



Republic of the Philippines  
**House of Representatives**  
Quezon City



**HON. TEDDY BRAWNER BAGUILAT**  
*Representative*  
*Lone District, Ifugao*

**SOLIDARITY MESSAGE FOR THE MINES UNSAFETY ACTIVITIES**

I applaud the Cordillera Peoples Alliance for organizing this timely forum on destructive mining.

I do not blindly object to mining. I recognize that we need to get valuable minerals from the earth to sustain lifestyles and technologies that are prevalent in our modern world. What I object to is the destructive way by which mining companies conduct their businesses.

Thus far, I have no knowledge of a large-scale mining activity in the Philippines which has been other than destructive. Mining leaves a scar on the earth, with wounds running deep beneath the earth's surface.

Lately there have been aggressive media campaigns by mining companies highlighting their so-called corporate social responsibility activities. These CSR activities consist mostly of forestation or tree-planting. That is an admission that mining companies cannot restore to the earth what they have taken.

Mining extracts minerals and metals, not trees. What mining companies extract from the earth cannot be replaced until after millions of years under ideal conditions, conditions that likely do not exist anymore or which never will be replicated.

What bothers me even more is the violent intrusion of mining companies into indigenous communities. The violence exists in several aspects.

For one, the process of getting an indigenous community's free, prior and informed consent can be very divisive for the community concerned. In some instances, bogus indigenous leaders come out of the woodwork to allegedly support the proposal of some mining companies. This, of course, leads to conflict with the legitimate leaders and community members.

The extraction process is likewise violent. It intrudes into areas intended for community rituals or into sacred grounds. Even when a FPIC has been validly obtained, mining activities are



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certain to displace activities of indigenous communities, if not the community members themselves.

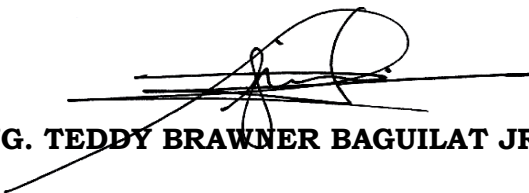
Likewise, there are effects on the environments such as runoff of tailings for certain kinds of minerals. And because mining happens underground, substructures need to be cleared, leaving the ground without support. This can result in cave-ins or sink holes.

And for all of these effects, the only clear trade-off that mining companies can guarantee is a forestation program of areas that may not even lack forests. Clearly there is an error in this equation.

I hope that government agencies concerned will thoroughly examine and evaluate mining proposals. I hope that the foremost consideration of those agencies will not be the short-term financial return that mining companies promise, but the long-term impact on our environment and indigenous communities that mining operations are certain to produce.

Are we willing to sacrifice the welfare of future generations in exchange for money? I can only speak for myself when I say that I am unwilling to proceed in that path. I hope that everyone here will join me in that position and urge the government to explore other means of generating much-needed funds, and likewise think twice about fast-tracking mining activities at the expense of our indigenous brothers and sisters, and at the expense of Mother Earth.

Thank you and may you all find strength in the path you will take against destructive mining.



**CONG. TEDDY BRAWNER BAGUILAT JR.**