



Republic of the Philippines
Province of Occidental Mindoro
MUNICIPALITY OF ABRA DE ILOG

OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL MAYOR

28 January 2022

LORMELYN E. CLAUDIO CESO IV

Regional Executive Director

DENR MIMAROPA

THRU : **ERNESTO E. TAÑADA**
PENRO
OCCIDENTAL MINDORO

**SUBJECT: ENCROACHMENT OF ILLEGAL SETTLERS IN LAWAN
WATERSHED AND FORESTLANDS, IN BGY. POBLACION
AND BGY. BALAO, ABRA DE ILOG, OCCIDENTAL
MINDORO**

DEAR RED CLAUDIO/PENRO ERNIE:

Please allow me to refresh and bring to fore the worsening controversy of encroachment and illegal occupancy by *tagalog* and *Mangyan* settlers in the watershed and forestlands of Sitio *Lawaan* in barangay Poblacion, Abra de Ilog, Occidental Mindoro.

This area is a DENR and LGU reforestation site, protected and heritage park for primary growth forest. It also is the spring source of potable water for four (4) of our ten (10) barangays with continuous planned spring development.

The illegal settlers in this area have their residences in the adjacent and contiguous barangays of *Balao* and *Wawa*. They relocated in this pristine area in 2012 and their numbers are continuously swelling. From around eight (8) families then to more than forty (40) at present. They cut down trees, brush strip areas, *kaingin* and charcoal making. Our water supply, classed Double AA is under threat of contamination from their human activities. They bathe in the streams, indiscriminately scatter trash and defecate in the area.

We ask for the help and intervention of the DENR to put a stop to this environmentally degrading activity. We call on the DENR to initiate administrative or legal action similar to that undertaken in Palawan, in Caticlan and elsewhere in resolving forest and watershed human settlement encroachment issues.

There have been preparatory steps taken such as delineation of the forest areas and watershed but these have at the moment been shelved. We have called these occupants to dialogues and appraised them of their illegal occupation, environmentally destructive activities and health threatening actions but they persist and disregard all our requests and warnings.

This matter has also been brought to the attention of the IPs tribal council and they have been advised that their actions are not countenanced by their leadership. The council's recommendation is for them to vacate the watershed mindful and aware of the danger of disease human habitation can bring on a protected water source.

Having possibly exhausted all means for a rational resolution of the issue, coupled with our obligation to promote public health, protect environment, and guarantee the safety and cleanliness of our only source of potable water for our four (4) barangays, we call on the DENR to initiate a formal proceeding to settle this getting out of hand controversy.

Our inhabitants are clamoring for immediate action on this matter as the threat of disease from contaminated water increases with the unrestrained flow of new settlers.

Please get in touch with me or our MPDO and MENRO designate Emerito R. Cristalino at 09985582004; mpdc_abradeilog@yahoo.com; mpdcabradeilog@gmail.com for coordination on this.

Very truly yours,


ERIC A. CONSTANTINO
Municipal Mayor

Copy furnished:

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