

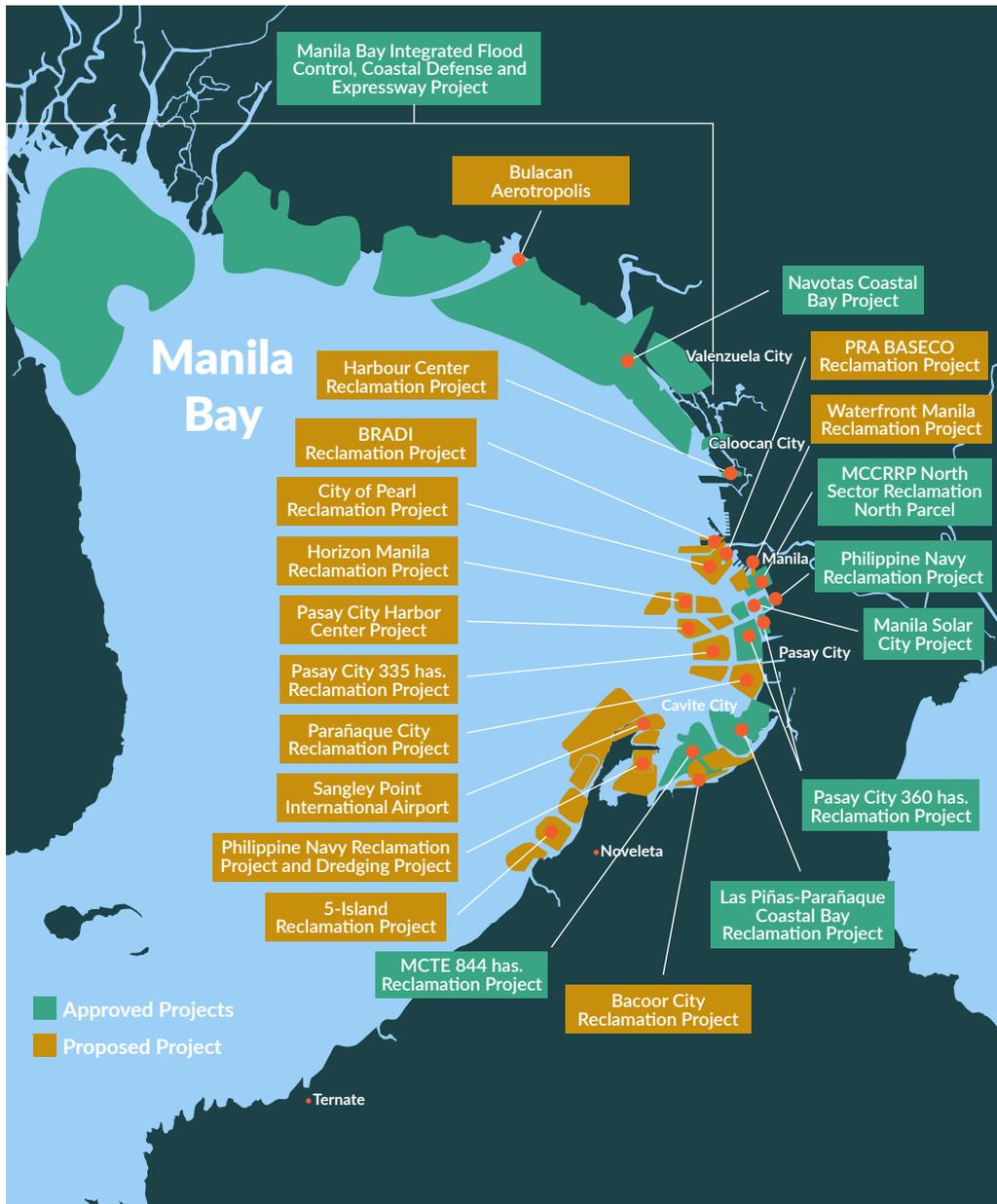
# The Ugly Truth Behind the Promise of Reclamation

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 OCEANA



The Manila Bay Area spans **199,400 hectares** with a coastline that runs through Cavite, Parañaque, Pasay, Manila, Malabon, Navotas up to the provinces of Bulacan, Pampanga, and Bataan. It has been a witness to battles that changed the course of our country's history. Now, it is battling an environmental war within our waters against dump-and-fill projects hiding behind the promise of reclamation. There are 25 dump-and-fill projects along Manila Bay in varying stages of development. This is according to presentations made by Philippine Reclamation Authority in 2018 and 2019.



## Dump-and-Fill Projects Threaten Life in Sea and Land

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization describes land reclamation as “an irreversible form of environmental degradation.” The existing and proposed coastal infrastructures around Manila Bay create a chain reaction of negative environmental impacts that threaten the marine biodiversity of the bay and disturb fragile ecosystems.

### Fish:

The bay is a premier fishing ground. Commonly caught fishes include sardines, mackerel, mullet, threadfin bream, squid, blue crab, round scad, and fusilier.

67% of Manila Bay's total value is accounted for by the fisheries industry alone. Reclamation will decrease fish populations due to the loss of breeding grounds.<sup>4</sup>

### Wetlands:

These prevent shoreline erosion, absorb pollutants, improve water quality, and provide habitat for animals and plants.

Out of the 84,451 hectares of wetlands in Manila Bay, only 20,404 hectares remain. This drop in number represents a 71.1% decimation of wetland areas.<sup>2</sup>

### Mangrove forest areas:

These protect the coast from waves and typhoons and provide habitats, shelter, breeding sites, and food sources to coastal wildlife.

From 54,000 hectares at the turn of the century (1890), only 680 hectares remain in 2016. This figure indicates nearly 99% decimation of mangrove forest in Manila Bay.<sup>1</sup>

### Waterbird:

Manila Bay is a globally Important Bird Area. It is also the site of the largest congregation of coastal waterbirds in the country.

60% of all waterbird species in the Philippines including 12 globally threatened species are at risk because they occur within proposed reclamation areas in Manila Bay.<sup>3</sup>

## The Vulnerability of the City and People

In 2010, more than 28 million people lived in the Manila Bay area. This figure is projected to skyrocket to almost 33 million by 2020 (based on NSO 2000 census-based population projection). Dump-and-fill projects expose this great number of people to life-threatening geological hazards and increase their vulnerability to disasters in the middle of the climate crisis. (NSO 2000 census-based population projection)



### Liquefaction:

This happens to reclaimed land where loosely packed land lose their strength. During an earthquake, the layers below the surface liquefy like water and structures collapse on it.<sup>6</sup>

### Land Subsidence:

This refers to the sinking of land due to excessive extraction of groundwater. The sinking of the earth can worsen the effects of flooding in local communities. Many areas in Metro Manila, Cavite, and Laguna are already experiencing this.<sup>7</sup>

### Massive Flooding:

Buildings and other structures in the filled land obstruct the passage of floodwaters and the natural channels that divert water. This will increase and prolong the effects of flooding.

### Storm Surges:

In a country often battered by strong typhoons, storm surges have destroyed properties and claimed thousands of lives. Large-scale dump-and-fill projects have changed the movement and flow of the waters resulting to stronger and higher rush of seawater toward the coast.



### More environmental stresses:

An increase in urban areas result to increased demand for water, more waste to be treated or disposed, and general increase in pollution.<sup>8</sup>



It is the spawning ground of *Sardinella pacifica*, a new species of sardines found only in the Philippines and currently in Manila Bay, Sorsogon, Samar and Quezon.<sup>5</sup>

## How will climate change affect Manila Bay?<sup>9</sup>

The environmental threats of illegal dump-and-fill projects are worsened by the reality of the climate crisis which will endanger more lives and properties and result to more damage to the natural world.

Increased rainfall year-round by 2050



Worsened flooding



More frequent super typhoons



Storm surges in coastal areas



Rising sea level and land subsidence



More flooding



<sup>1</sup> Manila Bay Sustainable Development Master Plan, National Economic and Development Authority (December 2018)

<sup>2</sup> Internationally Important Waterbird Sites in Manila Bay, Philippines, October 2018. Technical Report. Wetlands International and IUCN National Committee of the Netherlands.

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.iucn.nl/files/publicaties/2018\\_wi-iucn\\_nl\\_-\\_internationally\\_important\\_waterbird\\_sites\\_in\\_manila\\_bay.pdf](https://www.iucn.nl/files/publicaties/2018_wi-iucn_nl_-_internationally_important_waterbird_sites_in_manila_bay.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.nfrdi.da.gov.ph/tjpf/etc/MANILA%20BAY%20BOOK\\_July%206%202017\\_PDF.pdf](http://www.nfrdi.da.gov.ph/tjpf/etc/MANILA%20BAY%20BOOK_July%206%202017_PDF.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://zokeys.pensoft.net/article/30688/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-indonesia-quake-liquefaction-explaine/explainer-what-is-liquefaction-idUSKCN1MC0E7>

<sup>7</sup> Rollon, R. The H2O Challenges for Manila Bay Rehabilitation. Insitute of Environmental Science and Meteorology.

<sup>8</sup> Hernandez, V. Bakit mapanganib and reclamation ng Manila Bay? University of the Philippines Science and Society Program.

<sup>9</sup> <http://climatereality.ph/official-statement-climate-reality-project-philippines-regarding-current-rehabilitation-efforts-proposed-reclamation-manila-bay-1027/>

## Uphold the Law in Manila Bay Reclamation Projects

Large-scale reclamation projects that lead to the dumping and filling of the seas are illegal because they violate our Constitutional right to a balanced and healthful ecology. Among the laws are:

- Gathering or transporting of coral sand, fragments, and other substances which make up marine habitat (Sec. 96); mangrove conversion (Sec. 99), and aquatic pollution and wetland conversion (Sec. 107).
- National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009 (RA 10066) – Modification and alteration of national landmark (Sec. 48b)
- National Integrated Protected Areas System Act (RA 11038) – Prohibited acts inside protected areas (Sec. 18)
- Local Government Code (RA 7160) – Violates the national law and plebiscite requirements for substantial alteration of boundaries of local government units (Sec. 10) and amount to illegal Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA) disbursements to local government units (Sec. 285)

Dump-and-fill projects also contravene the Supreme Court's order to restore marine life. (MMDA vs. Concerned Residents of Manila Bay)

## Stop the dumping and filling of our seas. Save Manila Bay.

The dump-and-fill projects hiding behind the promise of reclamation are in pursuit of economic and infrastructure facelift at the expense of the environment and the safety and livelihood of the people. Creating land where there was once only water bring irreversible destruction to marine habitats and make us vulnerable to disasters. Join Oceana and our partners in our call to stop the dumping and filling of our seas. Stop reclamation. Save Manila Bay.

Sign our online petition and let our voices be heard.

**STOP RECLAMATION! SAVE MANILA BAY!**

[tinyurl.com/savemanilabay](https://tinyurl.com/savemanilabay)

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