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Quezon youth group opposes DOE's reissuance of moratorium exemption of coal project in Atimonan

Quezon City, Philippines — The Philippine Movement for Climate Justice (PMCJ) and Kabataan para sa Kalikasan ng Atimonan (KAPAKANAN) filed an opposition letter at the Department of Energy (DOE) after the latter reissued the exemption of Atimonan One Energy (A1E) from the coal moratorium on July 10, 2025.

In April 2025, MGen received an official communication from DOE [revoking](#) its confirmation of exemption for the 1,200-megawatt (MW) coal project in Atimonan, Quezon. The project's Acknowledgement of Non-Coverage from the 2020 coal moratorium has been recalled for further review following the government's policies and programs.

The [2020 DOE Coal Moratorium Advisory](#) provides that exemptions apply to coal projects that meet any of the following criteria. First, committed projects listed by the DOE before the moratorium that have achieved financial closing or begun construction. Second, existing coal plant complexes with firm expansion plans and secured sites. Third, indicative projects with substantial accomplishments include notarized land acquisition or lease agreements, approved permits, and resolutions from the host local government unit (LGU) and regional development council (RDC).

PMCJ, in previous [statements](#), proved that the A1E project does not qualify for exemption. It is a greenfield development with no prior operations, no proven expansion record, and lacks the necessary approvals and a notarized land agreement. The project's construction has been delayed since 2019 due to unresolved legal and environmental issues, and its PSA was among those voided by the Supreme Court.

"The A1E project should not be exempted from the coal moratorium, as none of the exemptions apply to it. For the DOE to reverse course is to provide special treatment to the project in clear violation of the coal moratorium. What is so special about the A1E coal project that the DOE has reneged on its previous position of applying the coal moratorium to the project, and greenlighted its construction despite legal challenges and widespread opposition?" PMCJ Legal team head Atty. Aaron Pedrosa said.

Local communities, groups, and the whole province of Quezon [have long been rejecting the A1E coal project](#), arranging protests, forums, and filing legal complaints in an attempt to avert the heightening of fossil-fuel-related pollution and further ecological

destruction of their area. Following the [historic Advisory Opinion on Climate Change released by the International Court of Justice](#), which was strongly lobbied into courtrooms by 27 law students, this action to oppose the project by the Atimonan youth is an act to concretize and urge the government to regulate and fully implement the fossil fuel phaseout in the Philippines.

“Higit isang dekada nang nilalaban ng mamayan ng Atimonan at buong probinsya ng Quezon ang maruruming proyekto sa aming lugar. Bilang kabataan, alam namin ang kahalagahan ng aming pakikilahok sa laban para sa kalikasan,” KAPAKANAN President Eunise Balagtas said. [The people of Atimonan and the entire province of Quezon have been fighting against the dirty projects in our area for more than a decade. As youth, we know the importance of our participation in the fight for the environment.]

“The [project's rebranding](#) from coal to liquified natural gas (LNG), then back to coal, was widely seen as an attempt to exploit regulatory gaps, circumvent requirements, and sneak its way to construction and operation. Sec. Sharon Garin is grossly misinformed in her support for the project. Her predecessor was sued for bending the coal moratorium just to allow the A1E coal plant. She must not commit the same mistake. The coal moratorium provides her the unmistakable mandate of once and for all shelving the project,” Pedrosa stressed. ###

**#EndCoal #NoToLNG #PhaseoutFossilFuels #ClimateJusticeNow
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