

Solon asks DA to include Palawan in pump boat-distribution program

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PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—A few days following Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel F. Piñol's visit in Palawan, the Sangguniang Panlalawigan (SP) recently passed a resolution that seeks the inclusion of the province in its pump boat-distribution program.

Board Member Winston Arzaga, the author of the resolution, said on Wednesday the measure specifically aims to include the Lamayo Processing Center in Barangay New Guinlo in the northern Palawan town of Taytay.

If the project receives a pump boat from the Department of Agriculture's distribution program, Arzaga said small-scale fishermen will have the means to reach and fish in other areas of the Malampaya Sound, which is considered a rich fishing ground in Palawan.

The pump boats will help the fishermen bring their fish catches to the processing center, which is a project launched by the provincial government in partnership with the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources.

Arzaga said the processing center was launched to provide additional income-generating livelihood to fishermen in the Malampaya Sound community.

Arzaga said he is positive that Piñol will consider the request of the SP, as it is his aim to ensure the agriculture and fisheries sector in Palawan is helped.

Malampaya Sound is a protected inlet of the South China Sea on the northwestern coast of Palawan. It is a geographic sound consisting of a complex of sheltered bays, coves, estuaries and islands separated from the sea to the west by the Copoas Peninsula.

The sound is within the municipality of Taytay, and is an important feature for the ecology and economy of the province of Palawan. It is considered one of the finest natural harbors in the Philippines and one of the province's richest fishing grounds.

The entire embayment and its surrounding landscape was declared a marine protected area in 2000, known as the Malampaya Sound Protected Landscape and Seascape.

It covers 200,115 hectares of both aquatic and terrestrial environment, with diverse ecosystems consisting of mangroves, coral reefs and searass beds, and a variety of flora and fauna endemic to Palawan.

The sound is the only known habitat of Irrawady dolphins in the Philippines.

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