

Zubiri Wants Hanjin Investigated and Erring SBMA Officials Fired - MabuhayRadio

Written by Senator Zubiri's Press Office

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Sen. Juan Miguel Zubiri says that "Subic is a precious habitat and natural resource, not a mere piece of expensive real estate – whether it is the site for a hotel or for expatriate housing."

Senator Zubiri called for the investigation of Hanjin and dismissal of Subic Bay Management Authority and Department of Environment and Natural Resources officials who allowed the destruction of the Subic rainforest to build a \$20-million Hanjin Hotel.

"These \$20-Million two-tower concrete blocks are shot with environmental violations. First, they cut off trees from a long-standing forest. Next, this encroachment threatens the health of the Subic watershed system serving our brother Filipinos living outside the gates in Olongapo City, not just the economic zone. Destruction to habitat and threat to biodiversity are also clear."

"Subic is not just a piece of expensive real estate," Senator Zubiri says.

"They have overstepped their authority and should be investigated. Had its Ecology Department now turned into a rubber stamp of environmental violators?"

"The destruction of the lush rainforest is such a dastardly act in this time of water crisis. Americans in the former military base enjoyed good drinking water because they cared for the forests."

"It's so ironic. Before the Americans left, we Filipinos were crying foul because of the toxic legacy they dumped into the bay and some of its hills. The toxic legacy had killed and caused many to be sick. Now, here we are regaining control of this valuable territory, but shamelessly giving foreigners the license to destroy it."

Senator Zubiri explained that Olongapo City's old water source – the Sta. Rita River has been destroyed and contaminated by this same type of activities that "started with wanton cutting of trees to make way for various constructions. Later on, untreated sewage flows and leaching

from garbage dumps poisoned the river.”

Mr. Zubiri says the Zoobic safari and marine parks are “in danger of turning into pretentious window dressing for environmental crimes being done with license inside Subic.” “I clearly recall that years ago Korean engineers hired to build the 75-meter Subic-Tipo express tunnel worked closely with officials and environmentalists in SBMA. They so carefully and consciously designed it so the tunnel would not negatively impact the flora and fauna. The tunnel was built in such a way that deer and other small mammals would not be threatened and detached from their habitats and range.”

“That’s why this hotel in the midst of the thick forest so evidently and blatantly threatens the habitat and range of monkeys, deer and birds, among other wildlife.”

“The clearing of trees that’s now a bald spot in the middle of lush forest released tons of Carbon into the atmosphere that will speed up global warming. In case they have forgotten, the former Subic military base is part of the country’s patrimony. Not a fiefdom of managers. They are the ones that should discern the proper use and stop the abuse of Subic’s resources.”

The destruction of the lush rainforest is such a dastardly act in this time of water crisis. Americans in the former military base enjoyed good drinking water because they cared for the forests,” Mr. Zubiri says. Mr. Zubiri said the Zoobic safari and marine parks are “in danger of turning into pretentious window dressing for environmental crimes being done with license inside Subic.”

He reminded responsible authorities that Hanjin “has yet to be investigated on labor violations and neglect of occupational safety measures in its \$1.65 Billion shipbuilding and port operations. We must not allow Hanjin to feel smug it can get away with crimes and can violate our laws with impunity.” # # #

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