

Group: Food shortage if oil drilling continues

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CEBU - An environmental group yesterday warned of a possible food shortage if the oil drilling activities in the seas in Central Visayas continue.

Vince Cinches, one of the convenors of the Save Tañon Strait Citizens Movement, said the fish supply and marine resources in Central Visayas have been affected by the continuing oil and gas exploratory activities.

In a press conference, Cinches said that 52 percent of the animal daily protein requirement comes from fishes and these animals will suffer once the oil drillings are not stopped.

And once the marine mammals are affected, he explained humans will also suffer because many people in Cebu depend on fishing for their food and livelihood.

Reports said that more than 400,000 Cebuanos and inhabitants of other Central Visayas provinces engaged in the fishing industry are affected by the oil exploration that is being conducted by NorAsian in the waters of Argao and Sibonga.

"It's too much, the waters of Central Visayas are surrounded by service contracts for different oil companies to identify, develop and distribute oil resources," Cinches said.

"The Central Visayas is the epicenter of global marine shore fish diversity and has the richest concentration of marine life in the whole planet," he added.

With the oil explorations, Cinches pointed out that it is expected that the local marine ecosystem would be adversely affected.

NorAsian Energy Ltd., an Australian oil exploration company with three service contracts in the Philippines, is currently conducting explorations in the waters of Bohol Strait off the coasts of Argao and Sibonga to find out if the amount of fossil fuel in the area is commercially viable.

Cinches claimed the granting of service contracts to the foreign oil companies will not help the country and the local economy because of the tax holidays and other privileges granted to the foreign companies under the outdated Presidential Decree No. 87 of 1972 or the Service Contract Law. — Jasmin R. Uy/WAB (THE FREEMAN)