cavite which will be ready by end-April.

The Marikina plant, however, has been commissioned and supplies about 15 million liters of water per day.

The NWRB has also approved the

use ground water from existing deep wells, in case a need will arise to utilize the deep wells.

Cleofas said the MWSS appreciated efforts of Manila Water to help Maynilad by opening the cross boundary interconnection points to supply treated water to Maynilad service areas affected by water interruptions.

Maynilad reported that its water supply has stabilized since the NWRB approved the release of additional two million MLD that started flowing last Sunday.

"This higher allocation will definitely improve the volume of water reaching the portal and allowing Manila to increase its production as well as improve the levels of Ipo (dam) and La Mesa (Dam). We're also monitoring La Mesa

Portal which will be the basis of our 60:40 sharing with Manila Water. Once that is stabilized we expect the suspension of our set a, set b interruption which we announced end of March," said Maynilad president Ramoncito Fernandez.

He added that Maynilad has no definite timetable when the suspension of water interruption will commence, "but we will definitely try to advise within 24 hours and we are hoping it will start within the week as we are also monitoring La Mesa portal which is now at 46 cubic meter per second (cms)."

Turbidity improvement at the Laguna Lake has also increase water allocated for treatment at the Putatan treatment plants 1 and 2 to 280 combined volume which will address water shortage in Cavite.



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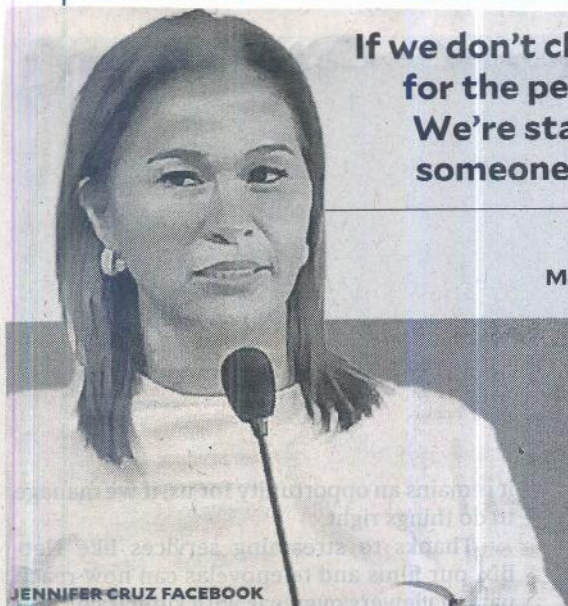
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JENNIFER CRUZ FACEBOOK

If we don't charge them, who will stand up for the people and our environment? We're standing up to them because someone must be held accountable

Jennifer Cruz
Mayor of Pola, Oriental Mindoro

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

REGIONS

Spill-hit town to sue 'irresponsible' groups

About 70% of Pola's shore still polluted and those who caused it must pay, says mayor

By **Jerome Aning**
@JeromeAningINQ

The mayor of Pola in Oriental Mindoro on Monday said the local government would pursue charges against groups and agencies responsible for the environmental damage wrought by the oil spill from the sunken MT Princess Empress in her town and adjoining areas in the province.

Speaking at the Laging Handa public briefing, Pola Mayor Jennifer Cruz said between 60 and 70 percent of the town's shores remained polluted by the oil spill since MT Princess Empress sank in the waters off Naujan and Pola towns on Feb. 28.

Cruz said the Department of Justice (DOJ) was helping her municipal government pursue charges against the "very irresponsible" entities behind the oil spill.

The tanker, owned by the Filipino company RDC Reield Marine Services Inc., was en route to Iloilo province when it sank while carrying 800,000 liters of



DIRTY WATER This photo from an aerial inspection by President Marcos and the Philippine Coast Guard on April 15 shows traces of oil in the waters off Oriental Mindoro even after more than a month since the fuel tanker MT Princess Empress sank in Naujan town. —PHOTO COURTESY OF PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

industrial fuel. Containment efforts led by the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) were still ongoing to plug the oil leaking from the vessel, which has settled in the depth off Pola's waters.

"They don't mind the great damage that they did to all the places where the oil spill [has] spread. They don't know how grave the damage done to our countrymen, to our shores, to our natural resources," she said.

"If we don't charge them, who will stand up for the people and our environment? We're standing up to them because someone must be held accountable," Cruz added.

Concern appreciated

The mayor did not say who were she aiming to bring to court but referred to reports that the ship was allowed to sail despite alleged noncompliance

with documentary requirements and other regulations.

The DOJ earlier said an inter-agency committee and the National Bureau of Investigation were probing the PCG, Maritime Industry Authority and the ship owner over reports that the tanker was allowed to sail without a permit and certificate of public convenience.

Cruz thanked President Marcos for showing his concern to Pola's plight when he visited the town on Saturday to supervise the distribution of relief goods and livelihood assistance to fisherfolk affected by the oil spill.

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources said more than 26,000 fisherfolk in Oriental Mindoro, Antique and Palawan were directly affected by the oil spill.

The damage in terms of inputs and produce, fishing gears and paraphernalia, and facilities and equipment amounted to a total of P445.3 million, the agency said. —WITH A REPORT FROM JULIE M. AURELIO INQ



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'Oil spill cleanup now 78% complete'

After a month and a half of continued operations, the oil spill cleanup along the shore of Oriental Mindoro is now 78 percent complete, according to the Philippine Coast Guard.

PCG incident management team (IMT) leader Commodore Geronimo Tuvilla informed President Marcos on April 15 that 77.9 percent of the affected shoreline is now free from oil slick.

The figure covers 31.64 kilometers of the 40.61-km oil-affected shoreline.

In a statement issued yesterday, the PCG told Marcos that its offshore response team had so far collected more than 20,000 liters of oily water.

Marcos visited the province on Saturday.

The PCG said its shoreline response team gathered approximately 134,000 kilos of oil-saturated debris from 12 affected barangays in the towns of Calapan, Naujan and Pola.

The report said the oil spill affected around 9,600 square meters of mangrove forest in Pola.

Of the estimated 9,600 sqm of mangrove forest, 8,900 sqm are located in the village of Batuhan, 500 sqm in Misong and 200 sqm in Calima.

During the visit, Marcos joined an aerial surveillance team to see the condition of the municipalities affected by the oil spill as well as the area where the PCG and the Malayan Towage and Salvage Corp. conduct offshore containment and recovery efforts.

Marcos assured residents of Pola that concerned government agencies, private stakeholders and foreign counterparts would implement the most efficient and effective response strategies to address the oil spill.

The oil came from the tanker *M/T Princess Empress*, which sank in the waters off Naujan town on Feb. 28.

The *Empress* was carrying 900,000 liters of industrial fuel.

From 24 leaks to 1

From the original 24 identified sources of oil leaks from the *Empress*, the number has been reduced to one after the rest were plugged by foreign experts tapped to help control the oil spill with the use of a remotely operated vehicle (ROV), the PCG said.

The remaining leak source was the second pressure valve located at the portside of the tanker.

The source has not yet been plugged "due to obstructions that may compromise the ROV operations," the PCG said.

Foreign experts used specialized bags made in the United Kingdom to plug the leaks in the *Empress*.

Locally made specialized bags produced by a golf bag manufacturing company in Silang, Cavite were also used to cover the leaks.

— Evelyn Macairan



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Long-term rehab of areas affected by oil spill needed

When news of the oil spill on the coast of Mindoro spilled to the media and on social media last Feb. 28, 2023, people were not aware of the magnitude and repercussions of that incident. Some assumed that it would only take a few days of cleanup to return the waters to its pristine condition, and a few days more to make the culprit accountable for its actions.

Details, however, emerged soon and the “prognosis” was bleak — and dark, like the spilt black oil that is highly toxic to the marine environment. It turned out that MT Princess Empress, which sank off Naujan in Oriental Mindoro, carried with it almost 900,000 liters of industrial fuel oil. En route from Bataan to Iloilo, the oil tanker encountered rough seas mid-way; it was an “accident” that no one had anticipated.

Soon, the oil spill manifested its deadly impact. In a recent report, the DSWD has said that the oil spill has affected nine municipalities in Oriental Mindoro, and two in Palawan. More than 100,000 residents were affected, while hundreds have fallen ill, with some experiencing respiratory-related symptoms. It should be noted that the Coast Guard described the oil slick as “black and thick, with strong odor.”

Though the oil spill has not yet directly affected the tourist area of Puerto Galera or the “center of the center of biodiversity” that is the Verde Island Passage, no day has passed without these two locations constantly being under threat. Authorities must ensure at all cost that the scope of the present affected areas will not spread out to unspoiled waters. Marine scientists have warned that any oil spill damage to Verde’s protected areas will be “irreversible” and would take generations to repair.

Aside from the environmental impact, the economic effect of the oil spill is also catastrophic, especially to the coastal towns whose residents rely on the waters for livelihood and survival. The Marcos administration was aware of this when the President reiterated the government’s long-term commitment to rehabilitate the oil spill affected areas.

Last April 15, the President conducted an aerial inspection to assess the extent of the damage and held a meeting with local executives in Pola, Oriental Mindoro. He also distributed livelihood assistance packages to the communities.

The President assured residents that all responsible government departments, such as DTI, DSWD, DOLE, and TESDA are committed to assist in terms of providing livelihood, training, and funding. “Rest assured that we will not leave you. You can count on the national government to be here with you until this issue is resolved, so that we can help you go back to your normal lives,” the President said.

The commitment of the national government for long-term rehabilitation is commendable. But there needs to be lessons learned. For example, the government has to invest in modern equipment and technology to immediately “cut” the source of an oil spill and “contain” the affected areas.

Reactive responses must also be thrown out of the window. Though they can’t prevent oil tankers from criss-crossing our archipelagic nation, maritime authorities must fully ensure that there are measures or protocols in place to assess if a vessel is sea-worthy. Otherwise, this Mindoro oil spill will just be one of the many maritime tragedies we will witness in this lifetime — and not the last of its kind.



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Recto says oil spill time for cooperation to fight eco-threats

By Maricel V. Cruz

DEPUTY Speaker and Batangas Rep. Ralph Recto on Monday said the Mindoro oil spill is an opportune time for the country's allies to exercise an "environmental Balikatan to combat an environmental threat."

"It is not yet late for the government to turn the Mindoro oil spill as site of an 'environmental Balikatan' where even nations at loggerheads with each other, like the U.S. and China, can "work together in fighting a real ecological disaster instead of an imaginary enemy," Recto said.

Recto said he believes that should the country issue a call for help (SOS), "our true friends will come."

He said the Philippines can bank on the "global humanitarian tradition" of helping a nation in distress "when its resources are overwhelmed by the challenges at hand."

"Tayo naman 'pag may disaster sa ibang bansa, automatic na nagpapadala ng tulong. Nang lumindol nga sa Turkey, nagpadala kaagad tayo ng isang eroplanong puno ng medical and rescue personnel and equipment," he said.

When it comes to the oil spill, Recto said nations "are raring to test their manpower and equipment in real life, not tabletop, situation."

More than a month after the tanker MT Princess Empress sank off Naujan and Pola towns in Mindoro Oriental, reports said the 800,000 liters of industrial fuel the vessel was carrying have seeped out and destroyed marine life in three regions.

Recto said if this month's Balikatan in five provinces can mobilize 17,000 troops from two countries for a "mock war," then even a fraction of the personnel and logistics involved will be a great help "in battling a real, not simulated, ecological threat.

Recto said if Beijing and Washington are competing for our affection, then they should see the Mindoro oil spill as an opportunity for them to show their solidarity with us.

"Each has made a declaration of supporting us. But what we need is an actual demonstration that will affirm their intention," he said.



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Recto prods Palace to open oil spill site for 'envi Balikatan'

BY JOVEE MARIE N. DELA CRUZ

[@joveemarie](#)

A HOUSE deputy speaker on Monday urged President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. to open the Oriental Mindoro oil spill site for a multi-nation "environmental Balikatan" exercise.

Deputy Speaker Ralph Recto said it is not yet late for the government to turn the Mindoro oil spill as a site for an environmental Balikatan where even nations at loggerheads with each other, like the US and China, can "work together in fighting a real ecological disaster instead of an imaginary enemy."

Recto said he believes that should "the country issue an SOS, our true friends will come."

He said the Philippines could bank on the "global humanitarian tradition" of helping a nation in distress "when its resources are overwhelmed by the challenges at hand."

"When there is a disaster in another country, we automatically send aid. When the earthquake hit Turkey, we immediately sent a plane full of medical and rescue personnel and equipment," he said.

When it comes to the oil spill, Recto said nations "are raring to test their manpower and equipment in real life, not tabletop, situation."

More than a month after MT Princess Empress sank off Naujan and Pola towns in Oriental Mindoro, reports said the 800,000 liters of industrial fuel it was carrying have seeped out and destroyed marine life in three regions.

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Recto said if Beijing and Washington are competing for our affection, then they should see the Mindoro oil spill as an opportunity for them to show their solidarity with the Philippines.

"Each has made a declaration of supporting us. But what we need is an actual demonstration that will affirm their intention," he said.

The entire province of Oriental Mindoro is now under a state of calamity because of the oil spill, which has also hit coastal areas in Batangas, Antique and Palawan.



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Expert pushes biodiversity protection measures in disputed West PHL Sea

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA
@jonlmayuga

MANY key biodiversity areas in the Philippines remain unprotected, and measures that seek to protect these, including natural resources in the disputed West Philippine Sea (WPS), are imperative.

This was stressed by Dr. Ma. Carmen Ablan-Lagman, a professor at the Department of Biology, De La Salle University, Manila, who spoke about the richness of the biological diversity in the disputed territory during a webinar organized by Stratbase ADR Institute for Strategic and International Studies on Monday.

"Finding new species new to science is not new to the Philippines. We are the center of the center marine biodiversity. In 2015, the California Academy of Sciences launched an expedition through which they discovered over 100 new species," she noted.

"Biodiversity creates the conditions for human existence and the ability to survive it provides the water we drink, the air we breathe, the food we eat, the shelter [we need]," she said.

However, Ablan-Lagman said disruptive fishing practices and even

coastal development, aggravated by climate change impacts, are putting pressure on biodiversity.

As far as fishery resources are concerned, she said the Bajo Masinloc and the Kalayaan Island Group (KIG) in the WPS provide hope.

For the fish, habitats like mangroves, seagrass, and corals are important for them to survive, she added.

Ablan-Lagman said that in 2020, fisheries yield in Bajo Masinloc is a lot higher than the national average, and higher in terms of yield compared to any other areas in the world.

Other studies, she noted, also have similar results, highlighting the productivity of the WPS in terms of fishery production.

According to Ablan-Lagman, House Bill 6373, or the KIG Scarborough Shoal Marine Protected Area Bill, and Senate Bill 1697, or an Act declaring the three nautical miles surrounding the KIG Group and the Scarborough Shoal in the WPS as a Marine Protected Area under Republic Act 7586 or the National Integrated Protected Areas System of 1992 as amended by Republic Act 11038 or the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System Act of 2019 are a welcome initiative, given that biodiversity in these areas means food,

water and even shelter that needs to be protected and harnessed.

"Looking at how the Philippines requires protection, these are some of the bills that we actually needed," she said.

However, Lagman-Ablan said the aspect of area protection should be extensively discussed because there are other interests other than just protection, although she highlighted that protection gives people food, water, and shelter, in general.

She noted that China, for one, has unilaterally declared a ban on fishing in the disputed areas, which is pushing Filipino fishermen away from their traditional fishing grounds. Other claimant countries, she noted, also have fishing policies that may be in conflict with that of other claimants to territories being disputed in fish-rich areas.

What is needed, Ablan-Lagman emphasized is for the Philippines to harmonize its environmental and fisheries policies with that of other countries that have a stake in the territory.

Moving forward, she said there's a need for a spatially explicit management plan bringing together biodiversity protection and multiple interests to be shared openly with stakeholders.



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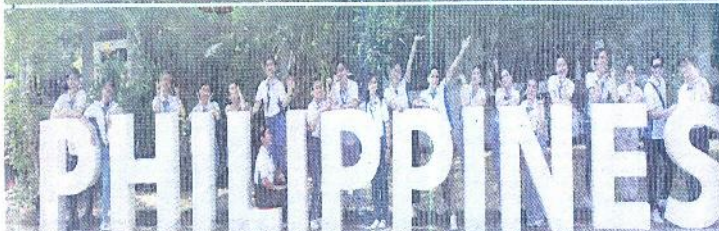
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WE ARE ALL HERE

WORLD'S FIRST GREEN TRAVEL MART YIELDS ARRAY OF CRUCIAL OUTCOMES FOR ECOTOURISM



From the proverbial four corners of the world came vital action and planning for ecotourism as an essential mover to uplift people's lives and nurture nature amidst climate challenges. All these, through the International Ecotourism Travel Mart (ETM), The Philippines marked history when 25 nations networked, shared learnings and resources, engaged, and discovered more during the multi-faceted ETM, the world's first green travel mart, from March 29 to April 2, 2018 in Silang, Cavite.



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Witness the 12th International Ecotourism Travel Mart (ETM) Philippines, the world's first green travel mart, which was held from March 29 to April 2, 2018 in Silang, Cavite. The event was a landmark occasion for the Philippines, marking the first time that a multi-faceted green travel mart was held in the country. The ETM Philippines was a landmark occasion for the Philippines, marking the first time that a multi-faceted green travel mart was held in the country. The ETM Philippines was a landmark occasion for the Philippines, marking the first time that a multi-faceted green travel mart was held in the country.



The Department of Tourism and Ministry of Tourism Promotion (DOT) was highlighted in the ETM, together with its role as a leading SME growth through its Market Order. Exhibitors engaged by the DOT include various local businesses and services, showcasing products and services to the international market.



The ASEAN Centre for Industry, located at the ASEAN Heritage Park in Cavite, was the venue for the ETM. The event was a landmark occasion for the Philippines, marking the first time that a multi-faceted green travel mart was held in the country. The ETM Philippines was a landmark occasion for the Philippines, marking the first time that a multi-faceted green travel mart was held in the country.



ETM engagements and other collaborations were expanded in the ETM. Activities which were in ETM included the 11th World Ecotourism and Adventure Travel Awards, 14th ASEAN Ecotourism Awards and the 1st ASEAN Ecotourism Awards. The event was a landmark occasion for the Philippines, marking the first time that a multi-faceted green travel mart was held in the country.



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The missing trees in subdivisions and the failure to implement forestry laws

THERE is an existing law that was issued by then President Ferdinand Marcos Sr. that is worth revisiting, if only to ask whether it is even being implemented and followed.



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The missing trees in subdivisions

In 1976, Marcos Sr. issued Presidential Decree 953, which technically is the equivalent of an act of Congress since it was promulgated when he had law-making powers. Thus, it would take an act of Congress to amend or revoke any of its provisions, or its entirety. To this day, there has been no such amendatory or repealing act.

Section 1 of the PD 953 clearly makes it mandatory for certain parties to plant trees. No. 2 of the section states: "Every owner of an existing subdivision shall plant trees in the open spaces required to be reserved for the common use and enjoyment of the owners of the lots therein as well as along all roads and service streets. The subdivision owner shall consult the Bureau of Forest Development as to the appropriate species of trees to be planted and the manner of planting them."

The law further requires that these owners who are required to plant trees would engage not only in tree planting, but also in tree nurturing, and should "take good care of them, and, from time to time, remove any tree planted by them in their respective areas which has grown very old, is diseased, or is defective, and replant with trees their respective areas whenever necessary."

The law further requires in Section 2 that "[e]very owner of land subdivided into residential/commercial/industrial lots after the effectivity of this decree shall reserve, develop and maintain not less than thirty percent (30 percent) of the total area of the subdivision, exclusive of roads, service streets and alleys, as open space for parks and recreational areas."

The law also clearly stipulates the mandatory nature of this provision, as further provided for in Section 2, which states: "No plan for a subdivision shall be approved by the Land Registration Commission or any office or agency of the government unless at least thirty percent (30 percent) of the total area of the subdivision, exclusive of roads, service streets and alleys, is reserved as open space for

parks and recreational areas and the owner thereof undertakes to develop such open space, within three (3) years from the approval of the subdivision plan, in accordance with the development plan approved by the Bureau of Forest Development and to maintain such parks and recreational areas."

To show the seriousness of the law, punitive measures are specified. Those who fail to plant trees within their subdivisions, as stipulated in Section 1, are to be punished according to the provision stated in Section 4, which states: "Any person who shall violate any provision of Section one hereof, or any regulation promulgated thereunder, shall be punished with imprisonment for not less than six months but not more than two years, or with a fine of not less than five hundred pesos but not more than five thousand pesos, or with both such imprisonment and fine at the discretion of the court. If the offender is a public officer or employee, he shall, in addition, be dismissed from the public service and disqualified perpetually to hold public office."

Those subdivision owners who fail to allocate at least 30 percent of the total land area of their subdivision as open space for parks and recreational areas, as specified in Section 2, are also meted out a penalty in accordance with Section 5, which states: "Any person who shall violate the provision of Section 2 hereof, or any regulation promulgated thereunder, shall be punished with imprisonment for not less than two (2) years but not more than five (5) years, or with a fine equivalent to the value, at current valuation, of the area representing thirty percent (30 percent) of the total area of the subdivision, or both such fine and imprisonment at the discretion of the Court."

It therefore behooves us to ask if these provisions are followed by subdivision owners and are faithfully enforced by the government through agencies attached to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and

the Department of Justice (DoJ). A quick and very raw look at the subdivisions I am familiar with or have visited gives me the impression that there may be a reason to believe that the law is not fully and faithfully enforced.

The success of laws rests on compliance. However, in order to ensure compliance, the appropriate government agencies should faithfully perform their duties as provided by law. Section 2 provides that the then Bureau of Forest Development (BFD), which has since been reorganized and renamed as the Forestry Management Bureau (FMB), which is a bureau under the DENR, is tasked to approve development plans to ensure that the 30 percent rule, as well as the tree planting requirement, are complied with. The FMB is also tasked to provide technical advice to subdivision owners on the appropriate tree species to plant, which is presumed to be contained in the subdivision development plan.

Section 2 also directs the Land Registration Authority (LRA), which is attached to the DoJ, to ensure that the 30 percent requirement is complied with, and should withhold approval of any subdivision plan if such is not complied with.

If these provisions are followed, then what we should have are subdivisions with significant open and green spaces. If the FMB and the LRA are enforcing compliance, then we should not be seeing violations. And we would be hearing of violators being fined or jailed, and those who happen to be government employees, even if they may occupy high positions, being perpetually barred from running for public office.

Many things are being said about the rule of former President Marcos Sr., but this particular law, which, ironically, he decreed using his martial law powers, makes sense particularly now that having more green spaces would be a positive step in climate mitigation. It is time to begin calling out people, or if not, for heads to roll.



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PHL eyes wider access to Germany's international climate change initiative

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA
@jonmayuga

THE Philippines is eyeing bigger access to Germany's International Climate Initiative (IKI) as the two countries hold a high-level consultation today, Tuesday, to strengthen partnerships for accelerating their respective climate agenda both at the global and national levels.

DENR Secretary Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga and Germany's State Secretary and Special Envoy will lead the 1st PHL-German Consultation on Climate for International Climate Action Jennifer Lee Morgan.

The Philippines is a focus of Germany's IKI being one of the most vulnerable countries in the world.

To date, IKI projects with the Philippines exceeded 63 million euros in funding covering projects on mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions, adaptation to the impacts of climate change, and conservation of natural carbon

sinks with a focus on reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+), and biodiversity conservation.

The IKI is a funding program initiative for climate action and biodiversity conservation established in 2018 by the German government as part of its commitments in the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

At least 700 projects in more than 120 countries are funded by IKI with around 3.9 billion euros.

Loyzaga will be joined in the discussion by senior officials from the member agencies of the Cabinet Cluster on Climate Change Adaptation, Mitigation, and Disaster Risk Reduction, while Morgan will be accompanied by German Ambassador to the Philippines Anke Reiffenstuel and other senior officials at the German Embassy Manila.

The consultation aims to come up with a blueprint on how the two countries can start activating a hotline between their respective

environment authorities and other key government agencies to accelerate the implementation of some of the priority environmental programs of the Philippines, including its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC).

The NDC binds the Philippines to attain an emission or avoidance in its greenhouse gas by 75 percent, which is equivalent to 3,340 million metric tons of carbon dioxide, as part of the country's commitment to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

Agenda items also include critical environmental issues of immediate global and national concern, such as the Philippines' environmental priority programs on water security, decarbonization of the Philippine economy through transitioning to renewable and sustainable energy in keeping with its NDC target, and the strengthening of the country's climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction and management capacities.



'Big sponge:' New CO2 tech taps oceans to tackle global warming

By ROMAIN FONSEGRIVES

SAN PEDRO, United States (AFP) – Floating in the port of Los Angeles, a strange-looking barge covered with pipes and tanks contains a concept that scientists hope to make waves: a new way to use the ocean as a vast carbon dioxide sponge to tackle global warming.

Scientists from University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) have been working for two years on SeaChange – an ambitious project that could one day boost the amount of CO2, a major greenhouse gas, that can be absorbed by our seas.

Their goal is “to use the ocean as a big sponge,” according to Gaurav Sant, director of the university's Institute for Carbon Management (ICM).

The oceans, covering most of the Earth, are already the planet's main carbon sinks, acting as a critical buffer in the climate crisis.

They absorb a quarter of all CO2 emissions, as well as 90 percent of the warming that has occurred in recent decades due to increasing greenhouse gases.

But they are feeling the strain. The ocean is acidifying, and rising temperatures are reducing its absorption capacity.

The UCLA team wants to increase that capacity by using an electrochemical process to remove vast quantities of CO2 already in seawater – rather like wringing out a sponge to help recover its absorptive power.

“If you can take out the carbon dioxide that is in the oceans, you're essentially renewing their capacity to take additional carbon dioxide from the atmosphere,” Sant told AFP.

Trapped

Engineers built a floating mini-factory on a 100-foot (30-meter) long boat which pumps in seawater and subjects it to an electrical charge.

Chemical reactions triggered by electrolysis convert CO2 dissolved in the seawater into a fine white powder containing calcium carbonate – the compound found in chalk, limestone and oyster or mussel shells.

This powder can be discarded back into the ocean, where it remains in solid form, thereby storing CO2 “very durably... over tens of thousands of years,” explained Sant.

Meanwhile, the pumped water returns to the sea, ready to absorb more carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Sant and his team are confident



A SAMPLE of removed carbon in the solid form of calcium carbonate and magnesium hydroxide is displayed during a briefing about UCLA's SeaChange project at the Port of Los Angeles in San Pedro, California on April 12, 2023. (AFP)

the process will not damage the marine environment, although this will require further testing to confirm.

A potential additional benefit of the technology is that it creates hydrogen as a byproduct. As the so-called “green revolution” progresses, the gas could be widely used to power clean cars, trucks and planes in the future.

‘If you can take out the carbon dioxide that is in the oceans, you're essentially renewing their capacity to take additional carbon dioxide from the atmosphere,’ according to Gaurav Sant, director of the university's Institute for Carbon Management (ICM).

Of course, the priority in curbing global warming is for humans to drastically reduce current CO2 emissions – something we are struggling to achieve.

But in parallel, most scientists say carbon dioxide capture and storage techniques can play an important role in keeping the planet livable.

Carbon dioxide removal (CDR) could help to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 as it offsets emissions from industries which are particularly difficult to decarbonize, such as aviation, and cement and steel

production.

It could help to tackle the stocks of CO2 that have been accumulating in the atmosphere for decades.

‘Promising solution’

Keeping global warming under control will require the removal of between 450 billion and 1.1 trillion tons of CO2 from the atmosphere by 2100, according to the first global report dedicated to the topic, released in January.

That would require the CDR sector “to grow at a rate of about 30 percent per year over the next 30 years, much like what happened with wind and solar,” said one of its authors, Gregory Nemet.

UCLA's SeaChange technology “fits into a category of a promising solution that could be large enough to be climate-relevant,” said Nemet, a professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

By sequestering CO2 in mineral form within the ocean, it differs markedly from existing “direct air capture” (DAC) methods, which involve pumping and storing gas underground through a highly complex and expensive process.

A start-up company, Equatic, plans to scale up the UCLA technology and prove its commercial viability, by selling carbon credits to manufacturers wanting to offset their emissions.

In addition to the Los Angeles barge, a similar boat is currently being tested in Singapore.

Sant hopes data from both sites will quickly lead to the construction of far larger plants that are capable of removing “thousands of tons of carbon” each year.

“We expect to start operating these new plants in 18 to 24 months,” he said.



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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

On the ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS) of the proposed **95.2 MW IN ISLAND BASELOAD POWER PLANT PROJECT** of the CONAL HOLDINGS CORP. to be located in **BARANGAY IMELDA, UBAY, BOHOL**.

Notice is hereby given to all parties who wish to give their opinion regarding the implementation of the proposed **95.2 MW IN ISLAND BASELOAD POWER PLANT PROJECT** to attend the Public Hearing on:

Date	Time	Venue
03 May 2023 (Wednesday)	9:00 AM <i>Registration starts at 8:30 a.m.</i>	Covered Court, Barangay Imelda, Ubay, Bohol

The Public Hearing is being conducted in connection with the review of the EIS of the aforementioned project by the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The following is the project information:

Project Name	95.2 MW In Island BaseLoad Power Plant Project
Project Location	Barangay Imelda, Ubay, Bohol
Project Type/Capacity	Thermal Power Plant (Diesel)/95.2 MW
Project Rationale	The proposed project aims to develop a diesel power plant with an installed capacity of 95.2 MW located in Brgy. Imelda, Ubay, Bohol. The plant will serve as a backup power plant when the Leyte to Bohol submarine cable shall undergo maintenance and when an Islanding Event occurs in Bohol Island, rendering the Bohol sub-grid totally electrically isolated from the Visayas Grid. Additionally, in order to comply with the 100% dependable capacity requirement as indicated in the Terms of Reference of the One Bohol Joint Distribution Utilities Competitive Selection Process, the capacity of the in-island power plant will be the same as the contracted capacity of the power supply.
Project Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 72 units of Diesel Generators with total installed capacity of 95.2 MW <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 67 operating units and 5 spare units • Interconnection System/Switching Station • 2 x 2500 m³ diesel fuel storage capacity • Plant Switchyard • Operator Room • Cooling Water System • Fire Protection System • Oil-Water Separator • Wastewater Discharge Pond
Proponent	Conal Holdings Corporation

All interested parties who wish to attend or participate in these Public Hearings should preferably confirm their attendance/participation and may give their opinion(s) in a concise position paper to the ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT DIVISION (EIAMD) of this Office through mail or e-mail at eia@emb.gov.ph at least three (3) days before the Public Hearing schedule. Those who will not be able to register or submit written positions may be given the opportunity to share their issues on the day of the hearing itself.

The project's EIS and Executive Summary for the Public are downloadable at our website: www.eia.emb.gov.ph (kindly access the Notice of Public Hearing/Consultation link found in our website) while copies will be available in the following offices:

1. **EMB Region VII**
DENR Compound, Greenplains Subdivision, Banilad, Mandaue City
Tel. No. (032) 290-9777
2. **Ubay Municipal Hall**
Municipality of Ubay, Province of Bohol

For more details, please contact the EIAMD Division at this Office at telephone number (02) 8539-4378 loc. 116 through the project case handlers, Engr. Carl Anthony del Rosario and Ms. Leonil Marie Gargar.

(PDI – April 18, 2023)



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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

On the ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) REPORT of the proposed Dalton Pass East Alignment Road Project of Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) located in Municipality of Carranglan, Nueva Ecija and Municipality of Santa Fe and Aritao, Nueva Vizcaya.

Notice is hereby given to all parties who wish to give their opinion regarding the implementation of the proposed Dalton Pass East Alignment Road Project to attend Public Hearing that is scheduled as follows:

Date	Time	Venue	Participants
03 May 2023 (Wednesday)	9:00 AM (Registration starts at 8:30)	Covered Court of the Municipal Hall of Aritao, Aritao, Nueva Vizcaya	Residents of Nueva Vizcaya
04 May 2023 (Thursday)	9:00 AM (Registration starts at 8:30)	PAG-ASA Gymnasium of the Municipal Hall of Carranglan, Carranglan, Nueva Ecija	Residents of Nueva Ecija

The Public Hearing is being conducted in connection with the review of the EIS of the aforementioned project by the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The following is the project information:

Project Name	Dalton Pass East Alignment Road Project		
Project Location	Municipality of Carranglan, Nueva Ecija and Municipality of Santa Fe and Aritao, Nueva Vizcaya		
Project type/Length	Road Project/23 kilometers		
Project Rationale	The objective of this project is to construct a bypass road that includes but not limited to roads, bridges, tunnels and slope protection works, that will serve as an alternate route bypassing the existing Dalton Pass Section along Pan-Philippine Highway (PPH) in the event of road closure brought about by calamities/natural disasters such as typhoons and earthquakes, thereby directly connecting the Cagayan Valley Region (Region II) and eastern part of Central Luzon Region (Region III) to the National Capital Region (NCR)		
Project Components	Road	Total Length: 23 km Lane: 4 lanes Design Speed: 60 km/hr. Width: 60 m ROW	
	Tunnel	Length of the North Tunnel: 4.5 km Length of the South Tunnel: 1.6 km Construction of lighting, ventilation, and emergency facilities	
	Bridge	Total Number: 14 Total Length: 3.5 km	
Proponent	Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH)		

All interested parties who wish to attend or participate in this Public Hearing should preferably confirm their attendance/ participation and may give their opinion(s) in a concise position paper submitted to the ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT DIVISION (EIAMD) of this Office through e-mail or eia@emb.gov.ph, at least three (3) days before the Public Hearing schedule. Those who will not be able to register or submit written positions may be given the opportunity to share their issues on the day of the hearing itself.

The project's EIS and Executive Summary for the Public is downloadable at our website: www.eia.emb.gov.ph (kindly access the Notice of Public Hearing/Consultation link found on our website) while copies will be available in the following offices:

EMB Region II
20 Pagayaya Road, Regional Government Center,
Carig Sur, Tuguegarao City, Cagayan

Municipality of Santa Fe
Santa Fe, Nueva Vizcaya

Municipality of Carranglan
Carranglan, Nueva Ecija

Municipality of Aritao
Aritao, Nueva Vizcaya

EMB Region III
Masinoo Corner Matalino St., Diosdado Macapagal
Government Center, Maimpis, San Fernando, City,
Pampanga

For more details, please contact the EIAMD Division at this Office at telephone number (02) 8538 4378 local 116 and look for the project case handler **Engr. Joel G. Polintan** or **Ms. Joena Marie Pagulayan** at this e-mail: joel.polintan@emb.gov.ph and joena.pagulayan@emb.gov.ph.

Protect the environment... Protect life...

(PDI-April 18 & 25, 2023)