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By: Sheldeen Joy Talavera

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Information and Knowledge Management Division

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DoE pushes 22 green energy projects for NGCP system impact study

By: Sheldeen Joy Talavera

The Department of Energy (DoE) said it endorsed 22 renewable power projects to the National Grid Corp. of the Philippines (NGCP) in June for a system impact study (SIS).

“In June 2024, the DoE issued 22 SIS endorsements to the NGCP which are all new applications,” the department said in a document posted on its website.

Such studies are conducted to determine the adequacy and capability of the grid to accommodate the new connection.

The government aims to increase the share of renewable energy in the country’s power generation mix to 35% by 2030 and 50% by 2040.

Data from the Energy department showed that it has issued SIS endorsements for 13 solar power projects and nine wind power projects.

Among the notable projects is the Terra Solar Project under SP New Energy Corp., which consists of a 3,500-megawatt (MW) solar-power plant and a 4,500-megawatt-hour battery-energy storage system.

The projects also include the 516.10-MW Suncastle Baao Solar Farm Project, 421.97-MW Medellin Solar Power Project, 365.46-MW Cabiao Solar Power Project, 304.06-MW Tinang Tarlac Solar Power Project, 300-MW San Jose Wind Power Project, and the 280-MW GigaWind1 Floating Solar Power Project.

The list also includes the 229-MW San Luis Solar Power Project, 169.55-MW Iguig Solar Power Project, 131.79-MW Calamba Floating Photovoltaic Solar Power Project, 86.74-MW San Marcelino Solar Power Project, 61.31-MW Cabcaben Solar Power Project, and the 67-MW Magat Floating Solar Power Project.

The DoE has also issued SIS endorsements for the 300-MW Botolan Wind Power Project, 300-MW San Jose Wind Power Project, and the 50-MW Mabini Wind Power Project.

The department has also endorsed the Ubay Wind Power Project, Quezon Wind Power Project, Butuan 1 Wind Power Project, Gumaca-Pitogo Wind Power Project, Butuan Wind Power Project, and Palayan-Laur Wind Power Project for the study, all of which have a capacity of 100 MW.

For the first half of the year, the DoE has endorsed a total of 88 power projects, of which three are energy storage systems.

DAILY TRIBUNE

Group urges BBM to address plastic production

By: Elmer Recuerdo

An advocacy group is urging the Marcos Jr. administration to address the plastic production as well as importation of plastic materials in the light of the recent flooding brought by typhoon “Carina” as it also helps the global challenge to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The environmental group BAN Toxics said the exponential increase in plastic production is expected to exacerbate the so-called “triple crisis” of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution.

“It has always been easy to blame trash and the lack of discipline for recent and future flooding, yet the climate impacts of unhampered plastic production, along with land use conversion, large-scale mining, and their contribution to environmental degradation are being overlooked,” the group said in a statement on Thursday.

“The President must realize that 99 percent of all plastics are derived from fossil fuels, the largest contributor to the global climate crisis,” the group said.

“The import of finished plastic products and wastes into the country, combined with the current rate of domestic plastic production and other factors, is overwhelming the capacity of our waste management systems, rendering them ineffective,” Jam Lorenzo, head of BAN Toxics’ Policy Development and Research, said.

In 2021, the Philippines, imported 1.98 million ton of plastic raw materials, plastic products, and plastic packaging with 393 kilo tons export, making it a net importer of plastics, the group said.

The country had a virgin resin production capacity of 900 kilo tons in 2019, with projections of at least an additional 360 kilo tons from 2021 onwards.

“With only 9 percent of consumed plastics being recycled and 33 percent disposed of in landfills, an estimated 35 percent — or about 1 million tons of plastic waste in 2021 — leak into the open environment. This amount is equivalent to the average weight of 714,285 sedan vehicles, more than the total number of registered vehicles in Metro Manila,” the group added.

These figures do not include the import of hazardous plastic wastes, both legal and illegal into the country, as well as the illegal waste imports from developed countries, BAN Toxics said.

“The Extended Producers Responsibility law has so far been failing to compel multinational corporations to take immediate action to phase out single-use plastics, as evidenced by brand waste audits in the country. Many of the companies that topped the list have previously been identified as top plastic polluters in global brand audits,” the group stated.

“We stand with the Filipino people in holding the government accountable for the recent floods and those yet to come, and we call for science-informed and human rights-based climate actions,” it said.

GMA NEWS

Typhoons forming closer to coast due to climate change — study

Typhoons in Southeast Asia are forming closer to coastlines, intensifying more rapidly and lasting longer over land due to climate change, according to a joint scientific study released on Wednesday.

Coastal communities and cities like Hai Phong in Vietnam and the Thai capital Bangkok are "facing unprecedented threats from longer lasting and more intense storms", a statement about the study said.

Researchers from the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) in Singapore and Rowan University and the University of Pennsylvania in the United States analysed "more than 64,000 modelled historic and future storms from the 19th century through the end of the 21st century" to come up with the findings, the statement said.

Published in the peer-reviewed Nature partner journal Climate and Atmospheric Science, the study "highlights significant changes in tropical cyclone behaviours in Southeast Asia".

The changes include "increased formation near coastlines and slower movement over land, which could pose new risks to the region", the statement said.

It added that climate change, which has caused ocean waters to warm, can alter the paths of tropical storms in the region, home to more than 650 million people.

"Our study shows that as the cyclones travel across warmer oceans from climate change, they pull in more water vapour and heat," said Benjamin Horton, director of NTU's Earth Observatory of Singapore and a co-author of the research.

"That means stronger wind, heavier rainfall, and more flooding when the typhoons hit land."

Lead author Andra Garner of Rowan University's School of Earth and Environment said people living along the region's densely populated coastlines were the most vulnerable.

"There were two takeaways: First, we should be acting to reduce emissions, so we can curb the impacts of future storms," Andra said.

"Second, we should be acting now to protect those coastlines for the future, which will likely see some worsened tropical cyclone impacts regardless of future emissions."

Just last week, intense rains from Typhoon Gaemi caused heavy flooding in the Philippine capital Manila and parts of Kaohsiung city in Taiwan.

It was the strongest typhoon to hit Taiwan in eight years, and left at least five people dead and hundreds injured.

In the Philippines, it exacerbated seasonal rains and triggered flooding and landslides that killed at least 30 people.

MANILA BULLETIN

How plastics worsen floods, emissions

By: Climate Reality Project

Anyone can draw a line from plastics to floods. In the recipe of murky urban floodwaters, plastic products are a staple ingredient. Labo or sando bags, bottles, food containers, and sachets—you name it, you can find them bobbing along rushing floodwaters during typhoon season.

Suffocating our drainage systems, plastic waste makes floods worse. A 2023 report commissioned by Tearfund confirms this: It found that plastic pollution increases the risk of severe and frequent flooding in poor communities.

Not that Filipinos need any reminders.

Drawing a line between plastics and flooding

Many videos of the Typhoon Carina-enhanced "habagat" floods showcase the pollution problem—people wading through chest-high waters, with plastic bottles and bags floating around them. Days after the rain stopped, residents from affected areas still cleared trash off their streets. Water damage to their homes aside, residents' health is also at risk from prolonged exposure to waste.

Much of this plastic is thrown into canals, clogging storm drains, and sewers. Last week, when the waters rose because of the non-stop downpour, the trash rose with it.

Dire as the situation is, it is not new—it did not appear overnight. In fact, the issue of plastic pollution and waste disposal has long been intertwined with flood management discussions.

No less than President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. himself expressed this when he conducted an on-ground inspection of the devastated communities, urging Filipinos to practice proper waste disposal so the installed flood pumps could work effectively.

The connection is clear: Plastic pollution exacerbates flooding, and in turn, increases the damages floods cause. But one line many Filipinos have yet to draw from plastics to floods runs through climate change.

Putting two and two together

In every step of their production and its eventual disposal, plastic products heat the planet in various ways.

For example, at the production stage, 99 percent of plastic products are made from petrochemicals. These are derived from fossil fuels like oil and natural gas. To process these materials, more fossil fuels are consumed, which then adds to the already alarming amount of greenhouse gases across the planet.

Greenhouse gases, in turn, accumulate to trap heat in the atmosphere by absorbing and reradiating heat from the sun. This then leads to what the world now experiences as global warming.

Climate change is linked to extreme weather events like prolonged heat waves and super typhoons. The hotter the planet becomes, the stronger typhoons it produces. As typhoons get stronger, floodwaters grow higher—to the detriment of climate—vulnerable nations like the Philippines.

What at first might be largely attributed to pollution, worsening floods can also be traced back to plastic production and consumption.

The line that connects the two does seem blurry, long, and complex, but it is there. This line grows more apparent when considering that plastic production is estimated to be responsible for 3.3 percent of greenhouse gas emissions.

For comparison, the world emits around 54.6 billion tons of greenhouse gases annually; 1.8 billion of which is attributed to plastic production. A ton is equal to 1,000 kilograms, which then means that the plastic industry produces 1,800,000,000 kilograms worth of greenhouse gases.

With that much contribution to global warming, and in turn, to stronger typhoons and worse floods—is the line clearer now?

Seeing the big picture

The plastic industry is making floods worse two-fold: through pollution and its staggering greenhouse gases. It makes sense then that flood management solutions adopt a systemic approach to the problem.

Right now, two proposed bills exist in the Senate, both of which aim to tackle the plastic crisis through taxation. The goal is to deter consumers from buying single-use plastics by raising prices.

Recently, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority suggested waste incineration as another possible solution—a proposal that Climate Reality Philippines vehemently opposes. Incineration is a counterproductive approach to plastic waste management. Providing a seemingly easy solution, this proposal may inadvertently incentivize increased plastic production.

In terms of addressing the issue of pollution and flood control, these proposals are not enough. The plastic problem is deeply rooted in overproduction and consumption, far surpassing the realm of individual responsibility.

The real solution now lies in connecting the dots and retracing the lines. To solve the country's plastic issue, policymakers need to step back and look at the big picture—determine the root cause of the crisis and start there.

Beyond holding consumers accountable, officials should get huge plastic-producing companies to take responsibility. And more than promoting proper waste disposal, authorities should implement bolder moves to combat the impacts of plastics on our environment, with a focus on eliminating single-use plastics.

SUNSTAR

Integrated flood-control master plan 'non-existent' in PH

By: Third Anne Peralta-Malonzo

Department of Public Works and Highways Secretary Manuel Bonoan said on Thursday, August 1, 2024, that the Philippines has no integrated flood control master plan.

In the opening of the inquiry conducted jointly by the Senate Committee on Public Works and the Environment, Natural Resources, and Climate Change on the impacts of the combined effects of the habagat and Super Typhoon Carina, which submerged dozens of villages, particularly in the National Capital Region (NCR) and Central Visayas, Bonoan said that currently, there were several master plans in the 18 major river basins across the country, but they were not integrated.

He said these maste rplans were being updated, taking into account the climate change phenomena and other factors that should be incorporated.

Bonoan said the master plans are also very specific in each river basin because they have different requirements.

He also clarified that the 5,521 completed flood control projects touted by President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. during his third State of the Nation Address (Sona) last week were stand-alone projects to provide immediate relief to low-lying areas.

He said these projects were initiated during the previous administration and were continued after being halted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

“These are immediate projects engineering interventions na hindi kasama sa master plan. These projects are what we call the immediate relief for flood mitigation,” said Bonoan.

In short, presidential sister Senator Imee Marcos said these were band-aid solutions to mitigate flooding.

Senator Joel Villanueva who hails from Bulacan, one of the hardest-hit areas of the recent calamity, said the problem is floodwaters tend to spill over to the nearby province of the one with a working flood control system.

"Kung hindi po integrated, kung gagawin mo yun sa isang lugar, ‘yung kabilang side naman, ‘yung kabilang probinsiya, kabilang town, kabilang barangay, yun naman ang babahain," he said.

(If it's not integrated, if you do it in one place, the other side, the other province, the other town, the other barangay, will be flooded instead.)

“Yung 5,500 pala na programs projects na natapos na ipinagmalaki ng ating pangulo ay patsi-pasti lang. Di rin nakatulong kasi patsi-patsi nga po,” he added.

The 5,500 programs and projects that our president boasted about are actually piecemeal. They didn’t help because they were indeed piecemeal.

Committee chairperson Ramon “Bong” Revilla said the Philippine government has spent around P1 trillion for flood control over the past ten years.

Senator JV Ejercito raised the immediate need for the country to come up with a law mandating the formulation and institutionalization of a comprehensive infrastructure development master plan in light of the massive floods in Metro Manila and nearby provinces due to the intensified monsoon rains brought by Super Typhoon Carina.

Thousands of families have been displaced due to the massive flooding brought about by the recent calamities.

Marcos earlier said among those to be blamed for the flooding is the improper disposal of waste, which caused clogging in the drainages.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

10 million trees up for planting to rehabilitate Central Cebu

The Mananga River in Talisay City has been identified as possible site for a reforestation and watershed recovery project dubbed as Carbon PH led by the Aboitiz Group in partnership with the Cebu Provincial Government.

The project intends to rehabilitate and sustain the Central Cebu Protected Landscape (CCPL) and its surrounding areas by planting over 10 million trees.

The CCPL covers several areas in Cebu, including Toledo City, Talisay City, Danao City, Balamban, Consolacion, Liloan, and Compostela. Protected areas in Cebu City also include the Buhisan Dam, Sudlon National Park, Cotcot Lusaran Watershed Forest Reserve, Mananga Watershed Forest Reserve, and Central Cebu National Park.

Carbon PH Project, as reported, is the first multi-partite reforestation and watershed recovery effort which targets approximately 13,000 to 15,000 hectares within the CCPL and an additional 25,000 hectares of adjacent forest land.

Governor Gwendolyn Garcia even expressed that the area must be planted with trees avoiding it not to dry, during a meeting with Cebu City Acting Mayor Raymond Alvin Garcia and Talisay City Mayor Samsam Gullas on Wednesday, July 31.

Atong i-rehabilitate, mananom tag mga kahoy. Panamnan gyod na nato kay kung di na nato tamnan, mao ra gihapon, mouga ra gihapon ta, said Garcia in a post by Sugbo News, Capitol s official media arm.

The tree planting activity will proceed alongside the desilting operations of the Mananga River. This desilting operation clears water springs obstructed by years of heavy siltation, prevent pool formation, and ensure a steady water flow to the Metropolitan Cebu Water District s (MCWD) Jaclupan Facility.

Present during the meeting were Aboitiz Foundation president Ana Margarita Hontiveros-Malvar, MCWD general manager Edgar Donoso, Department of Environment and Natural Resources Provincial ENR Office (DENR-PENRO) official Arnold Omandam, and Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) first district Engineer Leslie Molina.

Environmental Management Bureau Region 7 (EMB) chief of the Environmental Impact Assessment Section Engr. Mary Ann Bueno, contractors involved in the desilting of the

rivers, and barangay captains from the concerned areas of the cities of Talisay and Cebu were also in attendance.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

PUNTO CENTRAL LUZON

Mayor Lazatin to receive climate hero award
By: Angeles Cio

Angeles City Mayor Carmelo “Pogi” Lazatin, Jr. is set to receive the Climate Hero Award from the Climate Change Commission, in line with his efforts and dedication to enhance climate resilience and sustainability in the city.

This is in reference to a letter dated August 1, 2024 from Commissioner Albert Dela Cruz, Sr. recognizing Lazatin’s steadfast commitment to environmental stewardship and resilience-building efforts.

In the said letter, Dela Cruz stated, “We believe your achievements not only benefit Angeles City but also serve as inspiration to cities globally.”

Dela Cruz also mentioned Mayor Lazatin’s visionary leadership and commitment to sustainable urban development which garnered international acclaim, particularly with the city’s selection by UN Habitat as a partner in the Building Climate Resiliency through Urban Plans and Designs Project.

The said awarding is set on August 27, 2024.

It has been a flagship program of Mayor Lazatin to push for environmental protection and preservation, especially with the massive reforestation of the Angeles City Watershed which to date has 79,715 trees planted.

This project is being supervised by his trusted Chief Adviser IC Calaguas and Executive Assistant IV Reina Manuel.

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