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Department of Environment and Natural Resources
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Sender: JAIME LLAGUNO MABILIN

Address: PRESIDENTIAL COMPLAINT CENTER
BAHAY UGNAYAN, JOSE P. LAUREL STREET MALACANANG, MANILA

Subject: LETTER DTD 02/22/2023 LETTER FROM MS. DANA NARVADEZ SILVERIO MAKATI CITY SEEKING
INTERCESSION RELATIVE TO ISSUES AND CONCERNS WITH PCC CODE NO. PM-DAVE-02-22-2023-050

Addressee(s): Office of the Secretary (DENRCO - OSEC)

CC Addressee(s):

Date/Time Received: 03/14/2023 02:54:00 PM

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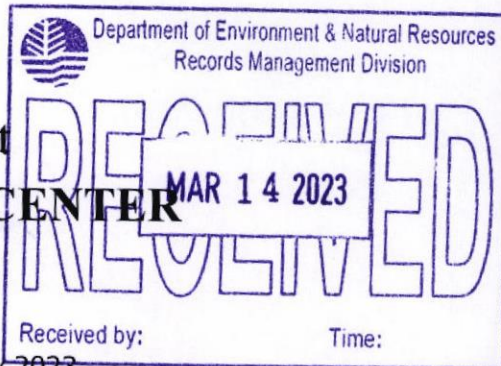
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Office of the President
PRESIDENTIAL ACTION CENTER
Malacañang, Manila



22 February 2023

Secretary MA. ANTONIA YULO-LOYZAGA

Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Visayas Ave., Diliman
1101 Quezon City

Thru: HEA JOSE JOAQUIN YULO LOYZAGA

Madam:

Respectfully forwarding the attached letter dated 26 January 2023, with enclosures, addressed to **PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS, JR.**, for appropriate action, consistent with existing laws, rules and regulations on the matter, from **Ms. DANA NARVADEZ SILVERIO** c/o Makati Tuscan, 6751 Ayala Avenue, Makati City, seeking Presidential intercession relative to issues and concerns which, as stated therein, may be best coordinated/addressed by that Office.

A reply direct to the party/ies concerned, copy furnished the Center, citing **PACE Code No. PM-DAVE-02-22-2023-050**, will be highly appreciated. Expeditious action is requested in accordance with the provisions of Republic Act No. 11032, otherwise known as the Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2018 as implemented and enforced by the **Anti-Red Tape Authority**. Please be reminded that failure to timely respond to the public's concern shall be ground for administrative sanctions under existing laws and regulations.

Our cordial regards.

Very truly yours,

JAIME LLAGUNO MABILIN
Director IV

Encl.:a/s
Cc: party/ies concerned
/dave

Note: Enclosures forwarded to agency thru mail

IMPORTANT

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BANTAY KALIKASAN NG SIBUYAN
San Fernando, Romblon

13 January 2023

RESPECTFULLY SEEKING THE ATTENTION OF:

Hon. Maria Antonia Yulo Loyzaga
Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES
DENR Compound, Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City

Atty. Wilfredo G. Moncano
Director of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR MINES AND GEOSCIENCES BUREAU
MGB Compound, North Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City

Engr. William P. Cuñado
Director of the Environmental Management Bureau
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT BUREAU
DENR Compound, Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City

SUBJECT: ALTAI Philippines Mining Corporation's Licenses and Permits for Mining Operations in San Fernando, Romblon

Dear Madams and Sirs,

We, the undersigned, are representatives of a group of individuals under the coalition **BANTAY KALIKASAN NG SIBUYAN**, an organization dedicated to conserving the ecosystems and natural resources of Sibuyan Island in the province of Romblon. We are all residents of San Fernando, Romblon where ALTAI was granted **MINERAL PRODUCTION SHARING AGREEMENT (MPSA) No. 304-2009-IVB** which has a term of twenty-five (25) years. The said MPSA covers the contract area of 1,580.8010 hectares situated in the Municipality of San Fernando, Sibuyan Island.

The MPSA was suspended by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) through a **CEASE-AND-DESIST ORDER (CDO) dated 19 September 2011**. However, the CDO was lifted by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) through **DENR ORDER dated 09 September 2021**.

We are writing this letter to bring to your attention our long-running dismay and concerns regarding ALTAI's mining activities in San Fernando, Romblon. To give some historical context on the issue, in 2007, **Armin Marin**, a staunch anti-mining advocate and a member of the Sangguniang Bayan of San Fernando, died during a rally pushing back against mining activities in the island after he was gunned down by an ALTAI security guard.

Presently, and to the best of our knowledge and the information available to us, ALTAI is still in its exploration phase and is not yet allowed to commence mining operations. However, as of the time of this writing, ALTAI already has a stockpile of ore ready for shipment. Furthermore, ALTAI has completed the causeway for barges and has readied the haul roads. Additionally, many trees have already been cut and announcements for hundreds of job vacancies have already been posted by ALTAI.

Unfortunately, despite strenuous efforts on our part, we are not getting any further information, clarifications, nor help from our relevant provincial and local officials as to the status of ALTAI's mining operations. Significantly, our clamors for the stoppage of ALTAI's mining activities have been largely ignored.

With these precedents in mind, we are now constrained to respectfully write to your Honorable Offices to inquire about ALTAI's licenses and permits for its mining operations in San Fernando, Romblon, specifically:

Office of the President
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

OP Copy



022023-MRO-41998

BANTAY KALIKASAN NG SIBUYAN

San Fernando, Romblon

A. EXPLORATION PERMIT ("EP")

1. Does ALTAI have an EP?
2. If not, what are the requirements for ALTAI to be issued an EP?
3. Who among civil society stakeholders were notified prior to DENR's lifting of the CDO against ALTAI in observance of due process?
4. Specifically, what are the activities allowed under ALTAI's EP?
5. Does ALTAI's EP permit already allow the following acts to be done by ALTAI: (a) large-scale cutting of trees; (b) construction of haul roads; (c) construction of pier/causeway for barges; and (d) the stockpiling of ore?

B. ENVIRONMENTAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE ("ECC")

1. What is the status of ALTAI's application for an ECC?
2. At present, is ALTAI permitted to conduct the following acts: (a) large-scale cutting of trees; (b) construction of haul roads; (c) construction of pier/causeway for barges; and (d) the stockpiling of ore?
3. Specifically, what are all the documents and permits required by the DENR, MGB, EMB, and other relevant administrative agencies before ALTAI can start its mining operations in San Fernando, Romblon?

C. MINING ACTIVITIES vis-à-vis EXPLORATIVE PHASE

In the DENR ORDER dated 09 September 2021 that lifted the MGB's CDO against ALTAI's MPSA No. 304-2009-IVB, it was stated in the ruling portion thereof that:

"First, the MPSA of Altai was merely in the Explorative Phase, meaning that a full-scale mining project is still subject to another application and assessment for Declaration of Mining Project Feasibility (DMPF), the grant of which is contingent on whether or not the project is technically, socially, environmentally, and financially feasible and compliant. It is only at this point that the concerns of the then Municipal Mayor could be raised as the applicant would be required to secure an Environmental Compliance Certificate, develop an Environmental Protection and Enhancement Program, and Mine Rehabilitation and/or Decommissioning Plan.

"Second, the activities of Altai are limited only to activities to determine the feasibility of the project and is not a full-scale mining operation..." [Emphasis added]

1. If ALTAI is merely in its Explorative Phase, is ALTAI already permitted to conduct the following acts which are akin to a full-scale mining operation: (a) large-scale cutting of trees; (b) construction of haul roads; (c) construction of pier/causeway for barges; and (d) the stockpiling of ore?

2. Does the acts of the people of Sibuyan Island in continuously raising and communicating their opposition against mining operations in Sibuyan Island enough to demonstrate the social infeasibility of said operations in the island? What more do the people of Sibuyan need to do?

Through this letter, we are expressing our firm opposition to mining operations in the whole of Sibuyan Island. It is the people of Sibuyan Island, whom we represent, that will ultimately suffer when changes caused by mining to the terrain of our island makes it susceptible to landslides, flooding, siltation of agricultural lands and rivers, as well as the destruction and pollution of watersheds, coral reefs, and fishing grounds.

Notably, Sibuyan Island's ecosites and landmarks will also be significantly affected. Cantingas River, which was declared the cleanest inland body of water in the country, will be severely affected. Olango River where Dagubdob Falls is located will also be seriously affected. Significantly, Cantingas River and Dagubdob Falls, two of the main nature attractions of the island for tourism, will be negatively affected by mining operations in the island if not altogether destroyed. The 1,580.8010 hectares covered by ALTAI's MPSA encroach on both Cantingas and Olango rivers, not to mention the other rivers that will be affected, if not obliterated, by the mining operations.

BANTAY KALIKASAN NG SIBUYAN
San Fernando, Romblon

Sibuyan Island is also home to numerous species of birds, flora, and fauna which are endemic to the island. Stripping the topsoil will seriously affect the stability of the landscape. No amount of rehabilitation will be able to restore the deforestation of the mined-out areas which will consequently affect not only the people of Sibuyan but also all the species of birds, flora, and fauna found therein.

We are now earnestly praying that your Honorable Offices will take action on not only the contents of our letter but also to halt the continuation of ALTAI's mining operations in Sibuyan Island. Let it be known once more that the people of Sibuyan Island are against mining, whether it be ALTAI or any other mining company or organization.

We respectfully expect a clear, candid, and straightforward response to the issues and concerns we have raised herein. Thank you.

Representatives of Bantay Kalikasan ng Sibuyan:

ELMOR A. BORDA

ALFREO B. PASCUAL

VERONICA R. BARTAN


PRISCILLA R. REY

HELLY Y. ASOY

Copies furnished:

LORMELYN E. CLAUDIO

DENR Regional Executive Director for Region IV-B (MIMAROPA) DENR Regional Office for Region No. IV-B 3/F, 1515 DENR Building, Roxas Boulevard, Ermita, Manila

ENGR. GLENN MARCELO C. NOBLE

MGB Regional Director for Region IV-B (MIMAROPA) MGB Regional Office for Region No. IV-B 7/F, 1515 DENR Building, Roxas Boulevard, Ermita, Manila

JOE AMIL M. SALINO

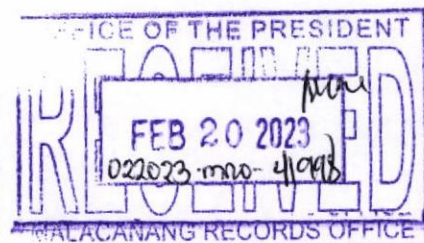
EMB Regional Director for Region IV-B (MIMAROPA) EMB Regional Office for Region No. IV-B 6th Flr. DENR by the Bay Bldg., 1515 Roxas Blvd., Ermita, Manila

¹ Cinco, Maricar. "Campaign on to save 'cleanest' river in PH." *INQUIRER.net*, 22 September 2014, <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/639773/campaign-on-to-save-cleanest-river-in-ph>.

² Foundation for the Philippine Environment, https://www.fpe.ph/conservation_site/location_details/sibuyan-island-romblon

26 January 2023

His Excellency
FERDINAND E. MARCOS, JR.
President
Republic of the Philippines
Malacañang Palace, Manila



Dear Mr. President:

I have the honor of writing Your Excellency, on behalf of the tens of thousands of deeply concerned residents of Sibuyan Island in the Province of Romblon, in light of the imminent environmental and social threat that our island is facing because of mining.

I was born, raised and had an idyllic childhood in the sleepy town of San Fernando, one of the three municipalities comprising Sibuyan Island. The other two are Cajidiocan and Magdiwang.

Benevolently overlooking the island is majestic Mount Guiting Guiting and its lush forests, crystal clear rivers, waterfalls and streams. The 15,200-hectare Mt. Guiting-Guiting Natural Park is a biological treasure, home to an estimated 700 plant species, 130 bird species and a few rare mammals, including the small, nocturnal tube-nosed fruit bat. Many of these are endemic to the island. Befittingly, Sibuyan is popularly dubbed as the "Galapagos of Asia."

Mount Guiting-Guiting or G2 is the highest peak in the province of Romblon with an elevation of 6,752 ft above sea level. It is ranked 73rd-highest peak of an island on earth. In terms of difficulty, it is considered as one of the toughest hikes in the Philippines. It is actually used as a training ground for Filipinos heading to Nepal before attempting Mt. Everest. Over the years, hundreds, even thousands of local and foreign mountaineers have tried to conquer G2. Some have lost their lives in the attempt, most unfortunately.

Still another of Sibuyan's natural treasures is Cantingas River in my hometown of San Fernando. It is said to be the cleanest in the Philippines. We used to drink straight from it back in the days, even until now. In fact, it is a major watershed area. It is also used to generate hydroelectric power that provides power for the towns of Sibuyan.

The abundance of waterfalls, with virtually one in each barangay, means that we have a rich source of natural power that provide potable drinking water for the people and irrigation for farmlands, and as an alternative source of electricity for the island as well. Given the escalating cost of imported oil these days, these sustainable sources of power must be protected.

In addition, the rich diversity of marine life and the bounty of fish and aquatic resources from the waters of Sibuyan Sea is truly remarkable. Oldtimers recall that it was your late father himself, President Ferdinand Marcos, Sr., who ordered the planting of mangrove trees in the island.

If Your Excellency may recall, you once told me that the best Lapu-lapu you have ever tasted is from Sibuyan.

Indeed, this speck of an island, with an area of just 445 square kilometers, is a jewel that must be treasured and protected from the insatiable greed of some.

But all of these precious natural heritage is now being imperiled with the looming mining operations for high grade nickel perpetrated by Altai Philippines Mining Corp. (APMC). Please consider these facts:

- Foremost, no community acceptance or people's approval have been secured to date.
- Mining equipment have already arrived in the island.

- Though only a Mining Exploration permit has been issued by the DENR, APMC is now in full operation, i.e., excavation, constructed haul roads, hauling and stock filling of earth (soil) amounting to 50,000 metric tons of nickel ore.
- Hauling ship from China has docked in sitio Binayaan, España, a barangay of San Fernando, apparently ready for loading and transport of extracted minerals to another country.

The area that they are planning to mine in San Fernando is about 2,000 hectares, but its impact on the environment and the social cost will be devastating and irreversible. At the rate ALTAI violates the rules, no doubt that they are capable of extending and wreaking havoc beyond the 2,000 hectare area of operation.

Sibuyan is so small that environmental damage in one area automatically affects the rest of the island. The nagging question now is: should we allow the "Galapagos of Asia" to suffer the same fate of some other Philippine islands which were ravaged by mining and never recovered what God's bounty has given them?

We are not against mining per se. We understand the use of these minerals for some vital industries, especially electronics. However, let not Sibuyan pay the excessively high price. Simply too much for a small island to bear.

Despite their promise of transparency, they are actually employing deceptive strategies. They've been saying nice things but are actually doing the opposite. Seemingly, they are very well versed and well placed at playing this game. Which is why we urgently need His Excellency's intervention to save our island from an impending degradation of its environment and the lives of its people.

On an encouraging note, albeit ALTAI may have the material and political resources, or even the "savviness" to meet their objectives, but the Sibuyanons have the integrity, courage and conviction to defend and preserve their beloved Sibuyan.

As a Native American proverb says:

WE DO NOT INHERIT THE EARTH FROM OUR ANCESTORS.
WE BORROW IT FROM OUR CHILDREN.

Thank you very much, Mr. President, for hearing me out. I just can not stand by and allow my home to be destroyed knowing that I could have done something to stop it.

May I request for an audience with you together with CONCERNED SIBUYANONS whose letter to the DENR I am attaching herewith.

Very respectfully yours,

DANA NARVADEZ SILVERIO

c/o

Makati Tuscany

6751 Ayala Avenue, Makati City.

Cell No. 0917-8886255



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25 January 2023

Honorable Ma. Antonia "Toni" Yulo-Loyzaga
Secretary
Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)
Visayas Avenue, Quezon City
Philippines

Dear **Secretary Toni**,

Greetings from Sibuyan Island!

With Aksyon Klima Pilipinas, it was heartwarming to meet and talk to you during our climate dialogue at DENR and informal conversations at the United Nations Conference on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 28th Conference of Parties (COP28).

As you know, I also come from Sibuyan Island in the province of Romblon called by conservationists as "Galapagos of Asia", a biodiversity hotspot and a center of endemism. It is where I started my environmental work opposing the entry of mining to preserve ecosystems integrity and defend the rights of our people to a healthful and balanced ecology.

On December 28, 2022, the central office of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) under your office approved a Mineral Ore Export Permit (MOEP) which prompted its MIMAROPA Regional Office to issue an Ore Transport Permit (OTP) allowing the hauling of 50,000 wet metric tons of nickel ore to be shipped to China as part of exploratory activities of Altai Philippines Mining Corporation (APMC) called "metallurgical bulk sampling and analysis" as provided for by Section 5.5.5 of the Exploration Work Program (ExWP) approved on December 21, 2022.

The undersigned seeks urgent clarification on the following:

1. Excavation and extraction of 50,000 metric tons of nickel ore require clearance of vegetation including shrubs, plants and trees, and removal of top soil. The exploration area is within the buffer zone of Mt. Guiting-guiting Natural Park per official map from the Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB). MGB has been consistent in its position that no Environment Compliance Certificate (ECC) is needed for exploration stage, hence, no Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). In what category of Environmental Impact System (EIS) policy does extraction of 50,000 metric tons fall that fact that massive earth moving and vegetation clearance are required? Was the EIS policy amended or changed to accommodate exemption to excavate and extract 50,000 metric tons during exploration period?

Sibuyan Island: life-support of the present existence, a conditional inheritance of the past, owned by the future generation.



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2. In Section 4.5 the approved Environmental Work Program (EWP) of APMC, it claims that no rare, threatened or endangered species of plants and animals have been found. However, it is mentioned in same EWP that there are White Lauan, Toog, Yakal, Kamagong, Narra and Red Lauan - all these are threatened plant species. Threatened animals are also listed: wild pig, wild deer, perico kulasisi, Philippine tuko, among others.
3. Does the extraction and hauling of 50,000 metric tons of nickel ore complement or contradict the provisions of DENR Memorandum Order 2023-01, DENR DAO 2022-04 and Environmental Management Bureau 2014-05?

With the situation negatively escalating on the ground, on behalf of Sibuyan Island residents, I seek that your office declare an urgent status quo pending a DENR Central Office-led scientific, multisectoral, transparent and inclusive mining audit. Attached is a briefer of the mining issue in Sibuyan Island.

I hope for your immediate action on this matter.

Sincerely yours,

Rodne R. Galicha
Chairperson