



November 30, 2023

**MEMORANDUM**

**FOR** : The Regional Executive Director  
DENR- MIMAROPA Region  
1515 L&S Building  
Roxas Blvd., Ermita, Manila

**THRU** : The Provincial Environment and  
Natural Resources Officer  
Sta. Monica, Puerto Princesa City

**FROM** : The Community Environment and  
Natural Resources Officer

**SUBJECT** : **UPDATES ON THE HALF-SUBMERGED VIETNAMESE VESSEL  
(VIET HAI STAR) IN BALABAC, PALAWAN**

This pertains to the half-submerged Vietnamese-flagged vessel (Viet Hai Star) in the vicinity waters off Balabac, Palawan that ran aground at approximately 810 yards off Balabac Port on November 21, 2023 while on their way to Cagayan De Oro City from Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, loaded with 4,000 tons of rice and carrying 29,000 liters of automotive diesel oil (ADO).

Please be informed that Local Government Unit (LGU) of Balabac, Palawan issued Executive Order No 46, Series of 2023, dated November 24, 2023, creating the Municipal Incident Management Team (IMT) with the following functions:

- to manage the response activities of the Municipality of Balabac
- to conduct of risk assessment of the impact areas;
- to conduct Information Education Campaign (IEC) on the hazard of oil spill to the affected communities;
- containment of oil spill and its debris by the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG and coastal clean-up led by MDRRMO;
- fabrication of indigenous oil spill boom to supplement the oil spill containment;
- containment of the environmental impact of the oil spill to the marine ecosystem; and
- document the operational costs of the oil spill response of the LGU Balabac.

According to the report of the Municipal IMT, as of November 28, 2023, there are four (4) barangays which were affected by the oil spill. These are Barangays Poblacion 3, 4, 5, and 6 wherein there are evidences of contamination of the shoreline/baywalk areas/beach areas and contamination of mangrove areas (please see attached photos).

Simultaneous and continuous coastal/shoreline clean-ups are being conducted by the PCG, PDRRMO, PNP-MARIG, crews of Viet Hai Star and other Barangay Volunteers led by MENRO which resulted to a collection of total of 10.5 drums (20,500 liters) of oily water mixture and 1,045 contaminated debris (mixture of contaminated sand, wood, and absorbent pads).

Further, underwater inspection was conducted by the PCG, it was noticed that the source of oil spill is from the exhaust vent (gooseneck vent) which is suspected from a sludge tank located on the starboard side (right side) midship of the subject vessel flowing in the direction going to the shoreline, 400 yards NW off Balabac, Palawan. Based on the underwater inspection of PCG, the FES Challenger Marine and Builders personnel conducted diving operations to survey and patch the areas of oil leak. The dive team patched/closed four (4) blowers, six (6) air vents, one (1) chimney door, four (4) doors and four (4) windows.

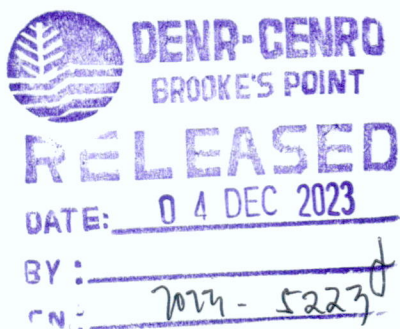
Moreover, additional improvised oil spill boom was provided by MRDDMO Balabac and additional oil spill boom from Coast Guard District Palawan were laid out around the vessel. Thereafter, the PCG continued the application of dispersants, manual scooping of oil spill and absorbents on the oil trapped within the boom.

Currently, the DENR-PEMU coordinated with LGU Balabac (MENRO, MDRRMO) and PCG regarding the incident and conducted water sampling activity within the vicinity waters of the affected Barangays (please see attached photos).

Meanwhile, continuous coordination meetings are being conducted by the PCG, MDRRMO, PNP-MARIG, LGU Balabac, Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD) DENR-Provincial Environmental Management Unit (PEMU), Harbor Star Shipping Services (Salvage Team) to synchronize all the efforts and actions taken regarding the incident. As agreed during the recent coordination meeting, there will be an inventory and assessment of the areas affected by the oil spill and another meeting with Harbor Star regarding the ship salvage and towage.

This Office will continue to monitor the situation in Balabac in coordination with PCG, DENR-PEMU and DENR-CENRO Brooke's Point – Balabac Sub-Office.

For your information, record, and further instruction.



  
LEONARD T. CALUYA



**Actual situation and location of Viet Hai Star as of November 29, 2023**





**Water sampling activity conducted by DENR-PEMU**





**Actual photos showing the affected areas of oil spill**













