



18 January 2011

**Hon. Loren B. Legarda**  
Chairperson  
Senate Committee on Climate Change  
GSIS Bldg., Financial Center, Roxas Blvd., Pasay City

Dear Sen. Legarda,

Thank you very much for requesting our comments on the People's Survival Fund bill (PSF bill) filed by Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile as S.B. 2558. This is the formal submission of our comments on the said bill.

The intense climatic extremes that have recently slammed our country, hitting disproportionately the poor, particularly women, provide a stark backdrop to the need to craft and urgently agree on legislation that provides localities with desperately needed funding support in anticipation of worsening climate change impacts on the Philippines.

We believe the PSF bill fills such a need, specifically because of its explicit intention to utilize public finance, particularly climate finance, as a central tool to alleviate the vulnerabilities of countless local government units and communities and increase the resiliency of regions most at risk.

The continued rise in the severity and frequency of extreme weather events and rising sea levels should remind Filipinos once again of the central tenet that our country's ancestors had embraced: self-reliance. In light of the dismal outcome of the UN negotiations held in December 2010 in Cancun, Mexico, it should be crystal clear that we are on our own and that it would be folly to rely on the largesse of industrialized countries or the possibility they may one day truly recognize their responsibility to compensate developing countries for the grave harm they have inflicted due to the profligate, greedy and ultimately destructive ways that rich countries have tried to live in the last few decades.

Even as we persist in pressuring rich countries to own up to their huge responsibility, we believe we also need to rapidly mobilize our own resources based on plans that will ultimately redound to the interest of vulnerable communities in the Philippines.

As an amendment of the Climate Change Act of 2009, also known as R.A. 9729, we believe that changes recommended in the PSF bill strengthen the aforesaid Climate Change Act, particularly the role it provides to the Climate Change Commission, established by R.A. 9729, as an information hub of climate finance. This measure better ensures consistency between the country's climate change-related plans and the amount and type and mode of funding that the national government leverages domestically or abroad, from public or private sources. We believe the PSF bill is correct in identifying funding sources with direct links to processes with high externality costs, such as the Motor Vehicle User's Charge (MVUC), and we believe it is correct to place the responsibility of managing the PSF under the Climate Change Commission, with the full participation of agencies such as the DOF, NEDA Banko Sentral to ensure funds are administered with adequate fiduciary responsibility.

The PSF bill, we believe, will accelerate climate action from localities because it is intended as a "rewards fund" that incentivizes early action from below.

We thus strongly supportive of the PSF bill's intention to move the Climate Change Commission away from rote project implementation - a task better undertaken by actual line agencies established for the said purpose - and for the Commission to play instead a coordinative, capacity-building leadership role in helping formulate, undertake and monitor the country's response to climate change.

We are excited to contribute input that can further improve the way the Commission governs the People's Survival Fund. We support the PSF bill, particularly if it can ensure that communities will have "direct access" to climate adaptation funding.

We would be happy to further contribute detailed suggestions in the next few hearings which we hope to attend.

In the meantime, please accept our warm regards,

Sincerely,



Rowena F. Bolinas

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