



MEMORANDUM

FOR : ~~The Undersecretaries~~ *Sio:*
Field Operations - Luzon, Visayas, and Environment
Policy, Planning, and International Affairs
Legal and Administration

The Directors
Legal Affairs Service
Policy and Planning Service

The Bureau Directors
Environmental Management Bureau
Biodiversity Management Bureau
Forest Management Bureau
Land Management Bureau
Ecosystem Research Development Bureau

The Regional Executive Director
Region VII

The EMB Regional Director
Region VII

The OIC PENRO
Bohol, Region VII

FROM : **The Undersecretary**
Special Concerns and Legislative Affairs

SUBJECT : **INVITATION TO A FACE-TO-FACE MEETING ON HOUSE RESOLUTIONS CONDUCTING AN INQUIRY AND A PRIVILEGE SPEECH RE: CONSTRUCTION OF A RESORT IN CHOCOLATE HILLS FROM THE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

DATE : **08 MAY 2024**

In reference to the electronic mail received, the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives is inviting the Department to a face-to-face regular meeting on **20 May 2024 (Monday), 10:00 in the morning at Conference Rooms No. 3 & 4, R.V. Mitra Building, House of Representatives** to shed light on the following:

1. **House Resolution No. 1648**, entitled "Resolution Directing The House Committee On Natural Resources To Conduct An Investigation, In Aid Of Legislation, On The Construction Of A Resort Near The Chocolate Hills In Bohol, A Declared Global Geological Park By The United Nations

Educational, Scientific, And Cultural Organization (UNESCO) And National Protected Landscape", authored by Rep. Arlene D. Brosas, Rep. France L. Castro, and Rep. Raoul Danniell A. Manuel;

2. **House Resolution No. 1652**, entitled "A Resolution Urging The House Committee On Natural Resources To Conduct An Inquiry, In Aid Of Legislation, On The Construction And Operation Of The Captain's Peak Resort Located Within The Chocolate Hills In Sagbayan, Bohol", authored by Rep. Erwin T. Tulfo, Rep. Jocelyn P. Tulfo, Rep. Ralph Wendel P. Tulfo, Rep. Edvic G. Yap, and Rep. Eric Go Yap; and
3. **Privilege Speech No. 323**, on the Construction and Operation of Resort in Chocolate Hills, by Rep. Erwin T. Tulfo.

In this regard, may we request a position paper to be submitted on the abovementioned measures. Kindly send them on or before **15 May 2024** via email at derrllo@denr.gov.ph for submission to the Committee. Further, kindly inform us of the name/s of the representative/s from your office who will participate in the meeting so we may include him/her/them as resource person/s.

Attached herewith are the Letter Invitation, Agenda, the House Resolutions, and the privilege speech for your reference.


IGNATIUS LOYOLA A. RODRIGUEZ



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Committee on Natural Resources

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committee.naturalresources@house.gov.ph, naturalresources.hrep@gmail.com

7 May 2024

HON. MARIA ANTONIA YULO LOYZAGA

Secretary

Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Visayas Avenue, Diliman
Quezon City

Dear Honorable Secretary Loyzaga:

The Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives will be holding a face-to-face Regular Meeting on **20 May 2024 (Monday), 10:00 in the morning at Conference Rooms No. 3 & 4, R.V. Mitra Building, House of Representatives.**


In light of this, we would like to invite you or your authorized representative to attend the said meeting and shed light on the following:

1. **House Resolution No. 1648**, entitled "*Resolution Directing The House Committee On Natural Resources To Conduct An Investigation, In Aid Of Legislation, On The Construction Of A Resort Near The Chocolate Hills In Bohol, A Declared Global Geological Park By The United Nations Educational, Scientific, And Cultural Organization (UNESCO) And National Protected Landscape*", authored by Rep. Arlene D. Brosas, Rep. France L. Castro, and Rep. Raoul Danniell A. Manuel;
2. **House Resolution No. 1652**, entitled "*A Resolution Urging The House Committee On Natural Resources To Conduct An Inquiry, In Aid Of Legislation, On The Construction And Operation Of The Captain's Peak Resort Located Within The Chocolate Hills In Sagbayan, Bohol*", authored by Rep. Erwin T. Tulfo, Rep. Jocelyn P. Tulfo, Rep. Ralph Wendel P. Tulfo, Rep. Edvic G. Yap, and Rep. Eric Go Yap; and
3. **Privilege Speech No. 323**, on the Construction and Operation of Resort in Chocolate Hills, by Rep. Erwin T. Tulfo.

We would like to request the submission of your **position paper** on the aforementioned measures, or a draft thereof, on or before **May 16, 2024** in order to give the Committee Members enough time to read through the materials. Attached herewith are the subject measures, for your kind reference.

For confirmation of attendance or further inquiries, the Committee may be reached at committee.naturalresources@house.gov.ph. We are looking forward to having a fruitful discussion with you on the said measures. Thank you very much!

Very truly yours,


HON. ALFREDO D. MARAÑON III
Chairperson
Committee on Natural Resources

**Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City**

**COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES
May 20, 2024 (Monday), 10:00 AM
Conf. Rooms 3 and 4, R.V. Mitra Building,
House of Representatives**

**COMMITTEE HEARING
(Face-to-Face Meeting)**

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order/Roll Call**
- II. Acknowledgment of Members and Resource Persons**
- III. Opening Remarks of the Chairperson
Hon. Alfredo D. Marañon III**

- IV. Initial Consideration (Inquiry in aid of legislation)**
 - a. House Resolution No. 1648, entitled "*Resolution Directing The House Committee On Natural Resources To Conduct An Investigation, In Aid Of Legislation, On The Construction Of A Resort Near The Chocolate Hills In Bohol, A Declared Global Geological Park By The United Nations Educational, Scientific, And Cultural Organization (UNESCO) And National Protected Landscape*", authored by Rep. Arlene D. Brosas, Rep. France L. Castro, and Rep. Raoul Dannel A. Manuel;

 - b. House Resolution No. 1652, entitled "*A Resolution Urging The House Committee On Natural Resources To Conduct An Inquiry, In Aid Of Legislation, On The Construction And Operation Of The Captain's Peak Resort Located Within The Chocolate Hills In Sagbayan, Bohol*", authored by Rep. Erwin T. Tulfo, Rep. Jocelyn P. Tulfo, Rep. Ralph Wendel P. Tulfo, Rep. Edvic G. Yap, and Rep. Eric Go Yap; and

 - c. Privilege Speech No. 323, on the Construction and Operation of Resort in Chocolate Hills, by Rep. Erwin T. Tulfo

- V. Other Matters**
- VI. Adjournment**

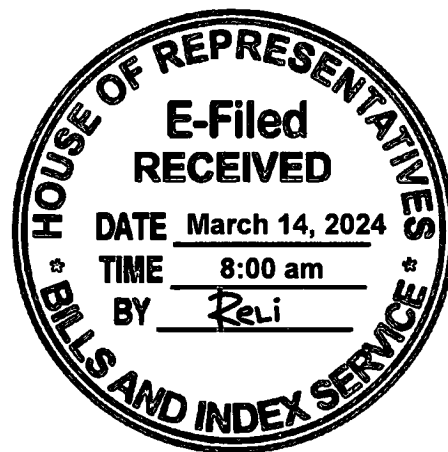
Resource Persons/Agencies

1. Department of Environment and Natural Resources and attached agencies
2. Department of Tourism
3. Department of the Interior and Local Government
4. Registry of Deeds, Province of Bohol
5. Governor, Province of Bohol
6. Municipal Mayor, Municipality of Sablayan, Province of Bohol
7. Board Member Atty. Jamie Aumentado Villamor
8. Tagbilaran Baywatch
9. Captain's Peak Management
10. Other Resort Owners

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION No. 1648



Introduced by Honorable Representatives
ARLENE D. BROSAS (Gabriela Women's Party),
FRANCE L. CASTRO (ACT Teachers Partylist),
and **RAOUL DANNIEL A. MANUEL** (Kabataan Partylist)

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF A RESORT NEAR THE CHOCOLATE HILLS IN BOHOL, A DECLARED GLOBAL GEOLOGICAL PARK BY THE UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC, AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (UNESCO) AND NATIONAL PROTECTED LANDSCAPE

WHEREAS, the Philippine Constitution mandates that the State shall protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature;

WHEREAS, the more than 1,700 almost symmetrical mounds dubbed as Chocolate Hills in the town of Carmen, Sagbayan, and Batuan in Bohol are considered as the crown jewels of Bohol's tourism, aside from being one of the wonders of the world;

WHEREAS, it was declared a protected landscape and National Geological Monument on July 1, 1997 by virtue of Proclamation No. 1037;

WHEREAS, in 2023, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) designed Chocolate Hills as the Philippines' first global geological park;

WHEREAS, according to UNESCO, Chocolate Hills in Bohol is a "unique karst landscape composed of smooth, conical hills. They are the result of thousands of years of erosion of the limestone on what was once a thick build-up of coral reefs that thrived during the Pliocene approximately 2 to 5 million years ago";

WHEREAS, Chocolate Hills are supposedly under the protection of the Republic Act 7586 or the National Integrated Protected Areas System Act of 1992, which prohibited several acts such as "hunting, destroying, disturbing, or mere possession of any plants or animals or products derived therefrom without a permit from the Management Board," "mutilating, defacing or destroying objects of natural beauty, or objects of interest to cultural communities (of scenic value)," as well as, "constructing or maintaining any kind of structure, fence or enclosures, conducting any business enterprise without a permit."

WHEREAS, a photo of a resort constructed near Chocolate Hills recently went viral on social media, drawing flak from netizens who questioned the permits secured by the resort;

WHEREAS, the photo featured an aerial view of The Captain's Peak Garden and Resort in Sagbayan, Bohol where its structures and amenities were visibly built by the foot of the hills;

WHEREAS, in an interview with Cebu media outlet The Freeman in 2023, Julieta Sablas, the administrator and sister of the owner of The Captain's Peak, Edgar Buton, stated that the resort had undergone the proper process for its construction;

WHEREAS, Sablas further said that they also presented a proposal to the Protected Areas Management Board (PAMB) of the DENR when changes were made to the approved plan regarding the location of some of the amenities;

WHEREAS, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said on March 13, 2024 that it ordered the temporary closure of the now viral resort near Bohol's Chocolate Hills last September 2023 and a notice of violation in January 2024 against Captain's Peak Resort "for operating without an environmental compliance certificate;"

WHEREAS, the construction of the Captain's Peak Resort near Chocolate Hills raises serious questions on the enforcement of regulatory mechanisms of the national government and local government, as well as on possible infractions on several laws and issuances by the DENR;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the House Committee on Natural Resources conduct an investigation, in aid of legislation, on the construction of a resort near Chocolate Hills which is a declared global geological park by UNESCO and national protected landscape.

Adopted,


ARLENE D. BROSAS
Gabriela Women's Party


FRANCE L. CASTRO
ACT Teachers Partylist


RAOUL DANNIEL A. MANUEL
Kabataan Partylist

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
2nd Regular Session

House Resolution No. 1652



INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVES ERWIN T. TULFO, JOCELYN P. TULFO, RALPH WENDEL P. TULFO, EDVIC G. YAP AND ERIC GO YAP

A RESOLUTION

URGING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF THE CAPTAIN'S PEAK RESORT LOCATED WITHIN THE CHOCOLATE HILLS IN SAGBAYAN, BOHOL

WHEREAS, the one thousand seven hundred seventy-six (1,776) hills, more or less, popularly known as the Chocolate Hills, in the province of Bohol is an iconic tourist spot renowned for its mound-shaped hills and declared a World Heritage Site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO);

WHEREAS, Proclamation No. 1037, s. 1997, dated 01 July 1997, declared the Chocolate Hills as a Natural Monument and restrained inappropriate exploitation thereat, regardless of private rights therein, in order to maintain its natural beauty;

WHEREAS, the Chocolate Hills are likewise protected and integrated into the National Integrated Protected Areas System under Republic Act No. 7586, as amended, which prohibited "mutilating, defacing, or destroying objects of natural beauty, or objects of interest to cultural communities" as well as "constructing or maintaining any kind of structure, fence, or enclosures, conducting any business enterprise without a permit";

WHEREAS, a viral photo circulating online showed that the Captain's Peak Garden and Resort located in the municipality of Sagbayan, Bohol was constructed and operational on the very foot of the Chocolate Hills;

WHEREAS, aerial views of the resort show swimming pools, slides, cottages, and other buildings therein;

WHEREAS, according to the administrator of Captain's Peak Garden and Resort, the construction thereof underwent the proper processes and even the approval and favorable endorsement from the Protected Areas Management Board (PAMB) of the Department of National Resources (DENR);

WHEREAS, a business permit was likewise secured from the Sagbayan Municipal Hall without an

Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC), which was even renewed as recent as 09 January of this year, under the presumption that the resort had all the proper accreditation;

WHEREAS, the DENR reportedly ordered the temporary closure of the Captain's Peak Garden and Resort last 06 September 2023 for operating without an ECC;

WHEREAS, the Office of the Mayor of Sagbayan likewise issued an order for the revocation of the business permit to operate the resort;

WHEREAS, securing permits required by law, rules, and regulations is essential to validating the propriety of the location, business purpose, and environmental considerations of establishments and should be verified by appropriate government bodies with scrutiny and not through mere presumptions;

WHEREAS, the construction of the Captain's Peak Garden and Resort raises serious concerns on possible avenues for the circumvention of laws and issuances on building, business, and environmental permits, certifications, or licenses in the guise of tourism or economic development;

WHEREAS, there is an utmost need to ensure that Natural Monuments and UNESCO World Heritage Sites of the Philippines are preserved, maintained, and protected at all times as against any and all private interests;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the House Committee on Natural Resources conduct an investigation, in aid of legislation, on the construction and operation of Captain's Peak Garden and Resort within the vicinity of the Chocolate Hills in Sagbayan, Bohol.

Adopted,


HON. ERWIN T. TULFO


HON. JOCELYN P. TULFO


HON. RALPH WENDEL P. TULFO


HON. EDVIC G. YAP


HON. ERIC GO YAP

(PO – Deputy Speaker Mendoza)

REP. VERGARA. ... ay nakakapuwing din.”

Please keep the faith in our government and our country. The whole nation is behind you and we will not be intimidated.

Mabuhay po ang Pilipinas!

Magandang hapon po sa ating lahat.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Mendoza). Maraming salamat, Representative Vergara.

Majority Leader. *(Gavel)*

REP. ARBISON. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of the Honorable Vergara to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Mendoza). There's a motion to refer the speech of Congress—or Representative Vergara. Is there any objection? *(Silence)* Hearing none, motion is therefore approved. *(Gavel)*

Majority Leader.

REP. YU (J.V.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Honorable Erwin Tulfo from the ACT-CIS Party-List to avail of the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Mendoza). Representative Erwin T. Tulfo, ACT-CIS Party-List, you're recognized, Sir. *(Gavel)*

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. TULFO (E.)

REP. TULFO (E.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Majority Floor Leader, distinguished colleagues, good afternoon.

Let me ask each and everyone of you here, what is our priority when we pass laws in this great institution?

Definitely, the answer would be to uplift and better the lives of each and every Filipino in this country.

But, does this mean, to the point that we have to destroy, deface, or ruin our environment, national heritage or protected areas to pave the way for economic advancement of one place?

Mr. Speaker, ang tinutukoy ko po ay itong nangyari sa Chocolate Hills sa Bohol. Nagsulputan na parang kabute ang iba't ibang resort at iba pang mga estruktura sa paanan ng mga nasabing burol.

Ang hindi ko po maintindihan ay kung bakit nagbigay ang Protected Area Management Bureau o PAMB ng DENR ng clearance para maging daan naman na mag-issue ng construction permit ang LGU para makapagpatayo ng mga estruktura ang ilang kompanya sa mga national heritage or protected area ng bansa sa kabila ng ilang batas na nagpoprotekta sa mga kahalintulad na lugar, Mr. Speaker.

I can only surmise at this point that our government officials in that area are unaware of such laws or, perhaps, masakit man pong sabihin, naareglo kaya? Or, do our existing laws do not clearly define what should and should not be part of areas for economic advancement?

Mr. Speaker, if we continue to allow development on our heritage sites or protected areas, there will come a time that our children's children will never see these wonderful places again.

Doon naman po sa nagsasabing alam nila ang ginagawa nila sa Chocolate Hills dahil doon na sila lumaki at nakatira, paalala lamang po sa mga tao na 'yon, nilikha po ng Poong Maykapal ang lugar na 'yan para sa lahat po ng Pilipino at sa mga darating pang henerasyon, at hindi lamang po para sa iilan lamang sa atin.

That will be all, Mr. Speaker.

Maraming salamat at magandang hapon po sa inyong lahat.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Mendoza). Maraming salamat, Congressman, Representative Tulfo.

Majority Leader. *(Gavel)*

REP. YU (J.V.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of the Honorable Erwin Tulfo to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Mendoza). There's a motion for the privilege speech of Congressman Tulfo for its referral. Is there any objection? *(Silence)* Hearing none, motion is approved. *(Gavel)*

Majority Leader, please.

REP. YU (J.V.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Honorable Raoul Danniell Manuel of the Kabataan Party-List for his privilege speech.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Mendoza). The Representative Raoul Dannel A. Manuel of the Kabataan Party-List, you're recognized, Sir. Please proceed. *(Gavel)*

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. MANUEL

REP. MANUEL. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This Representation stands here to point out the effect of conservative and antiquated regulations in schools on the right to education of members of the LGBTQIA community, or the queer community.

According to the chapter of queer advocates organization, Bahaghari, in the Eulogio Amang Rodriguez Institute of Science and Technology ...

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