

# Philippines: Leni and Leody the only candidates committed to environmental policies

Envi coalition's study names Robredo, Pangilinan, Bello as greenest bets

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## **Robredo, Pangilinan, and Bello emerge as the 'greenest' candidates, while Marcos and Atienza come out as the 'dirtiest' in the study made by Panatang Luntian Coalition**

MANILA, Philippines - Among the presidential bets, only Vice President Leni Robredo and labor leader Ka Leody de Guzman had green track records.

This is according to the findings of Panatang Luntian's fact-check research study that zoomed into the positions of the presidential and vice presidential candidates. The goal of the study is to help voters make informed decisions on environmental agenda in the upcoming elections. The study also aims to counter environmental disinformation.

Panatang Luntian, a group of environmental groups pushing for the country's just and green economic recovery amid the pandemic and climate crisis, identified three national candidates who stood out to have the most promising on-record pronouncements and track records in addressing the environmental concerns.

Using a fact-checking methodology, the study enumerated the positions of candidates with the use of online data from search engines. They looked into the 133 publicly-available statements of the candidates eyeing for the top two posts and scrutinized their positions to countercheck their rhetoric with their track records or actions related to the issue being addressed.

This study entitled Envibe Check utilized six assessment criteria (AC) that took off from the Panatang Luntian Agenda, a framework aligned with the #AtinAngPilipinas Agenda. The AC focused on the following issues which advance the [People's Green New Deal](#) and [Planetary Emergency Initiative Manifesto](#):

1. extractives and environmentally destructive projects;
2. community-based waste management solutions;
3. just transition towards renewable energy;
4. green spaces and mass transportation;
5. environmental defense and climate justice; and
6. biodiversity and environmental conservation.

### **How did they fare?**

Vice President Leni Robredo got the 'greenest' credential after earning a perfect rating for all six assessment points. The coalition pointed out that she is "the lone candidate with a track record in

biodiversity management-community consultation, protection of Mt. Isarog Natural Park, and a Green Agenda Pact.”

Robredo has been known for her [genuine partnership](#) with indigenous peoples from far-flung communities even before her stint as vice president. Her [Angat Buhay Program](#) that includes rural development as one of its six key advocacy areas, benefited those [organizations](#) that protect the country’s biodiversity.

Earlier this year, the incumbent vice president and various environmental groups [signed](#) the *Green Covenant of a Robredo Presidency* – a pledge of commitment to ensure the implementation of programs prioritizing biodiversity, proper land use, climate justice, sustainable agriculture, waste management, affordable energy, and people-centered development if she will win the presidential race.

De Guzman, who was named as second greenest prexy bet with 5 positive ratings, was praised for his dynamic involvement in environmental activism.

Meanwhile, the ratings that Robredo and De Guzman received came far off to that of presidential survey frontrunner Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos, Jr. who was assessed as the ‘dirtiest’ candidate.

*“Ang lumilitaw na dirtiest candidate ay si former senator Bongbong Marcos na sa maraming okasyon ay patuloy na pinagtatangol ang maruming legasiya ng diktadura ng kanyang ama...tulad ng abandonadong minahan ng Marcopper sa Marinduque, ang mga Kaliwa-Kanan-Laiban Dam Projects, ang nasirang saribuhay sa isla ng Calauit sa Palawan, at ang Bataan Nuclear Power Plant,”* said Leon Dulce, secretariat head of Panatang Luntian.

(Former Senator Bongbong Marcos was found to be dirtiest candidate for consistently supporting the negative legacies of his father’s dictatorship which include the abandoned Marcopper mining in Marinduque, Kaliwa-Kanan-Laiban Dam Projects, degraded biodiversity of Calauit Islands in Palawan, and the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant.)

In 1996, the [Marcopper Mining Corporation](#), a company that flourished during the Marcos regime, was responsible for one of the biggest mining disasters in Philippine history after spilling millions of tons of mine waste that killed marine life and displaced nearby residents in Boac River, Marinduque.

The [Kaliwa Dam project](#), meanwhile, poses a threat to the ancestral lands of indigenous peoples in Quezon province. It was originally conceptualized during the dictatorship of the older Marcos.

During his campaign in Bataan last March 17, Bongbong Marcos openly [considered](#) the revival of the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant (BNPP) – the infamous legacy project of his father. BNPP was initially considered an answer to the looming energy crisis in the ‘70s. However, corruption allegations and [safety concerns](#) halted its operations.

As for the vice presidential bets, the study findings of Panatang Luntian named both Senator Francis Pangilinan and former Akbayan Partylist Representative Walden Bello as the ‘greenest’ contenders. They received a perfect rating for all six assessment points.

The group touted Pangilinan’s legislations on [single-use plastics](#), fossil-free transportation, [sustainable agriculture](#), and [mangrove protection](#); and commended Bello’s co-authorship in the Alternative Minerals Management Bill and active participation in the advocacies of several environmental groups.

Buhay Partylist Representative Lito Atienza received the ‘dirtiest’ rating after his track record as

former Department of Environment and Natural Resources secretary that was riddled with his approval of extractive and destructive projects such as mining, coal power plant, green space conversion projects, among others. He received four negative points.

“Atienza’s pronouncements through the years were seen to be full of contradictions. While he has been speaking out against land reclamation projects in Manila Bay, he actually pushed for the conversion of the Arroceros forest park and other heritage sites in Manila for development projects,” the study cited.

Davao City Mayor and presidential daughter Sara Duterte was named the second worst vice presidentiable with three negative points based on the 6 assessment criteria. The rating was a result of her declaration of support to continue her father’s environmentally destructive ‘[Build, Build, Build](#)’ Program.

### **Call to action**

“The research results are recommended to be utilized as a tool for educating voters and holding accountable candidates to a pro-environment platform and mandate, respectively. It can also be used as a tool against environmental disinformation wielded by politicians to falsely promote their candidacies,” the study cited.

Dulce, meanwhile, pointed out that the fact-checking research hopes to further strengthen the candidates’ stances on pro-environment platforms and mandates.

*“Pinapakita nito na kailangan pa nating palakasin ang ating paghamon sa mga susunod na lider ng bayan na higit pang bigyang atensyon ang paglawak ng iba pang mapanirang proyekto tulad ng pagmimina, mga dam, reclamation, at land development,”* he said.

(It shows that we still need to urge our future national leaders to deal with existing destructive projects such as mining, dam construction, reclamation and land development projects.)

*“Ang pagpapalawak ng malinis na enerhiya tulad ng wind at solar; at pagpaparami pa ng mga green spaces, mga parks, mga bicycle lane, at pagpapaunlad ng ating mass transportation system ay dapat bantayan bilang malinaw na priority ng mga kandidato natin,”* he added.

(The expansion of clean energy such as wind and solar; production of green spaces, parks, bicycle lanes; and the improvement of our mass transportation system should be the clear priorities of our candidates.)

Panatang Luntian’s fact-checking research was presented during the second segment of the [Fourth #AtinAngPilipinas Town Hall](#) on Saturday, March 26. The full copy of the study can be accessed [here](#).

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