

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION No. 2003



Introduced by BAYAN MUNA Representative CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE

RESOLUTION URGING THE COMMITTEE ON GOOD GOVERNMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY AND THE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES TO CONDUCT A JOINT INVESTIGATION IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE ALLEGED ANOMALIES IN THE BALOG-BALOG MULTI-PURPOSE PROJECT

WHEREAS, on 28 June 2017, National Irrigation Authority (NIA) head Ricardo Visaya announced the construction of the largest ever dam project in the country, the Balog-Balog Multipurpose Project (BBMP), which is planned to be completed by 2020¹.

WHEREAS, The BBMP is a massive dam project with a height of 105 meters and a crest length of 1.4 kilometer and budgeted to cost at least P15 Billion, the biggest allocation for a single irrigation project in the Philippine history. Supposedly designed to irrigate more than 34,000 hectares of agricultural lands in Tarlac Province, it will also be projected to generate 43.5 Megawatts of electricity²;

WHEREAS, the BBMP is a controversial dam project that started in the 1980s. Then in 1999, it underwent an irregular "simplified bidding", which critics described as being done in secrecy and in haste. The award went to businessman Antolin Oreta, who was then also the presidential adviser on economic zones when the bidding was conducted on November 15, 1999. President Estrada lodged an additional P1 billion for the project also in 1999. Also, unexplainedly, NIA bloated the approved agency estimate (AAE) for the project from the P435 million in September 1999 to P701 million in less than two months;

WHEREAS, the bidding for the Phase II of the BBMP construction was also attended by controversies, triggering the resignation of then former NIA administrator Peter Laviña in February 2017. However, the bidding was still awarded to the joint venture of the Quezon

¹ <http://www.philstar.com/business/2017/06/28/1714126/most-expensive-irrigation-project-set-break-ground> (Retrieved 30 August 2017)

² (Tabios & David, 2014)

City-based ITP Construction and the Chinese firm Guangxi Hydro-Electric Construction Bureau Ltd.;

WHEREAS, the BBMP is situated in the ancestral domain of Aytas and is projected to displace 970 families;

WHEREAS, the tribes that will be affected by the project have already expressed their continuing opposition to the dam project, according to KATRIBU Kalipunan ng mga Katutubong Mamamayan ng Pilipinas, an alliance of different indigenous people's organization in the country. It claimed that the dam project violates the rights of indigenous peoples to their ancestral lands, and will submerged the Ayta tribes' livelihood that mainly comes from the land and forest;

WHEREAS, the Ayta people also claim that they were not properly and appropriately consulted and given their informed consent on the said project;

WHEREAS, the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) journal in August 2014 entitled "Appraisal of methodology in estimating irrigable areas and processes of evaluating feasibility of NIA irrigation projects," it has noted that the BBMP has "serious technical and financial issues to be resolved." The dam design, according to the study, will pose an "unacceptable risk" of flooding, and may be only good for 25 years. Irrigation viability is also compromised because "there is not enough water available from the source";

WHEREAS, the conditions for continued validity of the Environmental Clearance Certificate (ECC) have not yet been complied;

WHEREAS, BBMP was issued three *cease and desist* orders from the LGU for allegedly not following legal procedures, for numerous social, political, and environmental issues, and for not including the LGU in meetings and discussions on the project;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the House Committee on Good Government and Accountability and the Committee on Natural Resources to conduct a joint investigation, in aid of legislation, on the alleged anomalies in the Balog-Balog Multi-purpose Project.

Adopted,


Rep. CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE
Bayan Muna Partylist