

July 7, 2009

**Atty. Diosdado Jose M. Allado**  
The Administrator  
Manila Waterworks and Sewerage System  
Katipunan Road, Quezon Cjty

Dear Atty. Allado,

We are very alarmed by MWSS's call for eligibility of a *Private Joint Venture Partner* and submission of proposal to pursue the "design, financing, construction, and operation of the Laiban Dam Project (Manila Water Supply Project III)."

We would like to be clarified on the status of the Laiban Dam Project in Tanay, Rizal and General Nakar, Quezon. We would like to be provided with documents related to the Laiban Dam Project e.g. MWSS Board minutes and resolutions.

Serious concerns about this bid process were also raised in the newspaper articles on Laiban Dam which appeared in *The Business World Part 1 and 2 (July 6-7, 2009)*. It was reported that "the government is giving bidders only five days to initiate a challenge to the unsolicited proposal of San Miguel Corporation." We question the process by which the bids are made. We demand more discussions and a thorough review should be undertaken before such a project of significant impact will take place.

The MWSS has, furthermore, ignored widespread objections from stakeholders to the pursuit of the project itself. We have, in several for a and in meetings with your representatives, consistently objected to the construction of the dam because of its high social, economic and environmental costs. Allow us, once again to enumerate these costs:

- The construction of the dam within the Kaliwa Watershed will negatively affect and displace approximately 3,500 families living in 7 barangays in Tanay, Rizal and one barangay in General Nakar, Quezon. These people consist of upland farmers and indigenous peoples of Dumagat and Remontados, whose lives depend on the watershed.
- The project will cost approximately US\$1 Billion, surely causing water prices to increase. Studies show that about half of the water resources in Metro Manila is wasted due to leaks.
- The project will cause the loss of various development initiatives such as the World Bank funded - Kaliwa Watershed Management Project and other current agro-forestry projects of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources under the Protected Area Community-based Resource Management Agreement, as well as development and conservation projects of the local government units and other stakeholders will be lost.


- The resulting diminished water flow in the Agos River will disturb the navigation, irrigation, fisheries in the river and estuary in Quezon province.
- Located near geologic faults, the proposed dam will jeopardize the stability of the dam structure. In the event that the dam breaks, a repeat of the destructive flood in 2004 can result in deaths and loss of properties in General Nakar, Infanta, and Real in Quezon.

Studies of the World Commission on Dams and the International Rivers Network have indicated that costs far outweigh the benefits of large dams. An updated and relevant Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) should reflect these costs.

We therefore strongly support the multi-sectoral groups and the people of Tanay and Quezon who have experienced angst, anxiety and anger over the proposed project, in their struggle to oppose the project. We further propose that the Kaliwa Watershed be conserved for itself and the sustainable use of local people, so that nature will be maintained for the next generation.

Since MWSS is supposed to uphold public interest and in the spirit of good governance and transparency, we ask most urgently that all the issues surrounding the Laiban Dam Project be made public and that the various interests and rights of stakeholders, specially the indigenous peoples of Tanay and Quezon should be heard and protected without delay.

Sincerely,

  
**Angelina P. Galang, Ph.D.**  
 Coordinator  
 GREEN CONVERGENCE for Safe Food, Healthy Environment and Sustainable Economy)  
 (Green Convergence)

Signatories under Green Convergence:

Akbayan Citizens' Action Party (Akbayan)  
 Anti-Laiban Dam Campaign  
 Alternative Research for Empowerment (ALTERresearch)  
 Alyansa Tigil Mina (ATM)  
 Bascl Action Network - Asia Pacific (BAN - AP)  
 Balai Rehabilitation Center, Inc. (Balai)  
 CBCP's Episcopal Commission on Indigenous People - National Secretariat (ECIP - NS)  
 Civil Society Counterpart-Council for Sustainable Development (CSC-CSD)  
 Columban Fathers  
 Concerned Citizens Against Pollution (COCAP)  
 Consumers' Coalition for Truthful Information (CCTI)  
 Environmental Broadcast Circle (EBC)  
 EcoWaste Coalition (EcoWaste!)  
 Environmental Studies Institute (ESI), Miriam College

Environmental Education Network of the Philippines (EENP)  
Ecological Society of the Philippines (ESP)  
Freedom from Debt Coalition (FDC)  
Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (Gaia)  
Green Initiatives, Inc. (Green Initiatives)  
Green Page Network  
GreenPeace-Southeast Asia (GreenPeace SEA)  
HARIBON Foundation (HARIBON)  
Health Care Without Harm (HCWH)  
Initiatives for Dialogue and Empowerment through Alternative Legal Services, Inc. (IDEALS)  
Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation - Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines (JPICC-AMRSP)  
Laiban Commission  
Legal Rights Center - KSK/Friends of the Earth Philippines (LRC-KSK/FOE Phil)  
Lingkod Tao-Kalikasan (LTK)  
MASIPAG  
Mother Earth Foundation (MEF)  
Network Opposed to GMOs (No2GMOs)  
Philippine Greens  
Philippine Federation for Environmental Concerns (PFEC)  
Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in the Rural Areas (PhilDHRRA National)  
Partido Kalikasan Institute (PKI)  
Sanib-Lakas ng mga Aktibong Lingkod sa Inang Kalikasan (SALIKA)  
Sibuyan Island Sentinels League for Environment, Inc.  
Sibuyanons Against Mining (SAM)  
Southeast Asia for Regional Initiatives for Community Empowerment (SEARICE)  
Task Force Sierra Madre (TFSM)  
Third World Network (TWN)  
World Environment Day – Philippines (WED – Phil)  
Xaverian Missionaries  
Youth for Sustainable Development Assembly – Pilipinas (YSDA)

cc.

Hon. Jose L. Atienza  
Secretary, Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Hon. Maria Ana Consuelo Madrigal -Valade  
Senator, Philippine Senate  
Chair, Senate Committee on Environment

Richard Gordon  
Senator, Philippine Senate  
Chair, Senate Blue Ribbon Committee

Ralph G. Recto  
Director - General, National Economic and Development Authority

Atty. Antonio Oposa  
Global Legal Action on Climate Change