THE SMOKEY MOUNTAIN WASTE-TO-ENERGY PROJECT

Arrested development and environmental justice in urban Manila



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THE SMOKEY MOUNTAIN WASTE-TO-ENERGY PROJECT: ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IN URBAN MANILA

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Prepared and published by the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA) Asia Pacific. The study was written by Brex Arevalo and Mayang Azurin, with valuable inputs and testimonies from members of the Manila Anti-Incinerator Alliance (MAIA), as well as production support from Robi Kate Miranda.

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About the cover photo: Affected community members in Smokey Mountain, Manila held a peaceful protest last April 2026 in line with the celebration of Earth Day.

Layout design by Jen Derillo.

GAIA is a global network of more than 800 grassroots groups, networks, NGOs, and individuals. We envision a just, Zero Waste world built on respect for ecological limits and community rights, where people are free from the burden of toxic pollution and resources are sustainably conserved, not burned or dumped. We work to catalyze a global shift toward ecological and environmental justice by strengthening grassroots social movements that advance solutions to waste and pollution.

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A. CONTEXT

By far the largest and most expensive waste-to-energy (WtE) incineration project in the Philippines today is in Smokey Mountain in Manila – which became the global symbol of extreme urban poverty, urban neglect, and survival of wastepickers who found a living from collecting and recycling trash from the smoldering mountain of 2 million cubic meters of waste in the 1990s.

The P26 billion, 5.8-hectare proposed facility, where the 100MW WtE plant is planned, has drawn the attention of stakeholders across sectors working on environmental injustice, pollution, corporate land grabs, urban sustainability, and arrested development perpetuated by government and international financial institutions (IFIs).

A large waste power plant being located in a community that has already borne decades of waste-related burdens, and yet survived despite government neglect, reveals a story of the concentration of environmental burdens on a historically marginalized community, without honoring government commitments to Smokey Mountain before new industrial development proceeds.

More importantly, the project, being pushed to operation by the end of November 2027, promised to resolve waste problems, environmental rehabilitation, and flooding, has not only been technically weak but also unfair, exclusionary, and inequitable for the communities that have lived with Manila's waste burden for generations.

Early plans to establish an incinerator in Smokey Mountain in 1993 were legally quashed when the Philippine Congress passed the Clean Air Act (RA 8749) in 1999, which banned incinerators due to concerns that burning municipal, biomedical, and hazardous waste could release "poisonous and toxic fumes" that would harm public health and the environment. The following year, this ban was also reaffirmed with the passage of the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act (RA 9003).

The ban on incineration, however, would be violated by IFIs through a series of technical assistance (TA) and investments in the solid waste management sector, allowing the conduct of feasibility studies and demonstration projects, facilitating PPP arrangements, and preparing projects for investment and implementation. Further, they also aided in developing the legal and regulatory framework. Currently, these technical "recommendations" have been taken up in Congress while WtE plants in various cities have started in different phases, despite almost three decades of evidence in Europe,[1] the US,[2] and Asia[3] on the health and the environmental impacts of even the most modern incineration technologies.

As early as 2012, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) had already pushed for the technical feasibility of establishing WtE incinerators through private sector partners[4]. It specifically mentioned Smokey Mountain as one of the potential sites and promoted the credibility of the controversial project proponent, RII Builders/PhilEco. ADB would then embark on a series of TAs contravening national bans by building the policy, regulatory, financial, and institutional foundations needed for WtE projects to move forward at its proposed sites in Baguio, Dumaguete, General Santos, Santa Rosa, Zamboanga, Angeles, and Laguna[5].

These plans would prove to lack social acceptance and technical feasibility. Baguio and Dumaguete later accepted the scientific evidence of pollution from such plants and community resistance against these projects. The city mayor of Baguio rejected the proposal, while the city mayor of Dumaguete decided to close the waste- burning facility, respectively.

However, IFIs remain insistent on pushing these technologies without understanding the full context of the project sites. In 2017, the World Bank (WB) and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) supported a USD 500-million loan agreement that included a major component to establish a WtE plant in Metro Manila as part of a flood mitigation project (see Annex I).

The project was signed by President Rodrigo Duterte and continued by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., who later marked the "WtE Bill" as priority legislation for waste management, renewable energy, and flood prevention. In September 2025, ADB was also reported to be keen to fund the Smokey Mountain WtE project project.[6]

The construction of the Smokey Mountain WtE project has been described as a pet project of the current administration. The project has undergone several changes and delays due to concerns around sensitive land use, environmental risks, and discrepancies in land-use zoning. Reports have also tied these with contractor issues, permitting delays, and unresolved resettlement cases, reflecting the ongoing nationwide corruption scandal on government flood control infrastructure projects.[7]

Today, the Smokey Mountain WtE project has spurred community resistance, legislative inquiry, and public debate on how this project exacerbates chronic economic insecurity and joblessness, as well as the systemic neglect of local government units in pursuing sustainable urban development.



A resident of Upper Smokey Mountain plants sweet potato leaves on a small plot of land she claims, contrasted by a view of Tondo Permanent Housing behind her. Photo by Rafael Mendoza, from the photo essay "Field of Dreams: Residents turn Upper Smokey Mountain into Thriving Farmland," Manila Today (2025).

B. KEY ISSUES

The Smokey Mountain Development and Reclamation Project (SMDRP), the broader redevelopment and reclamation project for the former Smokey Mountain dumpsite, was proclaimed by virtue of Proclamation 39 as land for urban renewal and urban poor development. The area is now home to almost 70,000 residents across Barangays 101,105, 128, and 129. The former Smokey Mountain dumpsite is in Barangay 128, which is also the proposed site for the WtE plant. Some residents live informally in makeshift houses and shanties, while others reside in low-cost housing tenements like Aroma in Barangay 105, or Paradise Heights in Barangay 128. Farms, learning centers, social service centers, cooperatives, and government facilities can also be found in the area.

The contentions around this project sit at the intersection of waste management, energy policy, urban poverty, land rights, corporate accountability, and sustainable urban development. The key issues in this project go beyond technical compliance to questions on who bears the risks, who receives the benefits, and who gets to participate in decision-making.

Issue 1. Historical Injustice and Urban Poor Communities Being Made into "Sacrifice Zones"

Smokey Mountain residents face severe urban poverty, unstable housing, and repeated threats of eviction due to local government redevelopment projects which were promised to provide housing, rehabilitation, livelihood support, and environmental restoration. Residents again face the same dilemma of displacements for a project said to benefit the greater good. If approved, the project will not only repeat the pattern of broken promises but will also destroy the resilience built by communities. Burning 3,000 tonnes of residual waste per day is a statement of the national and local government's inability to uphold its environmental obligations, implement environmental and urban housing laws and programs, and place the disproportionate burden on low- income communities while wealthier areas generate much of the waste. Worst of all, the land meant to provide a decent life for the urban poor is allowed to be owned by a major waste industry player, RII Builders.



Smokey Mountain residents mounts a walk-out during the second public scoping for the proposed Smokey Mountain Land Rehabilitation project on July 2026. The project is the clearing of the naturally-healed Smokey Mountain from residents and "hazardous" legacy waste lying underneath nearly 300 trees and agricultural crops.

History of Smokey Mountain. Located near the edge of Manila Bay, Smokey Mountain is a former fishing village that turned into an unplanned and uncontrolled dumpsite in the 1950s. Waves of poor immigrants settled and engaged primarily in waste work over the decades, contributing to a thriving waste ecosystem that continues in Manila today. The uncontrolled buildup of waste in the smoldering dumpsite and growing international pressure led to its closure in the 1990s .

In January 1995, former President Corazon Aquino signed Memorandum Order No. 415 to greenlight the Smokey Mountain Development and Reclamation Project (SMDRP) which sought to transform Manila's infamous landfill in Tondo into a commercial port and habitable housing project using a private-sector joint-venture scheme to eliminate costs for the government. In the same year, former President Fidel Ramos issued Proclamation 39 to legally execute and realize the SMDRP. This policy placed it under the public domain, and a special patent and title was issued in the name of the National Housing Authority (NHA).

Developer R-II Builders ran out of private funds mid-project. The government had to step in with billions of pesos from state institutions.

Bailing out RII Builders. After R-II Builders failed to fulfill its role in securing funding for the SMDRP, an asset pool to finance the project - which included Smokey Mountain - was created in 1994 with bonds issued by the Home Guaranty Corporation (HGC). However, R-II Builders again failed to complete construction, and the whole SMDRP collapsed. HGC absorbed the financial guarantees and liabilities by paying investors over P4 billion by the time bonds matured in 2002. Ownership of the entire asset pool was transferred to HGC via a deed of assignment and conveyance[8].

The Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) and other agencies enabled financing continuity while the Philippine National Bank managed the trust/asset pool structure. Worse, to keep the project alive despite funding gaps, several executive orders were issued (see Annex II for a list of relevant policies and jurisprudence). Legal battles in court began in 2005 when R-II Builders questioned HGC's right to sell lots at Smokey Mountain. A 2018 ruling came in favor of R-II Builders, granting it the right to recover assets/proceeds from the project.

In 2019, the Commission on Audit (COA) questioned a supposed "compromise agreement" between R-II Builders and NHA consisting of P1.12 billion and almost five hectares of government land. According to COA, the basis of this agreement has yet to be verified[9]. In addition, former Congressman Neri Colmenares argued in 2020 that a transaction of this nature should first be approved by Congress before being given the green light to proceed[10].

Corporate land grabs. While RII Builders asserted rights to control and manage the Asset Pool as trustee and to receive the residual value or remaining assets due to it under the project agreements after liquidation and settlement of obligations, the company has exercised authority over the land beyond what the Supreme Court assigned to it as a trustee, not as owner. The Court explicitly observed that "a trustee does not acquire ownership of the assets entrusted to him but merely manages them for the benefit of the beneficiary."[11] The beneficiary in this case is the urban poor residents of Smokey Mountain.

No deed of assignment and conveyance was ever issued to R-II Builders. The Supreme Court, when the Smokey Mountain Project Participation Certificates (SMPPCs) matured and could not be redeemed, decided in favor of the Home Guaranty Corporation (HGC) .

Even so, R-II Builders exercises authority over the land through the Court Receiver as mandated manager. It is reported to have positioned armed security personnel, limiting mobility inside the premises and intimidating residents to accept compensation for self-demolition. It also undertakes illegal demolition in the area.

While chronic economic insecurity and joblessness in Smokey Mountain have remained unaddressed, the government has also turned a blind eye by allowing R-II Builders to undertake preparatory construction activities for the expedited displacements without following the rule of law on public consultations, environmental clearance certificates, environmental impact assessments , relocation plans, among others.

Failure in undertaking transformative changes in Smokey Mountain. After three decades, much of the former 11-storey dumpsite has been flattened by engineering works and grassroots material recovery efforts[12]. Industrial development was established in the harbor, and a few families were given mass housing. However, SMDRP failed to deliver long-term socio-economic stability for the urban poor. The port development provided employment for only a few local residents. The housing project was not maintained and families struggled with the rising cost of living . The SMDRP also faced a funding collapse leading to a long-drawn legal battle between previous governments with RII-Builders.

Nevertheless, the urban poor persisted in building their communities. The majority of families continued to scrape a living as part of the informal waste economy, working as waste pickers, consolidators and junkshop owners, serving as Manila's main partners in diverting waste from landfills. In the upper area, which was undeveloped by R-II Builders, the urban poor cultivated a new economy through urban farming with their bare hands. Residents recount carrying mounds of carabao manure to rehabilitate the toxic mountain into a productive economic area for the community.



A long-time resident of Smokey Mountain, Leticia Reyes serves as the accountant for a multipurpose cooperative at the former dumpsite. The cooperative runs a recycling facility and has expanded to other microenterprises, thanks to the Poverty and Environment Fund. Photo: Lester Ledesma/ ADB.

Issue 2. Destruction of Community Resilience

The WtE project has promised about 420 specialized jobs once the facility is operational, in contrast to the number of people who could be affected if recyclables and residual waste are diverted to feed the WtE plant. The informal waste economy in Smokey Mountain, even though it operates largely outside formal government structures, is far from being just a supplement to Manila's waste management system - it is a vital component of it. Researchers studying Tondo's informal waste economy describe waste pickers as significant contributors to waste recovery, recycling, and waste diversion.

Equally important are the losses in resilience and community gains from years of restoration that continue to benefit the marginalized poor. International financial institutions, non-governmental organizations, and government agencies have been unable to continue working with Smokey Mountain community members ever since the WtE incinerator proposal came to light. The imposition of the project has eroded gains in literacy, air quality, poverty reduction[13], cooperative development, and nature-based solutions.

From an uncontrolled garbage dump, Smokey Mountain has turned into a thriving community whose resilience is built by residents, government agencies, civic and social movements, and financial institutions. According to Clean Air Asia, "since its closure 28 years ago, what was once a towering testament to Manila's garbage problem has now transformed into a vibrant, thriving community"[14]. Indeed, around 412 trees adorn the area alongside farmland that has helped sustain the agricultural activities of up to 304 households, with surplus produce being sold in nearby markets.

Since the WtE project came to the forefront, support networks, media and institutions have faced growing intimidation and restrictions from entering Smokey Mountain — eliminating external social networks, individual mobility, and social services to grow for the benefit of community members.

Basic services like water are being cut off from residents, and the construction of housing improvements is being barred by Barangay 128 and armed men. Any attempts at reestablishing or fortifying existing shanties in the areas have been prevented.

1990 and 2026 Smokey Mountain visual comparison. Project proponents still like sharing Smokey Mountain as a dumpsite when restoration from both community and stakeholders has already been established long ago.



Physical, Social and Economic Profile of Affected Communities in the Smokey Mountain Development and Rehabilitation Project	
Population	Directly affected with economic and physical displacement are urban poor residents of Brgy 128 in Smokey Mountain, Tondo. Around 3,959 households recorded in the 2015 Census, with a total population of over 23,000–27,000 residents as of 2020-2021. The area consists of approximately 30 tenement buildings (Paradise Heights) housing families in a densely populated urban poor community[15]. Indirectly affected with economic displacements and pollution are 44,000-47,000 people from Barangays 101, 105, and 129.[16] Many live informally in makeshift houses and shanties, while others reside in low-cost housing tenements like Aroma in Barangay 105, or Paradise Heights in Barangay 128. Almost 35% of the residents depend on the informal waste economy as waste pickers while some buy and sell recyclables as junkshop owners and aggregators[17]. Others survive through charcoal-making, micro-businesses, port-related wage labor, and urban farming. Most have unstable income sources, and limited access to quality education, healthcare, and secure employment. Youth aged 13 to 17 comprise 38% of the population. More than 62% of elementary students eventually discontinue their education, often due to economic pressure and lack of accessible learning facilities.
Trees / farm	Around 412 trees adorn the former dumpsite.
Livelihoods	Urban farming - Unfamiliar to most, residents of Upper Smokey Mountain have been nurturing and developing the area that once was a landfill for years. [18]
Development projects built by government, international cooperation and civil society to address poverty and improve the environment	• ADB has engaged in poverty reduction efforts since 2014[19]. The bank has supported the Sambanyan ng Muling Pagkabuhay ni Kristo Multipurpose Cooperative (SMP), which received a grant from the ADB's Poverty and Environment Fund (PEF) to implement the Smokey Mountain Remediation and Development Program, which started in 2005. The program helped expand livelihood opportunities to residents through recycling, handicraft making, and microentrepreneurship. SMP also set up a materials recovery facility to aid in the sorting and recovery of materials from waste and has paid for the schooling of some of its members[20]. The cooperative has over 200 members and was recently featured, in 2021, as a success story by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). [21] • The Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), Planet CORA, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and Our Sea of East Asia Network (OSEAN), and Barangay 128 in Tondo launched the Eco-Ikot Center launched in October 2024 to strengthen waste reduction, reuse, and recycling in Smokey Mountain [22, 23, 24]. • The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Philippine Wood Producers Association have signed a joint agreement to convert Smokey Mountain into a city forest[25 26]. • Clean Air Asia has been helping the community foster community-based actions for cleaner air and climate change mitigation. These efforts aim to enhance the overall air quality of Smokey Mountain while minimizing the adverse effects of air pollution on people's health including. Efforts include introducing alternative livelihoods for those engaged in open-burning activities and training local decisionmakers on the impacts of open-burning.[27 28] • San Miguel Corporation has been implementing its Better World Smokey Mountain Pangarap Para sa Pamilya center, which repurposes idle, abandoned properties for community use, such as green space, learning, and healthcare facilities. The center opened in September 2023, and serves as an upskilling and training centre for multi- generational families, offering remedial and alternative learning system classes in areas such as digital literacy, sewing, shoemaking, embroidery, and electrical repair workshops. The four-story, 39-classroom Better World Smokey Mountain hopes to benefit 2,500 families. The center has over 1,900 enrolled members, reaching nearly 1,300 families.[29]
Schools and other services	1. Paez Elementary School Annex 2. Westminster High School 3. Parish of the Resurrected Christ 4. Community Christian church in Upper Smokey Mountain Farms, learning centers, social service centers, cooperatives, and government facilities can also be found in the area.

On the other hand, R-II Builders, with its international backers providing capital and technical know-how, will also earn from multiple revenue streams, such as tipping fees or waste disposal fees from local governments, electricity sales, and incentives from claimed carbon-related benefits once the WtE bill is approved. Although the plant is not yet operational, the City Government of Manila has already imposed, without public consultation, a 1,100 percent increase in garbage fees, which is believed to subsidize the tipping and hauling fees for the facility once it becomes fully operational.

On top of the government support promised under the WtE bill, which would benefit companies like R-II Builders, the bill includes a range of fiscal incentives including an income tax holiday, tax and duty exemptions on imported equipment and spare parts, tax credits, and others.

R-II Builders will also enjoy non-fiscal incentives, including faster or simplified permitting and regulatory processes, simplified customs procedures, and the ability to employ foreign technical personnel when necessary, as part of the support provided by its IFIs backers. It may also be potentially exempted from certain competitive procurement requirements as part of renewable energy or climate plans, and the project may be recognized as being of national significance under other relevant investment frameworks.

Issue 3. Lack of Recognition and Justice for Waste Pickers

Smokey Mountain has historically been home to generations of waste pickers contributing to recycling, waste diversion, and environmental services. A recent study of the Tondo waste economy found that wastepicker communities effectively function as a decentralized, informal Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) through collection, segregation and storage. Collected plastics, cardboard and paper, metals (aluminum, steel, copper), glass, and electronic scrap are then sold to junk shops, aggregators, and recycling industries, diverting waste away from dumpsites and landfills. Instead of waste being sorted in a formal government facility, sorting, storage, repair, and recycling activities occur throughout homes, streets, and small businesses in the community[30].

Smokey Mountain waste pickers perform work that municipalities would otherwise need to fund through formal waste management programs, effectively reducing the waste needed to be hauled and sent to landfills. These services lower the pressure on the city's waste disposal infrastructure[31]. Furthermore, research on the informal waste economy in Smokey Mountain found that many items are repaired, reused, repurposed, and resold within local communities. This extends the life of materials and creates additional economic value beyond conventional recycling and incineration[32].



In photo: Residents of Smokey Mountain collect waste as a form of living. Image by Climate Change Network for Community-based Initiatives - CCNCI

Waste pickers are not only project- affected persons but also workers and stakeholders whose knowledge and livelihoods deserve recognition. Instead, these livelihoods will be destroyed by a plant requiring a steady stream of waste— around 3,000 tons per day —to remain economically viable.

This will divert recyclable materials currently collected by waste pickers, junk shops, and informal recycling networks, potentially affecting the livelihoods of thousands of workers who depend on waste recovery.

Issue 4. Long-term Environmental and Health Risks

Worldwide, even modern WtE incineration models have generated pollutants and hazardous residues, including fly ash, bottom ash, wastewater, and air emissions, despite the most stringent regulations. Communities already burdened by environmental hazards should not bear additional risks.

The 6-hectare project site in Barangay 128 is an environmentally sensitive, high-density residential mixed-use area accessible via Radial Road 10 Highway.

It consists of, and is surrounded by, a mixture of residential, commercial, educational, institutional, and industrial infrastructure.

A November 2023 feasibility study funded by the World Bank and the AIIB notes with concern the site's close proximity to surface water, as a risk for eutrophication, due to its location just 0.12 kilometers away from the Navotas River. The study also identifies sensitive land use associated with permanent residential structures located 0.2 kilometers away. Around 200 people currently reside on the site, based on estimates from community leaders. This represents a noticeable decline from approximately 1,000 residents in early 2025.

MIEC's project description for scoping claims that Manila Bay, a Key Biodiversity Area by the DENR, is roughly 7 kilometers from the site. However, Google Earth imagery shows a conservative estimate closer to 2 kilometers if a straight line is drawn across the Manila Harbour Centre. Importantly, social service centers within 100 meters are absent from both the feasibility study and project description for scoping [33].

These include the San Miguel Corporation's four-storey Better World Smokey Mountain Learning and Skills Development Center, a local multipurpose cooperative-led materials recovery facility supported by the ADB, Smokey Mountain Health Center & Lying- In Clinic, and CORA Eco-Ikot Center for waste management supported by Korea International Cooperation Agency, Planet CORA, United States Agency for International Development, and Our Sea of East Asia Network. To date, a local Christian church located in the Upper Smokey Mountain was already demolished, in 2025.

Figure V-3. Suitability Analysis Map for Smokey Mountain

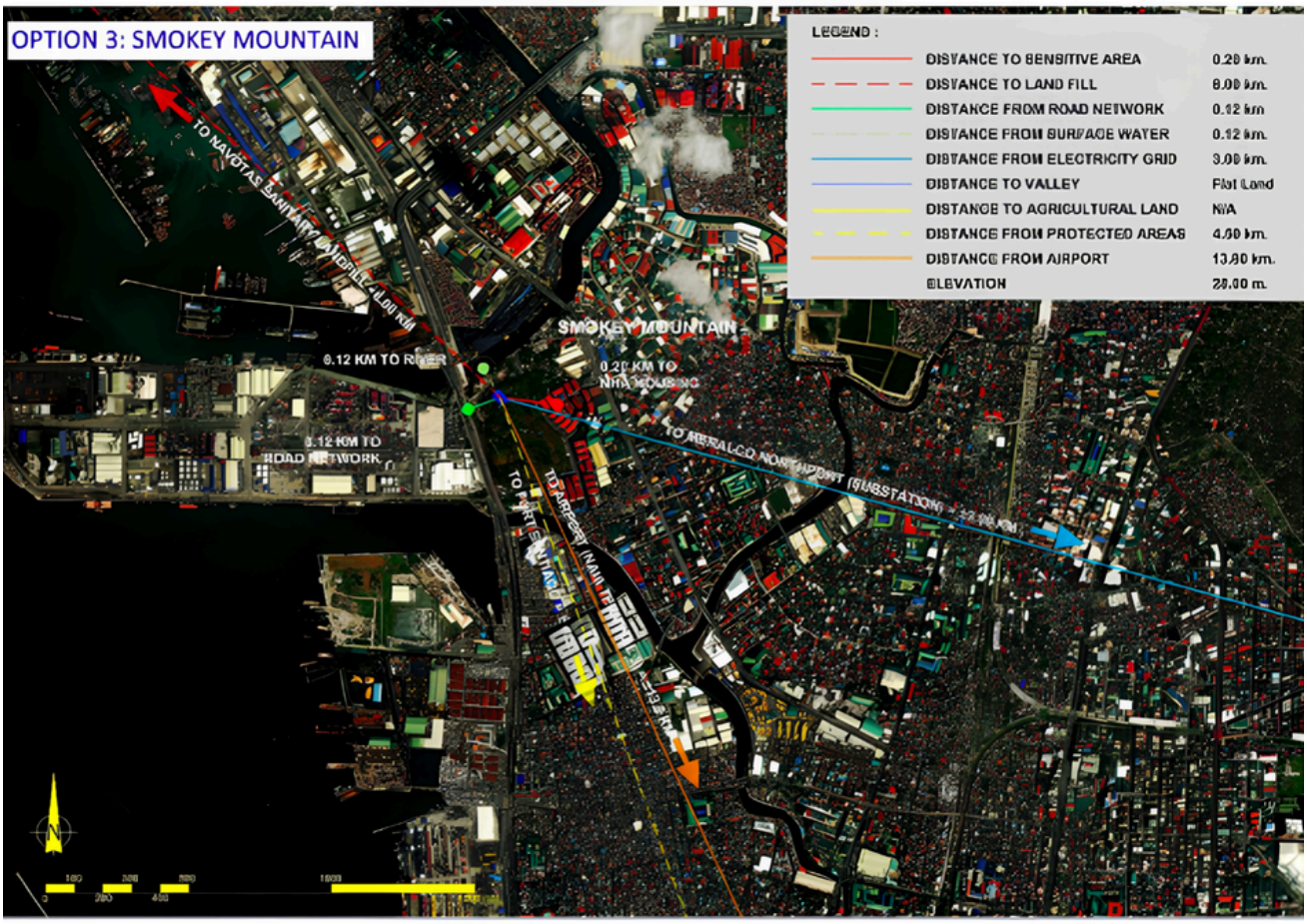


Figure 1. Map of project site taken from the World Bank and AIIB's 2023 Feasibility Study.

The project site's location and geology make it susceptible to liquefaction and tsunamis. Due to anticipated shallow groundwater levels, the adequacy of its bearing capacity cannot be ascertained. The absence of toxic substances underneath the former dumpsite also cannot be guaranteed. Existing zoning restrictions would have to be waived to allow for industrial activities like waste incineration. The site is currently zoned as a high-density, residential mixed use zone [34].

As indicated in the feasibility study, several significant disadvantages of Smokey Mountain point to its unsuitability as a project site for a WtE plant. Notably, the site received the lowest possible score of "0" in the document's multi-criteria analysis for "Distance from sensitive land use" and "Distance from surface water." Citing the World Bank, the study notes: "The noise, odor and emissions generated by an incineration plant are inevitable. Such emissions are harmful to human health and for that reason, the plant site should be situated away from inhabited zones and tourist attractions."

Lastly, the project proponents have not yet publicly disclosed a detailed ash management plan for the Smokey Mountain WtE project. The project descriptions released so far focus on plant capacity (100 MW, 3,000 tons/day of waste), financing, and energy generation, but do not explain where bottom ash and fly ash would go, how much ash would be generated, or how hazardous residues would be handled.

This omission is significant because ash management is one of the most important environmental issues associated with waste incineration projects, particularly because chief local executives often justify waste burning due to issues on landfills.

WtE does not eliminate the need for landfills; rather, it requires additional engineered landfills to manage ash that is considered hazardous waste in the Philippines.

Typically, municipal waste incinerators generate bottom ash, which accounts for roughly 15–25% of the original waste volume, as well as fly ash and air pollution control residues that may contain higher concentrations of heavy metals, dioxins, furans, and other toxic substances. Without a publicly disclosed ash management plan, it remains unclear how these residues would be handled and disposed of.

Issue 5. Harassment, Forced Demolitions, and Encroachment of Public Land

Environmental justice standards increasingly emphasize participation that is continuous, informed, and capable of influencing outcomes. Currently, R-II Builders, in coordination with barangay officials and the local city government, has proceeded with the active displacement of urban poor communities for site preparation, even without completing the full environmental review process with the participation of affected communities.



Residents of Smokey Mountain, Manila, hold a peaceful protest calling for secure housing, opposing forced evictions, and advocating for community-based Zero Waste solutions. The action took place during a dialogue with Philippine Representative Renee Co, local officials, and community members amid concerns over the proposed Waste-to-Energy facility and its potential impacts on residents' health, livelihoods, and environment. Photo credit: Climate Change Network for Community-based Initiatives (CCNCI).

To date, R-II Builders has yet to obtain an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), complete the public consultation process, or secure an Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) before implementation. Recently, RII-Builders, through the Court Receiver, has split the preparatory phase of the WtE project into a separate project it calls "land restoration," allegedly to evade these environmental and social requirements.

Forced demolitions started as early as 2021, during the COVID-19 lockdown period, and became more aggressive from 2025 onwards, when news of the WtE project came to light. The Court Receiver of RII Builders has also been aggressively laying claim to ownership of Smokey Mountain land, despite the land being under the public domain as per Presidential Proclamation 39 of 1992. The rights of the urban poor under RA 7279 (Urban Development and Housing Act) have been ignored.

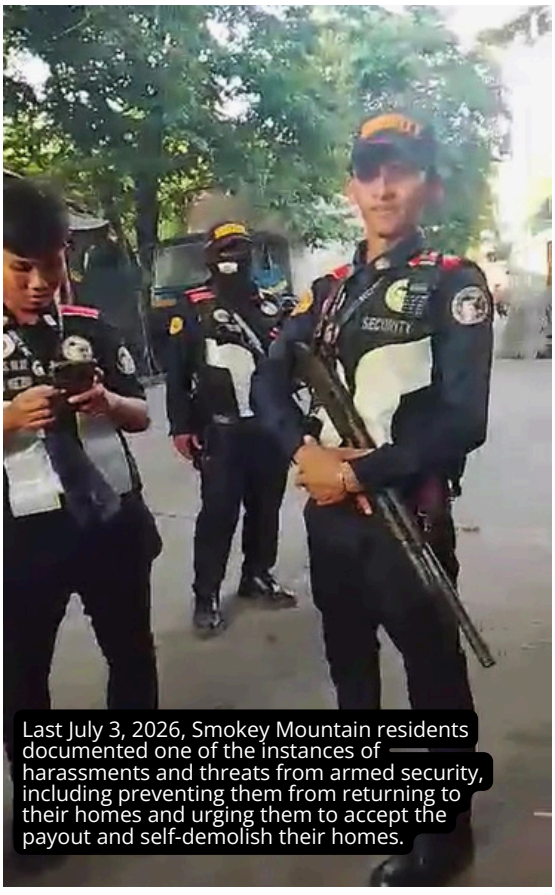
Testimonials from residents report that the Court Receiver, with support from Barangay 128, has stationed unidentified armed men around the area who move from household to household to "convince" residents to accept "financial assistance" in exchange for "voluntary self-demolition." The amounts offered vary from P10,000 to P150,000.

Threats of intensified evictions were reportedly made in late 2025 for December 2025 and January 2026, with armed men reportedly saying, "*Hanggang December nalang kayo*" (You only have until December) and "*Tanggapin nyo na ang pera kasi papaalisin na kayo sa January*" (You should just accept the money because you will be made to leave in January).

Reportedly, the so-called financial assistance is offered only to those who were included in the 2017 census.[14] Several claims have been made that some community members were not included in the census despite residing in the area for one or two decades. Additionally, community members whose homes were demolished are reported to either be living under bridges or to have moved to Paradise Heights to share already cramped living spaces.

In November 2025, some residents were blocked from returning to their homes by armed men claiming that the land is private property. Residents have also reported repeated physical and verbal harassment and threats by the armed men.

As of May 2026, multiple plots of land within the site have been fenced off. Private offices for the Court Receiver and security personnel have been erected, and several container vans purportedly containing WtE pre-construction equipment have been placed onsite without the necessary clearances from the DENR.



Last July 3, 2026, Smokey Mountain residents documented one of the instances of harassments and threats from armed security, including preventing them from returning to their homes and urging them to accept the payout and self-demolish their homes.

Rights of the Urban Poor under the Urban Development and Housing Act

- Mandatory Notice: Notice of eviction must be served at least 30 days prior to the actual eviction/demolition.
- Adequate Consultation: There must be mandatory, meaningful consultation with the affected families and community members.
- Relocation/Resettlement: Adequate, decent relocation must be provided. If not possible within 45 days of a final court judgment, financial assistance equivalent to 60 days of the minimum wage must be provided.
- Pre-Demolition Conference: A Pre-Demolition Conference (PDC) must be conducted by the Presidential Commission for the Urban Poor (PCUP) to ensure all legal requirements are met.
- Police Procedure: The Philippine National Police (PNP) must observe maximum tolerance, use proper uniforms, and avoid using heavy equipment for demolition except for permanent/concrete structures.
- Protection for Specific Groups: Women, children, and vulnerable sectors are to be given special consideration.

Rights Regarding Court Orders (Eviction & Demolition)

- Finality of Judgment: According to proposed amendments and general principles of law, a court order must be final and executory before it may be enforced.
- Stay of Execution: Underprivileged and homeless citizens may be exempted from paying a supersedeas bond (a bond to stay execution) during an appeal of an eviction order.
- Right to Due Process: No demolition should occur without a court order, except in cases such as danger areas or government infrastructure projects, which still require consultation.

Active exclusion of affected groups and their support organizations. Urban poor community members have noted that these consultations were conducted exclusively with a few pre-selected participants.

Along with civil society organizations, they also raised concerns about the conduct of a public scoping consultation in March 2025, where questions were vaguely answered regarding risks, impacts, legality, and the intensification of forced displacement as a result of the project.

Closed-door consultations with Barangay 128 officials and about ten pre-selected residents were held in February 2025.

A public scoping consultation was held shortly after, in March 2025, as part of a requirement for securing consent for the project and an Environmental Compliance Certificate from the DENR's Environmental Management Bureau (DENR-EMB).

Similar to the closed-door consultation that came before, it has been flagged by residents as exclusionary and inadequate. Questions and concerns raised about risks, impacts, legality, and the intensification of displacement due to the project were vaguely answered.

Its conduct appears to violate provisions in the DENR's own Departmental Administrative Order (DAO) 2017-15, which sets standards for public participation and access to information.

The project description for public scoping was not disclosed during the public consultations in March 2025, where no representatives from affected urban poor organizations were present or invited. GAIA requested a copy of the project documents from DENR-EMB but was denied access to the documents in July 2025. A copy was eventually obtained, however, when it briefly became publicly accessible ten months later, in January 2026, on DENR-EMB's website.



Photo: Smokey Mountain residents sought a dialogue with Mayor Isko Moreno but a platoon of police were the only ones who greeted them in front of the Manila City Hall last August 18, 2025. Source Rappler.

In the document, there is no mention of households and potential relocation sites at risk of physical and economic displacement.[35]

The lack of meaningful public participation amid intensified forced displacement has sparked several public demonstrations in front of Manila City Hall. Peaceful calls for dialogue with Mayor Isko Moreno from August to September 2025 went unanswered.

Several policymakers in the House of Representatives (HOR) have taken notice, notably Congresswoman Renee Co (Kabataan Partylist), Congresswoman Marivic Co-Pilar (Quezon City, 6th District), and Congressman Ernesto Dionisio Jr. (City of Manila, 1st District, whose jurisdiction includes the project site). Issues surrounding forced demolitions and their intensification due to the WtE project have been raised by community groups and members of Manila Anti-Incineration Alliance (MAIA) on two occasions at the HOR.

The first was on December 17, 2025, during a briefing of the Committee on Housing and Urban Development, chaired by Congresswoman Co-Pilar. The second was on January 28, 2026, at a meeting of the Subcommittee on the Presidential Proclamations, chaired by Congressman Roy Gonzales (City of Santa Rosa, Lone District), and attended by Congresspersons Co, Co-Pilar, and Dionisio.

In aid of legislation, Congresswoman Co visited the project site on February 17, 2026, where she held a closed-door dialogue with Barangay 128 officials and a community consultation with affected residents, MAIA, and civil society allies. Notably, Barangay 128 officials claimed that they lacked access to any project documents.

Issue 6. Exercising Poor Environmental and Social Safeguards Due Diligence to Allow Corporate Capture of Public Assets and Services

The WB and AIIB's incomplete assessment of affected communities in the project has been instrumental in undermining the safeguards requirements for starting development projects. In the WB's project document, Component 2 on solid waste management of the Metro Manila Flooding Project, of which the WtE project was originally a part, did not include even a single individual from the 70,000 direct and indirect project-affected persons in a site known to be historically disputed. Additionally, the loan amount has since increased by US$2.235 million, with no allocations for the relocation of affected communities.[36]

The government has also led partnerships for the project with operators and investors known to have past and current corporate governance and accountability concerns.

R-II Builders, PhilEco and MIEC. These are all connected to billionaire Reghis M. Romero II, a businessman and former Special Envoy of the President to Japan for Business and Investment. Having benefited from implementing the failed SMDRP, Romero was able to build an empire of companies under the R-II Group of Companies, alongside R-II Builders, Harbour Centre Port Terminal, Smokey Mountain Holdings, and PhilEco. PhilEco is a major waste management service provider in the country, operating various landfills reported to have major problems, while MIEC is its project company, in which PhilEco has majority ownership. R-II Builders now acts as if it is the owner of the project site.

PhilEco operates the Vitas Marine Loading Station (VMLS) in Manila, which currently functions as a marine transfer station for waste going to the Navotas Sanitary Landfill. In 2017, the DENR temporarily suspended the operations of VMLS, saying PhilEco had violated conditions in its Environmental Compliance Certificate. Among these were the dumping of solid waste and leachate directly into Manila Bay.

A number of violations came to light in April 2026 when the Navotas Sanitary Landfill remained on fire for over three weeks, causing high levels of air pollution in Metro Manila and parts of Bataan for over a week. According to the DENR-EMB, PhilEco has been flagged for administrative violations, such as the non-submission of compliance monitoring and self-monitoring reports, as well as discharge permit violations.

The agency is currently exploring legal remedies against the company for failing to complete its Safe Closure and Rehabilitation Plan, a responsibility required of it as the former operator of the landfill from 2006 to 2026.[37] The question is: Why is a company with these grave violations allowed to bid for projects without being held accountable?

Kanadevia. Providing technological, technical, and operational capacities to the WtE project is Japan-based company Kanadevia. Formerly known as Hitachi Zosen Corporation, Kanadevia is both a global leader in rolling out WtE technology and a company that has faced public opposition to its projects due to environmental and social impacts. The company was at the center of controversy in 2024 when it admitted to tampering with fuel efficiency and emissions data for marine engines since 1999.[38] Its change of name to Kanadevia that same year is seen as a move to reposition itself away from the scandal and regain consumer confidence.[33]

In 2025, Kanadevia disclosed inappropriate business conduct regarding its non-marine engine businesses. Inappropriate conduct in its waste incineration facilities in Japan dates back to 1996 and includes actions such as "falsification of flue gas measurement values," "falsification related to flue gas and furnace temperatures," and "improper measurement of waste incineration volumes," among others. These measures were proactively carried out across several facilities with the intent of producing false and misleading data.[39]

Issue 7. Debt-Inducing and a Potential Source of Corruption

Amid the ongoing energy crisis and controversies surrounding infrastructure works, particularly flood-control projects, the proposed WtE project raises concerns about the use of public financing and the potential for further debt. According to the Commission on Audit, there were delays of up to 310 days between 2018 and 2023 in the Metro Manila Flooding Project, resulting in P32.9 million in commitment fees paid to creditor banks. This is a substantial amount of money that could have been spent on improving the waste management system in Manila.[40]

The bigger costs lie in the debt that would be incurred by the government from these unnecessary, costly, and harmful waste management interventions. Without waste sorting and adequate waste infrastructure, WtE plants will not be sustainable, as they require a continuous supply of highly combustible waste to burn.

The supply of collected waste in Manila, however, is mixed waste. The plant will burn 3,000 MT of waste every day to produce 100 MW of power. However, the City of Manila generates only 1,100–1,800 metric tons of solid waste per day. Half of this is biodegradable (50%), recyclable (32%), residual (13%), and special waste (5%).

To feed this monster, recyclable waste currently recovered by the informal waste economy, along with residual waste, will be used as feedstock for the incinerator. But this waste alone is not enough, and the City of Manila will have to accept waste from other cities in Metro Manila. With other cities placing more focus on banning single-use plastics, the project may not find enough combustible materials to burn. This could create pressure to source waste from beyond Manila, including potentially from the nearby port.



PBBM holds a business meeting with the executives of Kanadevia Corporation and Phil. Ecology Systems Corp. on June 20, 2025 . Source: Presidential Communications Office.

The affiliations among R-II Builders, PhilEco Systems Corporation, Vitas transfer stations, and the port within the same business group have high potential for hiding costs and obscuring reporting requirements related to the management of transfer stations, the WtE plant, and port operations, which could potentially receive illegal waste from other countries as feedstock for the plant.

Waste projects are also known to be vulnerable to corruption, as pricing, emissions reporting, and required pollution-control technologies are seldom transparent. Moreover, this WtE project, being presented as a Metro Manila flood-control intervention, cannot be viewed separately from ongoing land reclamation, drainage management, river and estero systems, and major infrastructure developments, where large projects may proceed without sufficient cumulative-impact assessment or public accountability.

In the Philippines, up to 60% of public works and flood-control project budgets are routinely lost to corruption before construction even begins. This systemic leakage—primarily driven by kickbacks, "ghost" projects, and rigged bidding—has compromised essential infrastructure and cost the Philippine economy billions.[41] In the case of Smokey Mountain, the absence of a government budget for rigorous consultations, livelihood restoration, and relocation has come at the cost of the urban poor communities.

Issue 8. Systemic Neglect of Government in Broader Waste Governance and Climate Justice

Under RA 9003, local governments are mandated to implement waste segregation at source, establish Materials Recovery Facilities (MRFs), promote waste diversion through recycling and composting, adopt and implement a 10-year Solid Waste Management Plan, and avoid the collection of mixed, unsegregated waste.

Local governments, in general, have low compliance with these mandates. WtE projects are in conflict with the waste hierarchy established under Republic Act No. 9003. They undermine recycling and waste reduction efforts by creating long-term dependence on continuous waste generation and placing disproportionate burdens on low-income communities that are least responsible for waste generation yet face the consequences of pollution and climate impacts from these projects.

Prioritizing costly and harmful technological solutions over waste reduction and Zero Waste approaches comes with unnecessary debt and the risk of corporate capture of public assets and social services.

C. Recommendations

Urban poor residents in Smokey Mountain are organized into two major community groups: Nagkakaisa at Nagdadamayang Maralita Organization (NANAMOR) and Samahang Magkakapitbahay sa Upper Smokey Mountain (SMUSM). Nearby, in Barangay 105, is Samahan Tungo sa Maayos na Tahanan at Hanapbuhay (SMTH), which also faces issues of forced displacement by R-II Builders.

These three community organizations affected by the project have formed a broad alliance with civil society and other allies called the Manila Anti-Incinerator Alliance (MAIA), which calls on the government, IFIs, and R-II Builders to:

- Uphold the national ban on incineration as stated in the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act and Clean Air Act.
- Immediately stop evictions and ensure on-site housing and income restoration in Smokey Mountain.
- Respect rights to housing and basic social services, public participation, free speech, freedom of association, a safe and clean environment, and fair development, and end intimidation, fencing, and harassment.

The following section outlines key recommendations for national and local governments, the legislature, IFIs, and development actors.



Launch of the Manila Anti-Incinerator Alliance (MAIA) at Tondo, Manila in September 2025.

1. National Agencies and the City Government of Manila Must Protect Communities from Disproportionate Waste Burdens

National agencies and the City Government of Manila should protect the rights and livelihoods of communities affected by the Smokey Mountain WtE project, ensure meaningful participation in decisions affecting them, and uphold environmental justice and sustainable waste management.

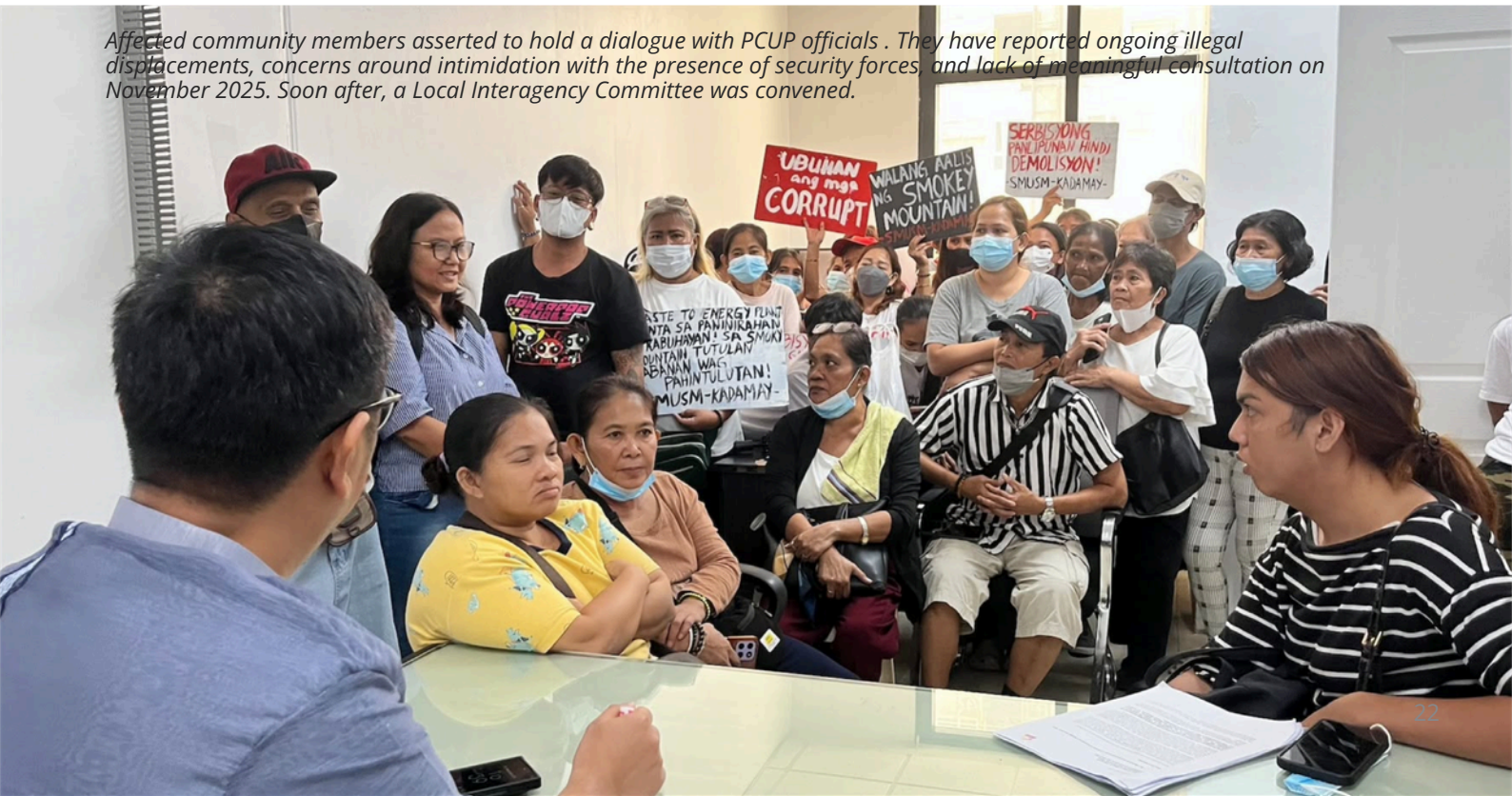
In particular:

- **Suspend all preparatory activities being undertaken in Smokey Mountain and project approvals.**

- **Complete the unfulfilled promises and resolve outstanding issues in Smokey Mountain**, as mandated by the 1987 Philippine Constitution, which obliges the State to undertake a continuing urban land reform and housing program for underprivileged and homeless citizens in the SMDRP. The City Government of Manila must adopt a formal commitment to prohibit forced evictions in connection with the project.

- **Establish an independent fact-finding committee.** Congress, the Commission on Human Rights, or the Office of the Ombudsman could be asked to investigate land ownership claims, property transfers, eviction practices, reprisals against residents, organizers, and critics, compliance with housing and environmental laws, and the progress of the SMDRP.

- **Establish an inter-agency review of the Smokey Mountain WtE proposal** that integrates environmental protection, waste management, energy planning, climate commitments, livelihood impacts, housing security, and environmental justice considerations before any national government support is granted. This is especially relevant because the Smokey Mountain issue is not solely an environmental matter; it intersects with solid waste management, energy policy, urban development, public health, housing rights, and climate policy.



Affected community members asserted to hold a dialogue with PCUP officials . They have reported ongoing illegal displacements, concerns around intimidation with the presence of security forces, and lack of meaningful consultation on November 2025. Soon after, a Local Interagency Committee was convened.

- **Exercise due diligence in the implementation of environmental and social safeguards,** including public participation and compliance with environmental regulations, and prevent companies with questionable environmental and social governance records from undertaking major public projects. Require cumulative-impact assessments in communities that have historically hosted dumpsites, landfills, or polluting facilities.

- **Publicly disclose all project agreements, feasibility studies, environmental impact assessments, joint venture agreements, and land-use plans related to the project.** Make documents available in accessible formats and languages for affected communities, and ensure that affected communities have meaningful opportunities to participate before any waste facility is approved.

- **Support and recognize the roles of waste workers and informal recyclers** by formalizing and protecting the livelihoods of waste pickers through cooperatives, social protection, health insurance, and access to recycling contracts. Integrate informal waste workers into the city's solid waste management system.

- **Incorporate environmental justice principles into city planning** to avoid concentrating additional waste infrastructure in already affected communities. The City of Manila should place community rights, environmental justice, transparency, and sustainable waste management at the center of all decisions affecting Smokey Mountain, ensuring that residents are meaningful participants in determining the future of their community.

2. The Philippine Congress Should Uphold the Incineration Ban and Protect Communities

The Philippine Congress should protect marginalized communities against displacement, support recognition of waste worker livelihoods, ensure cumulative environmental impact assessments, and require transparency regarding the role of IFIs in shaping waste policy. In particular, Congress should:

- **Uphold the ban on incineration** and reject ongoing legislative proposals to overturn that prohibition in protection of public health and the environment.

- **Conduct oversight of public land management,** specifically Proclamation 39, which established the SMDRP, and investigate alleged illegal displacements being undertaken for the project.

- **Call for a legislative inquiry into the failure of national and local agencies to protect** the right to a healthy and living environment, the right to adequate housing, the right against forced eviction and displacement, the right to participation, and the right to fair development.

- **Conduct oversight of the implementation of the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act and the Clean Air Act** before allowing the lifting of prohibitions on approaches such as incineration.

- **Strengthen oversight of IFIs** by requiring government agencies and private-sector entities receiving assistance from multilateral development banks, such as the WB, ADB, and AIIB, to disclose technical assistance outputs and report how foreign-funded policy advice influences legislation and public investment decisions.

- **Publish environmental and social risk assessments** associated with externally funded policy reforms.

- **Strengthen protections against involuntary displacement** by addressing lessons from resettlement and establishing national standards for displacement caused by infrastructure projects.

3. International Financial Institutions Should Support Environmental Justice and Transformative Change in the Waste Sector

International financial institutions should refrain from supporting WtE incineration and instead help countries achieve transformative shifts in the waste sector in alignment with the principles of environmental justice. In particular:

- **The WB, AIIB, and ADB should cancel all financing related to the Smokey Mountain WtE project,** as well as other upstream and project financing for WtE in the Philippines.

- **Apply stronger environmental and social due diligence to technical assistance activities** when those activities are intended to shape future investment decisions and may foreseeably influence projects with significant environmental, health, climate, or social impacts.



Members of Congress specifically Kabataan Partylist Rep. Renee Co and Chairperson of the House Committee on Housing and Urban Development Rep . Marivic Co-Pilar made efforts in Congress to look into the Smokey Mountain WtE project and resulting displacements.

- **Develop procedures for assessing foreseeable downstream impacts of technical assistance** and require monitoring of whether recommendations lead to projects with significant environmental or social consequences.

- **Invest in decentralized alternatives,** including barangay-level composting, materials recovery facilities, source-segregation programs, and community recycling enterprises.

- **Strengthen meaningful consultation requirements** through early consultation with waste pickers, urban poor communities, and residents of historically burdened areas.

- **Require disclosure of assumptions** regarding waste generation, emissions, recycling rates, and technology performance.

- **Include lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions in project assessments.**

- **Exhaust all potential alternatives** and assess waste reduction strategies, expanded recycling systems that include the informal waste economy, composting programs, and decentralized waste management options against proposed WtE facilities. Assessments should include costs, employment effects, climate impacts, and policy and environmental risks.

- **Require human rights risk assessments in all investments.** IFIs involved in this project must meet directly with affected residents rather than relying solely on company or government reports, and investigate allegations of retaliation against project critics.

4. Development Actors Must Prioritize Zero Waste and Circular Economy Approaches

- **Advocate for legislation expanding support for reuse and refill systems**, increasing funding for composting and materials recovery facilities, and integrating Zero Waste approaches into national waste policy.

- **Support the Magna Carta for Waste Workers** to recognize waste pickers as environmental service providers, support their organization into cooperatives, extend social protection and occupational safety benefits, and include them in local solid waste management planning.

- **Compare the proposed facility with decentralized waste management systems,** materials recovery facilities, and organics management programs.

- **For renewable energy investors, compare the proposed energy generation with renewable alternatives**, such as solar and wind, as well as energy-efficiency investments.

Annex I. Metro Manila Flooding Project funded by World Bank and the AIIB

Metro Manila Flood Management	
Total project cost	US$ 500.00 million as of 2018
Total committed cost	US$ 369.88 million. AIIB and World Bank
Implementers	Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Public Works and Highways,Metro Manila Development Authority
Safeguards Category	Environment : Category A
Components	The project comprises four components. Component 1: modernizing drainage areas will construct an estimated 20 new and modernize an estimated 36 existing pumping stations and appurtenant infrastructure, improve the associated waterways and drainage channels, including secondary and tertiary ones as needed, and develop new drains when required. Component 2: minimizing solid waste in waterways with a WtE incineration is to be established and operated near the pumping stations and waterways and drainage channels targeted under component 1 of the project. Component 3 participatory housing and resettlement will support three groups of project affected people. Component 4. Project Management.

Source: World Bank website. (https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P153814).

Annex II. List of policies and laws related to Smokey Mountain Development and Reclamation Project (SMDRP)

1. Key Executive Issuances and Directives

- Executive Order No. 1086 (1986): Established the original guidelines for the Tondo Foreshore and Dagat-Dagatan Development, which was later amended to include the SMDRP.
- Memorandum Order No. 161 and 161-A in 1988 had already mandated the NHA to find solutions to turn the area into a habitable, low-cost housing project.
- Memorandum Order No. 415 (1992), directing the NHA) to officially close the dumpsite and transform the area into a portside housing community.
- Proclamation No. 39 (1992): Declared the 40-hectare Manila Bay area, located directly across R-10, as the designated area for NHA housing and mixed commercial/ industrial use; directs titling in NHA's name.
- Proclamation No. 465 (1994) increases reclamation area from 40 ha to 79 ha.
- NHA–RBI Joint Venture Agreement (JVA) (March 19, 1993). The NHA and R-II Builders, Inc. (R-II) executed a JVA to implement the SMDRP (with the former as government implementing agency and the latter as developer for 3,500 temporary and 3,500 permanent housing units; RBI finances reclamation of 40 ha as its share.
- Amended and Restated JVA (ARJVA) (Feb. 21, 1994) adds Phase I (temporary housing, 3,520 units, 79 ha reclamation) and Phase II (incinerator, 119 ha reclamation).
- Amendment to ARJVA (AARJVA), (Aug. 11, 1994): clarifies port-plan integration, compensation upon termination.
- Smokey Mountain Asset Pool Trust Agreement alongside the Philippine National Bank (PNB, as trustee) and the Home Guaranty Corporation (HGC, as guarantor). This agreement securitized the Smokey Mountain Development and Reclamation Project (SMDRP). [1, 2, 3] The agreement established a specific financial framework and was accompanied by a Contract of Guaranty.
- Clean Air Act bans incinerators (1999); the incinerator plan in Phase II of the Amended and Restated JVA (ARJVA) becomes illegal; off-site waste disposal required.
- Ecological Solid Waste Management Act (2000), is the landmark Philippine environmental law that establishes a systematic, comprehensive, and ecological approach to solid waste management.

- Urban Development and Housing Act (1992), established a comprehensive and continuing urban development and housing program in the Philippines. It requires the local government unit, in coordination with the National Housing Authority (NHA) and other agencies, is mandated to provide adequate permanent or temporary relocation that includes basic services, community facilities, and access to livelihood opportunities, The Urban Development and Housing Act of 1992 (officially Republic Act No. 7279, also known as the Lina Law) was enacted on March 24, 1992, to establish a comprehensive and continuing urban development and housing program in the Philippines. The law establishes that housing priority must follow a cascading preference: On-site development first, followed by In-city resettlement, Near-city resettlement, and Off-city options only as a final, absolute resort

- Executive Order No. 221 (2000): Amended E.O. 1086 to allow the SMDRP to directly benefit from the proceeds of the disposal of the Vitas property owned by the NHA.

- Memorandum Order No. 33 (1998) Reconstituting the Smokey Mountain Development and Reclamation Project Executive Committee

- Memorandum Order No. 47 (2001): Dissolved the original SMDRP Executive Committee and transferred the authority to oversee the project to the Chairman of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC) to streamline implementation

2. Legal and Judicial Decisions

- Civil Case No. Q-12-71180 , a lawsuit filed in 2012 by R-II Builders, Inc. against the National Housing Authority (NHA) and the Home Guaranty Corporation (HGC)

- November 11, 2019, the Regional Trial Court, Branch 222, Quezon City granted the application for the appointment of a Receiver for the SMAP pending the resolution of the main action. The court-appointed Receiver has then taken custodia legis of the SMAP on behalf of the court.

- September 28, 2022. the Regioal Trial Court , Branch 222, Quezon City appointed Atty. Norma Singson-De Leon a new court Receiver with the passing away of the past Receiver.

- Aug. 27, 2003: NHA–RBI Memorandum of Agreement terminates JVA, ARJVA, AARJVA, Supplemental Agreements; provides for validation and settlement of RBI's claims.

- 2002–2003: Harbour Centre Port Terminal, Inc. (HCPTI) subscription and dacion en pago transactions over reclaimed land; company losses amid PPA licensing failure.

- G.R. No. 164527 (Chavez v. NHA), 2007: A case challenging the constitutionality of the Smokey Mountain Project's Joint Venture Agreement, seeking nullification, enforcement restraint, and public document disclosure. Mandamus granted for transparency. The Supreme Court upheld the validity of the JVA and the authority of the NHA to manage the reclamation, affirming that the project was a lawful exercise of government power, unlike other, non-social, reclamation projects. Case digest.

- Home Guaranty Corp. (HGC) Asset Pooling: Legal, financial frameworks were created to allow for the issuance of Smokey Mountain Project Participation Certificates (SMPPCs) to raise funds when the developer ran out of capital.

- G.R No. 192649 (2011). The Supreme Court reversed the Court of Appeals' decision, holding that the Regional Trial Court (RTC) lacked jurisdiction over the case due to the non-payment of correct docket fees and the improper transfer of the case from the Special Commercial Court (SCC). The Court emphasized that jurisdiction is acquired only upon payment of the prescribed docket fees, and the failure to do so warrants the dismissal of the case.

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- July 26, 2017 Decision issued by the Supreme Court First Division Home Guaranty Corporation v. R-II Builders, Inc. and National Housing Authority consolidated with National Housing Authority v. R-II Builders, Inc., et al. (G.R. No. 215347 and G.R. No. 215364 / G.R. No. 229288). The Supreme Court permanently affirmed that R-II Builders' lawsuit was a personal action incapable of pecuniary estimation, thereby validating the trial court's jurisdiction over the ₱4.5 billion dispute based on the minimal filing fees paid and forcing the case back to the trial courts for a final financial resolution.

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