

Senators see ratification of Paris climate pact by July

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Senate President Aquilino “Koko” Pimentel III (INQUIRER FILE PHOTO/ MARRIANE BERMUDEZ)

MANILA — Senate President Aquilino Pimentel III said on Monday that the country would likely ratify by July a Paris agreement on climate change, after he and some senators met with visiting French senators.

Pimentel said President Duterte would have to ratify the Paris climate change pact first before the Chief Executive submit it for Senate concurrence.

He told reporters that the Palace has been awaiting the certificate of concurrence of one of the 23 agencies and departments of governments required to make such a submission.

“Only one is being awaited, so once the agency submits, it will now be up to the President himself to ratify and he will now submit it for concurrency to ratify. Our sense in the Senate, we need 16 votes to concur, and I think we have the 16,” Pimentel said.

Two months ago, President Duterte agreed to sign the agreement that aims to lower the country’s carbon emissions by 2030 after earlier rejecting to do so. The President said he was convinced by his Cabinet to do so.

In a news briefing after meeting with a four-member delegation of the French Senate, Sen. Loren Legarda said the senators who met with the French Senate delegation were “all environmentalists and climate advocates” that she was certain “we will be able to shepherd the concerns and ratification within the year.”

Pimentel said the “projected timetable” in the Philippine ratification of the Paris agreement was “middle of this year.”

“So give us six months and then we’ll let that ratify,” the Senate president said.

French Sen. Gerard Miquel, leader of the delegation, said they met with Foreign Affairs Secretary Perfecto Yasay on Monday morning “who very much assured us of the willingness of the Philippine government to expedite the agreement by July.” **SFM**