

WHY THE RUSH FOR BNPP AMIDST BOUNTIFUL RENEWABLES & THE CLIMATE CHANGE CRISIS?

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The Kalikasan Institute raises concerns why there is a rush by proponents of H.B. 4631 seeking the recommissioning of the mothballed Bataan Nuclear Power Plant (BNPP).

The Philippines is endowed with sufficient renewable energy sources such as wind, solar and geothermal that if sufficiently developed as intended by the recently passed Renewable Energy Law will be more than enough to meet our energy needs in the next few decades.

The ill effects of climate change are upon us. While the IPCC in its Fourth Assessment Report has recently included nuclear energy as a means of dealing with global warming. It has also affirmed that despite decades of nuclear energy research, the technology is still with its major risks in terms of safety, nuclear proliferation and radioactive waste.

If the Philippines is to support global efforts at reducing green house gas emission, it can do so through renewable energy development and reduction of energy consumption, energy waste and improving our forests as carbon sinks. The promise of nuclear energy will only diffuse the country's focus on the better renewable energy options that pose considerably less safety issues and virtually zero risks associated with nuclear proliferation and radioactive waste.

Furthermore, supporting nuclear energy plant operation involves huge financial and environmental costs and greenhouse gas emissions associated with fuel transport, uranium mining, release of warm water, semi-permanent management of waste and maintenance of related systems, as well as the waste of electric power due to the difficulty of controlling power output. In fact, these generally tends to weaken arguments for nuclear energy's viability as a climate change option and we hope that IPCC will change its position on this soon.

We demand from our public servants in Congress, particularly the proponents of this bill to step up and open this widely and publicly and confront these concerns that we have raised. We are not at all convince of the current arguments on the viability of recommissioning the BNPP despite the obviously better option of developing our renewable energy and given its risks, we do not find strong argument for the country to join any bandwagon to make climate change action an excuse for nuclear energy.

As the re-development of BNPP will probably take close to a decade, we challenge the proponents to be thorough and take sufficient steps to respond to the many scientific, safety, and technical concerns as well as the more important social acceptability of this option not only to the people of Bataan but the entire country and our next generations that are stakeholders and risk takers of this proposal. The rush attitude of the proponents is to our opinion counter to the national interest.

We urge them instead to hold on to their dear proposal as we continue to debate the science and technical viability and leave them; politicians as they are, to take this public policy debate in their realm. **We CHALLENGE the proponents in 2010 to run or have their relative run; as the practice of Philippine politics have been, and make this nuclear proposal a prominent platform of governance in their bid to re-affirm their political authority. Given fair and honest elections, let us see if the people will want them as they offer the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant.**

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Kalikasan Institute (a.k.a. Partido Kalikasan Institute Inc.) is a support organization of Partido Kalikasan, an emerging national green party in the Philippines.