

## BANTAY KALIKASAN NG SIBUYAN

Pascual Compound Gov. Adriano Rios St. Poblacion, 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. Cuiado**  
*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 Marín**, 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:





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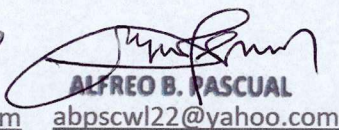
Sibuyan Island is also home to numerous species of birds, flora, and fauna which are endemic to the island. Stripping the topsoil will seriously affect the stability of the landscape. No amount of rehabilitation will be able to restore the deforestation of the mined-out areas which will consequently 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.

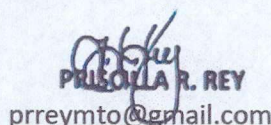
We respectfully expect a clear, candid, and straightforward response to the issues and concerns we have raised herein. Thank you.

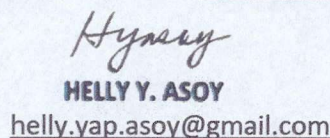
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1. Cinco, Maricar. "Campaign on to save 'cleanest' river in PH." *INQUIRER.net*, 22 September 2014, <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/639773/campaign-on-to-save-cleanest-river-in-ph>.

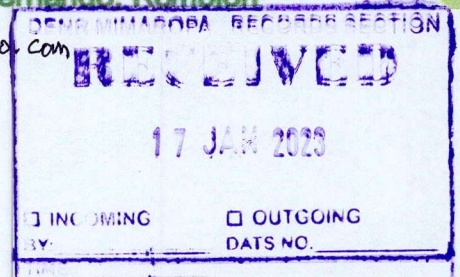
2. Foundation for the Philippine Environment, [https://www.fpe.ph/conservation\\_site/location\\_details/sibuyan-island-romblon](https://www.fpe.ph/conservation_site/location_details/sibuyan-island-romblon)



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### 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.