

Headline: Big business must do its part to stop climate change

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This is a reaction to the news article titled "Filipino climate change activist tells world: We can do something." (Inquirer, 10/31/11) We agree with Rodne Galicha that we can do something to stop climate change. It may start in our own little way, but we must take into account that big corporations, particularly the big foreign mining corporations operating in the country, have much to answer for the current state of our climate and environment.

Take the case of the horrific toxic spills in Rapu-Rapu Island six years ago, which resulted in the second fish kill in the area and caused an extreme decline in the fish catch of fishermen. It was so vast that even the fish sanctuary in Sitio Gaba, Batan, Rapu-Rapu was not able to sustain the fish population in Albay Gulf.

What we fear now is that the same thing may happen in Matnog, Sorsogon as there is a rampant and destructive mining operation in the area. It is not far off that the disaster that happened in Rapu-Rapu will be repeated in Matnog and here are the facts:

Based on Lafayette Mining Corp.'s application, of Rapu-Rapu's total land area of 5,589 hectares, 4,486.48 hectares (or 80.3 percent of its total land area) will be dug up. Also, Rapu-Rapu's large-scale mining operation was hailed as a flagship project, and one of the 24 Priority Development Projects of the former Arroyo administration. Lafayette's full mining operation took off in 2005 through its two Rapu-Rapu-based companies—Rapu-Rapu Minerals Inc. (RRMI) and Rapu-Rapu Processing Inc., (RRPI).

On the other hand, Sorsogon Mining under Thomas Ranola, applied for small-scale mining operation covering an area of 742.0854 hectares in Barangays Sinalmacan, Poropandan, Culasi and Poblacion, in Matnog. Also, Peniel Resources Mining Corp.'s exploration application for magnetite sand and other related minerals covers 12,616 hectares in the municipalities of Matnog, Bulusan, Magdalena and Bulan.

Yes, we agree with Galicha that something must be done to stop climate change, but some companies, like Lafayette, have to do more. We just remembered our departed loved ones, but we must also remember what happened in Rapu-Rapu Island due to Lafayette's mining operation, and learn from it because in the long run it will not only cause fish kills, it will also take the lives and livelihood of our loved ones.

—BEVERLY Q. ALA,

executive director,

Pangataman-bikol (Center for Environmental Protection),

[email protected]

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