

The Philippines should focus on developing renewable-energy sources, which abound in the country, instead of reviving the potentially-dangerous nuclear-power plant in Limay, Bataan, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Q. Pimentel, Jr. said today.

Senator Pimentel said the government and private sector should pour their limited resources on the alternative, indigenous energy sources like solar, wind, sea wave, bio-mass, geothermal and bio-ethanol.

“The development of these renewable energy sources will initially entail huge capital investments. But once the physical infrastructures like generating and transmission facilities and processing plants are completed, they will produce power at a much lower cost. Sunrays and wind, for instance, cost nothing,” he said.

**Editor's Note:** Please read Bobby Reyes' article reprinted on July 30, 2007:

[How OFWs Can "Reinvent" Power Generation in RP and Simultaneously Fight Global Warming \(Part 14\)](#)

Here are excerpts of it: I recently included the proposal in my series of doing a Filipino version of "The Manhattan Project." It became part six of the series and it was entitled, "Funding Reforestation as a Solution to Global Warming." To read the article in its entirety, please go to <http://www.mabuhayradio.com/content/view/134/90/>

I said in it: "There are other social benefits that shall accrue by doing the proposed Reforestation (E4) Program. There will be downstream projects, aside from the cottage-industry production resulting from the harvests of fruits, the sale of lumber and timber, the dairy, tannery and leather craft industries from the raising of goats. When watersheds teem with vegetation and even wildlife, the tree-farming co-ops (TFCs) may be able to generate their own power by operating their mini-hydro power dams. The TFCs may be able to provide cheap electricity to their villages or towns and sell the excess power generated to the district electric cooperatives or even to the National Power Corporation (NPC)." – Bobby M. Reyes

Mr. Pimentel recalled that the Aquino government decided not to operate the 620-megawatt Bat  
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nuclear plant after it was found to suffer from defects and the site lies on an earthquake zone.

“Let us not sacrifice the safety of our people. If a high-intensity earthquake occurs while the nuclear plant is operating, even residents of Metro Manila will be in danger of being exposed to nuclear radiation,” he said.

He said there was no suitable dumping ground for nuclear wastes which remain radioactive for thousands of years.

“If the nuclear wastes are improperly disposed of, they can emit radiation that can contaminate the water that we drink and the air that we breathe,” the senator from Mindanao said.

“There is a greater possibility that the nuclear plant will cause harm than bring benefits to the people. So I don’t think that is the solution to our power problem.”

Senator Pimentel said even industrially-advanced countries are finding it difficult to dispose of their nuclear wastes. In the United States, he said nuclear wastes are being disposed of in the deserts of Nevada. But he said the people of Nevada are protesting why even the nuclear wastes from other states are being dumped in Nevada

He said if Ilocos Norte Rep. Bongbong Marcos, Jr., along with Pangasinan Rep. Mark Cojuangco, is batting for the activation of the Bataan nuclear power plant, it is because his

father, the late President Ferdinand Marcos, was instrumental in the construction of the facility.

## **Deployment of Power Barges**

At the same time, Senator Pimentel urged the government to look into the possibility of deploying to Mindanao six idle power barges – four owned by the National Power Corporation and two others by the Aboitiz Group – to stave off the acute power shortage there.

He said the government should first exhaust all possible measures to beef up the country's power supply within the scope of powers of the President and the secretary of energy before contemplating on invoking emergency powers.

Mr. Pimentel said if the purpose of emergency powers is to enable the executive branch to take the shortcut by doing away with public bidding and other rules in awarding the construction of new plants, the temptation to overprice the projects will be too strong. # # #

Written by Senator Pimentel's Press Office

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{xtypo\_quote} The solution for the perennial power crisis in the Philippines is not to build 600-megawatt to 1,200-megawatt generating coal-fired plants. The answer is to build mini-hydro power-generating facilities and backed up by windmill farms. For example, my home province of Sorsogon needs only seven to eight mini-hydro power plants to declare itself energy independent from the NPC. And to make viable a mini-hydro plant, people (read, members of the electric cooperative) must undertake reforestation to make sure that the watershed areas can support during the summer months the river where the mini-hydro dam is located. – Bobby Reyes {/xtypo\_quote}

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