



Republic of the Philippines  
**PROVINCE OF ORIENTAL MINDORO**



**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**

05 May 2023

**MS. MARIA ANTONIA YULO-LOYZAGA**

Secretary

Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Through **MS. LORMELYN E. CLAUDIO, CESO IV**  
Regional Executive Director  
DENR MIMAROPA

Dear Secretary Loyzaga:

Greetings from Oriental Mindoro!

It has been more than two months, 66 days to be exact, since the oil tanker MT Princess Empress, carrying 800,000 liters of fuel, sank in the waters of Oriental Mindoro, and the province continues to suffer from the catastrophic damage it has done not only on our marine resources, but also in the livelihood of numerous Oriental Mindoreños.

With the oil spill affecting the quality of water in our coastlines and fishing areas, the provincial government declared a fishing ban to protect the people from ingesting contaminated water and sea food until the BFAR and DENR declare it safe through regular tests being conducted in different locations.

As of this writing, more than 75,000 families located in the coastal *barangays* of Oriental Mindoro are affected by this oil spill tragedy. These are families of fisher folks, fish vendors and those whose livelihood are dependent on the fishing activities along the coasts of the province. With no source of income since the implementation of the fishing ban, they are forced to rely on in-kind assistance from the provincial and the national governments.

With the Philippine Coast Guard declaring 86% accomplishment in the clean-up operations, and with the Department of Health recently relaying favorable drinking water test results in different *barangays* of Naujan and Pola, we are hopeful that we can eventually lift the fishing ban so that our fisher folks can resume with their livelihood. However, we want to be consistently cautious so as not to compromise the health and safety of our *kababayans*.

Last Monday, 01 May, in a meeting with the Philippine Coast Guard and DOST-NRCP Lead Expert for Oil Spill Professor Hernando Bacosa, a discussion was made regarding the current condition of the fishing ban. Dr. Bacosa shared studies conducted on marine life during an oil spill. The result of the studies supports the position of NOAA Science Support Coordinators who are closely monitoring the oil spill situation in Oriental Mindoro. To further substantiate the recommendation and expert opinion of Professor Bacosa and the PCG, we sought the opinion and official statement of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources on the matter.

In this regard, may I request for the official position and statement of the DENR relative to the status of our sea water, our marine resources, and the fishing ban in the province, which I hope to receive within 48 hours upon the DENR's receipt of this letter, as I intend to make an official announcement regarding the fishing ban in Oriental Mindoro in a media conference on Monday, 08 May.

Attached herewith are pertinent documents for your reference, as well as the expert opinion and professional advice of Professor Hernando Bacosa. I look forward to your prompt action relative to this request, and I thank the DENR for being the PGOM's partner in making sound decisions through data-driven information as we recover from this environmental and economic catastrophe.

Very truly yours,

  
**GOVERNOR HUMERLITO "BONZ" A. DOLOR, MPA, PH.D.**

Senior Vice President for Luzon South, League of Provinces of the Philippines