

## EDGARDO ANGARA

### A. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY

1. Certainly, I will support a moratorium on proposed coal-fired power plants and the transition of the existing ones to renewable energy. I will further support moratorium on other greenhouse gas emitting sources. Meanwhile, I also propose that Congress pass a bill that would reduce pollutants at coal-powered electric plants.

On the level of policy, there are initiatives that the Congress can do to address the global warming problem; On a personal level, all of us can do our share to lessen the problem of global warming. We need to work from two fronts, policy reforms and personal discipline.

The past months, we've heard of alarming reports on the consequences of global warming. Its impact has been felt around the world. In the Philippines, we saw millions of vegetables from Benguet ruined due to frost, we've had *Milenyo* and *Reming* typhoons and lately concerns on the prolonged stay of migratory birds which might be carriers of bird flu are being raised.

It is clear, therefore, that there is a need for the government to intensify efforts to tap indigenous energy sources to cope with rising energy and environmental preservation needs. At the Senate, I rallied for the passage of the **National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS)** to secure for the Filipino people of present and future generations the perpetual existence of flora and fauna. At present, there are 3.33 M hectares of proclaimed areas covered by NIPAS.

I also co-sponsored the **Biofuels Act** and continue to rally for the passage of Renewable Energy Act to promote the development of renewable energy sources in the electricity energy and the National Cultural Heritage Act that seeks to preserve, conserve, enrich and protect the nation's historic and cultural heritage including marine and coastal resources.

These laws are not only providing us alternatives, they are in themselves imperatives. Brazil, India, China and Canada are some of the countries that use biofuels today and I strongly believe that the Philippines must join this move towards environmental sensitivity, community empowerment and more sustainable societies.

The time is right to get started on our future in alternative and renewable sources of energy.

2. As mentioned, I rallied for and co-sponsored the Biofuels Act in the Senate.

Under this law, we will gradually phase out the use of harmful gasoline additives and oxygenates. Two years from its effectivity, it will be required that the annual total

volume of gasoline fuel sold and distributed in the country shall contain at least 5% bioethanol. Within four years, it will be raised to 10% bioethanol. Three months from the effectivity of the law, a minimum of 1% biodiesel shall be blended into all diesel engine fuels.

Our future is in renewable energy. Many countries have already begun the transition from total dependence on imported oil to tapping RE, and it would be to our great advantage to follow suit.

3. It is clear that there is a need for the government to intensify efforts to tap indigenous energy sources. We need to develop an overall energy policy emphasizing Renewable Energy and to set clearer goals and achievable targets towards an eco-friendly society.

Raising public awareness and making the public participate in the move towards RE are just some steps we can do. We need to encourage investments in RE by making sure that we have a level playing field, addressing the high initial cost of setting it up and providing incentives such as tax credit, cash subsidy and other incentives for producing RE and inventing devices used in RE.

## **B. WATER**

1. I have and I will continue to allocate a percentage of my CDF for the improvement of our water system.
2. The seasonal problem of lack of access to potable water has large economic cost and impact on the quality of life. It affects our health, agricultural production, threatens food security and a host of other damaging consequences.

We need to recognize the need to improve management and preservation of our water resources for present and future generations. We need to pass on laws that will intensify the task of regulating water use and keeping polluters away down to the provincial, city, town and barangay level.

As senator in the 13<sup>th</sup> Congress, I filed several bills calling for **the establishment of Protected Areas in various parts of the country**; I was the one who first called for the **investigation and immediate response on the oil spills in Guimaras and Semirara**; I filed a bill calling for the **Oil Compensation Fund** to impose strict penalties on oil pollution that have caused great damage to our water resources, among others.

3. Water is NOW a critical issue. In 20 years, water demand is expected to rise almost three-fold. As water resources are unevenly distributed throughout the country, we can soon expect water shortages in highly populated areas; unless we do something about it now.

At present, a mere one percent of our entire population is connected to sewer systems. In Metro Manila, only 4 percent of 13.3 million residents have access to sewerage systems provided by the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS). The rest of our country's urban and rural areas have none.

Based on the 1994 National Urban Sewerage Strategy, LGUs are responsible for the provision of sewerage and sanitation improvements. Unfortunately, the LGUs lack capacity, technical expertise and ability to finance the proper management and maintenance of the water systems. Sewerage services outside Metro Manila are almost non-existent.

We need an extensive change in the way we manage our country's resources and how we as a people consume these resources.

We need to protect our watersheds. According to a DENR report, 90 percent of the 99 watershed areas in the country are hydrologically critical. Logging, uncontrolled land use from mining, overgrazing, agricultural expansion and industrialization have contributed to water depletion.

We need to increase investment in sanitation and sewerage infrastructure. It is estimated that the country will need to invest P250 billion in physical infrastructure alone. We need to amend the Local Water Utilities Act to help strengthen and modernize local water cooperatives in their services to barangays.

As a long term solution, we need to speed up several water supply projects. It would also be a good idea to promote and develop use of rainwater catchment tanks, or simply encourage the habit of collecting rainwater in our homes to water our plants.

We need to allocate a workable budgets to the government agencies involved in the management and administration of our water resources. We need to bring the task of maintaining water resources and regulating water use down to the regional, provincial, town, city, and barangay levels. To encourage local participation, we need to develop policies, rules and institutions that will transfer management responsibilities to local communities.

We also need to put in place a long-term environmental monitoring program for major waterways so that we may be better able to point out trends and understand changes.

On the demand side, we must initiate efforts to eliminate waste and make more efficient use of our water resources. Simply increasing supply without dealing with demand is ineffective.

### C. SOLID WASTE

1. We need to review and re-evaluate the effectiveness of the existing law and find out why it was not able to answer the need to close all dumpsites and create more MRFs. As in the case with all laws, we need to continuously study its effectiveness and strengthen R&D programs so we will know which areas we need to improve on or better yet know if the existing law no longer respond to the people's needs.

We also need to strengthen local government unit to increase their proactive participation in the implementation of these laws. Instilling health consciousness through education and media is also key.

2. We need to educate both waste pickers and junk shop owners on their role on the ecological and safe management of discards. Waste pickers need to be informed on proper waste segregation and on what to do with their discards. Often they just rummage through dumpsites and get whatever they think is useful and sellable to the junk shops leaving the non-recyclables. While junk shop owners try to reuse whatever they think is reusable and then again throw off the discards.

Local government units may likewise involve the waste pickers in livelihood training programs where they can be trained to recycle waste materials, like the program in Marikina.

With proper education, waste pickers, junk shops and the government can all work together towards a waste-free community.

3. Toxic substances continue to threaten the environment and our future generation's right to a better living condition. With this, we need to pass on law that will require companies to (a) properly label their product as it is the consumer's right to know the contents of what they are buying and (b) gradually phase out the use of toxic chemicals.

Initially from my end, I filed a **Mercury Reduction Act in 2004** calling for a phase-out reduction of materials and products with mercury in the market. Given the privilege of serving again, I will rally for its passage in the next Congress.

4. The key is always gradual elimination.

We need to come up with measures that will eventually eliminate the use of toxic chemicals and plastics that are harmful to the environment. Sin tax would also be good as it will regulate the use of these plastics and disposables in the market. But more than that, we need to present an alternative and educate the people. We cannot just tell people to stop using plastics and disposables, we need them the urgency of the issue and what alternatives do they have.

#### **D. TOXIC WASTE TRADE & JPEPA**

1. There were hearings in the Senate on the provisions of the JPEPA, however, it was not presented in the Senate floor for debate and discussion. My vote will depend on the strict and clear language of the treaty which will redound to the benefit of the country in all aspects – from economic, social and environmental respects.

Prudence dictates that I wait for the discussion in the Senate floor before I speak on my vote.

2. I do not see any reason why I will not vote for the banning of toxic and hazardous wastes entry to the country. The aim of the Basel Convention is to protect human health and the environment and we need to make sure that we do not end up as dumpsite for the developed countries.

In fact, I voted for the passage of Republic Act 6969 or the Toxic Substances and Hazardous and Nuclear Wastes Control Act of 1990. The principle of “*transgenerational responsibility*” is a sound environmental policy which the government, I believe, would do well to adopt and apply.

3. More than making the manufacturers accountable for their products, we also need to support measures that will gradually stop use of any toxic chemical/substance.

#### **E. GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS**

1. I have expressed my support of the Cartagena Protocol on Philippine biodiversity which will govern all trading countries’ safe hand on importation and exportation of GMOs. It is about safety in the transfer of biologically engineered organisms across boundaries so that biodiversity of the recipient country will not be adversely affected.
2. Last year, news sparked that the genetically engineered (GE) rice are being sold to supermarkets in Metro Manila. Marketed as “Uncle Sam Texas Long Grain Rice”, the product has been rejected by rice markets throughout Europe and Asia.

I do not see any reason why we should be importing rice when Philippines is still predominantly an agricultural country. The problem is we are not producing enough rice. Land area devoted to rice production has shrunk greatly from 5.2 million hectares of land in 1980s to 4.1 million hectares with only 1.2 million hectares under irrigation.

Irrigation is key to solving this problem. When land is irrigated, one can harvest almost three times in 18 months. During my time as Agriculture Secretary, there were so many big time contractors offering to build and repair irrigation networks. We should explore that option. The private sector advances its own funds and is not dependent on the timing of government’s budget releases. Hence, we can tap them in

constructing or reconstructing communal irrigation, or even the national irrigation system. Then, we would be better able to catch up with our lingering backlog in irrigation and soon enough, we will be producing more rice.

Meantime, the National Food Authority and the Department of Agriculture must closely monitor and prevent the entry of GMO tainted rice varieties in the country, especially those coming from the United States.

3. I am always for the mandatory labeling of all products sold in the market, especially those containing genetic modifications. An informed citizenry would make informed choices.

#### **F. SUSTAINABLE & ORGANIC AGRICULTURE<sup>1</sup>**

1. I am for the modernization of the agricultural sector and I fully support organic agriculture. We do not need to remember that we cannot begin to modernize agriculture without sustained and systematic adaptation and transfer of technology. Our farmers are handicapped by the lack of support facilities such as farm-to-market roads, irrigation networks, post-harvest facilities, fishing ports and access to credit. Our agriculture situation calls for the need to revitalize our science education and training systems and provide incentives for rapid technology transfer.

We need to adopt modern technology while keeping an eye on environmental protection.

2. Yes, considering the benefits to be derived from organic products, we must encourage the shift in policy orientation from synthetic to organic agriculture.

#### **G. LOGGING**

1. I have consistently voted for total log ban in the Senate and has always been a staunch supporter of the green technology. Yes, we must maintain a large percentage of our land resources as forest reserves, free from all forms of conversion. That is why I have persistently supported and filed measures creating protected areas in many parts of the country.
2. Certainly. I am for total log ban and I have and will definitely support any measure that will link up forest management to LGUs.

#### **H. MINING**

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<sup>1</sup> Organic Agriculture – “includes all agricultural systems that promote the environmentally, socially, and economically sound production of food and fibers. These systems take local soil fertility as a key to a successful production. By respecting the natural capacity of plants, animals, and the landscape it aims to optimize quality in all aspects of agriculture and the environment. Organic agriculture dramatically reduces external inputs by refraining from the use of chemo-synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, and pharmaceuticals. Instead it allows the powerful laws of nature to increase both agricultural yields and “disease resistance”. Definition of IFOAM (International Federation of Agricultural Movements)

1. Mining has had a very poor history in the country. But modern mining practices have taken a role of being responsible in European countries in the way they develop mines.

If we develop mining industry properly, putting equal emphasis on economic gains vis-à-vis sustainable and equitable developments, especially in the countryside, then we gain, the country gains.

But our collective experiences on the environmental destruction and pollution of our water sources brought by many mining companies must give us strength and foresight. We need to amend the Mining Act and make it difficult for mining developers to make use of our resources without sustainable development and environmental control.

The community where mining is being done flourish alongside the mining companies. That is the development we envision and the development that we must create.

2. Yes, definitely. That is why I authored Republic Act 7076 or the **People's Small Mining Act of 1991**. The mining industry should not be made available to big foreign investors; it must likewise cater to small-scale communities who must be educated of the good practices in the industry so they themselves will directly bear the fruits of the resources around them.

It is government's role to develop and rationalize viable small-scale mining activities in order to generate more employment opportunities for community dwellers. More importantly, this will encourage mining activities that rely more on manual labor using simple implements rather than explosives and heavy mining equipments.

3. I am of firm resolve that the rights of the people to a healthful and balanced ecology must take precedence over economic gains. There are no compromises to be had on this issue. After all, it is what is good for the country, the environment and the people.

## **I. AIR POLLUTION**

1. The Philippine Clean Air Act of 1999 is a big step towards environment protection. We need to safeguard that it is implemented.
2. The passage of the Renewable Energy Act, which I intend to co-sponsor, and the effective implementation of the Biofuels Act will do wonders to the air, to motor efficiency, and to reduction of fuel consumption.

## **J. YOUR ENVIRONMENTAL TRACK RECORD**

1. I have had the privilege of serving the Philippine Senate from the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, and 13<sup>th</sup> congresses.

My track record speaks of my stand on environment protection. I rallied for the passage of the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) and the agricultural and Fisheries Modernization Act (RA 8435). I co-sponsored the Biofuels Act, People's Small Scale Mining Act (RA 7076), Indigenous People's Rights Act (RA 8371), Oil Pollution Liability and Compensation Act (OPA) and Clean Air Act in the Senate and I will continue to rally for the passage of the Renewable Energy Act and the National Cultural Heritage Act.

Sans any interest to be forward, I encourage you to go over my advocacies and causes to gauge for yourself that I have fought for and will continue to fight for environmental protection and heritage conservation as a legislator and public servant.