

# Manila Bay reclamation projects opposed

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A coalition of environment advocates staged a picket rally in Malate, Manila on Thursday to oppose the “Horizon Manila” reclamation project and other similar ventures in the historic Manila Bay, citing “environmental hazards that it will cause to the city (of Manila) and the entire National Capital Region.”

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA) Chairman of the Board Alberto Agra, General Manager Janilo Rubiato and J-Bros president Engr. Jesusito Legaspi Jr., was signed last June 1 for the construction of the 419-hectare Horizon Manila project worth P100 billion. Mayor Estrada led the MOU signing.



NO TO RECLAMATION – Protesters picket outside the DENR office in San Andres, Manila, Thursday to condemn the Manila Bay reclamation project. (Ali Vicoy | Manila Bulletin)

Under the project, three artificial islands will be constructed in the Manila Bay, between the Manila-Pasay City border in the south and Roxas Boulevard in the east, stretching to about 3.5 kilometers off the shores of the bay.

Apart from Horizon Manila, the administration of Manila Mayor Joseph Estrada has already approved three other reclamation projects touted to bring economic benefits to both the city and its residents.

### **More flooding feared**

But environment group “Mamamayan Para sa Kalikasan Coalition” believes otherwise, stating that the “creation of three islands that is connected by artificial bridges will exacerbate flooding in Manila.” The reclamation land, according to them, will “block rain water from escaping to the sea thereby trapping it within the city because the reclamation island will be higher than the water, it will form a bowl that will keep flood waters in.”

But the city government insisted that through this milestone project, it is closer to achieving its goal in regaining “The Pearl of the Orient” tag.

The group said that the area of Manila Bay along the historic districts of Ermita, Malate, and Intramuros “has been important culture, art, and tourism destinations whose potential should be maximized along what the other great cities have done for the waterfront and historical districts and improved rather than destroyed.”

The environmental group also cited Resolution No. 19, series of 2012, of the National Historic Commission of the Philippines, declaring Manila Bay and Waterfront, from Delpan Bridge to the Cultural Center of the Philippines on Roxas Boulevard, as a national historical landmark.

The group said it is necessary “to understand how this reclamation plans will impact human communities, marine geology, biodiversity, heritage structure, and climate change.”

“No doubt, the said project will directly affect the entire community made up of residents, businesses, tourism establishments, cultural heritage center, and the Filipino people, and will destroy all hopes of making Manila the center of culture, arts, and recreation and tourism,” the group said.

But the city government boosted that the project will generate thousands of jobs and livelihood opportunities for the people of Manila, and will also boost funding for social programs in the various fields such as education, healthcare, infrastructure, among others.

<https://news.mb.com.ph/2017/12/08/manila-bay-reclamation-projects-opposed/>