

## Building a renewable mindset

Written by BY SEN. BEN PANGELINAN  
Thursday, 24 Apr 2014 03:00am

---

OUR people have come a long way. From using the galaide or carabao cart to transport us from one destination to another, to presently living in a world where, without thinking twice about it, we simply get in our vehicle and go to the local convenience store even if it was just a few short blocks away or buy a plane ticket to get from one island to the next. We have become so accustomed to the conveniences of refrigerators, microwaves and air conditioners. Most of us are only in the infancy stages of adapting our way of life toward more recycling. Reducing the effects of our everyday lives on the environment becomes a topic only when we hear about a rise in the price of oil, and these days especially, when opening our monthly power bill. The idea that we can continue to consume Earth's – our island's – resources indefinitely and without consequence must change if we are to ensure we leave a healthy Earth and island as our legacy to our children.

A sustainable Earth as our legacy means that we must move toward a more actively engaged community of recyclers and guardians of the natural environment. We must reduce our energy consumption and seek alternative energy solutions that will help to ensure a livable existence on this Earth in the days and decades to come. We must shift and enhance our thinking, and turn inaction into positive action. We must protect and preserve our natural resources for future generations. We must begin now and it must begin with us. There are many incremental steps we can take beginning with understanding how the environmental movement began.

I was first exposed to the concept of environmental responsibility when I read the 1962 Rachel Carson book entitled "Silent Spring." The book was a New York Times bestseller that spawned a modern movement toward public health and environmental responsibility. Her book raised environmental awareness on a national level that had not been seen before. Carson and others spurred a series of events that would change the landscape of addressing environmental issues and the importance we place on protecting our natural resources. During a time when most people were oblivious to the impacts their consumption had on the environment and there was little accountability or legal consequence for big businesses, her call to change sparked a shift in the mindsets of many, including me and the government.

Eight years after Carson's publication, Wisconsin Sen. Gaylord Nelson, capitalizing on the changing socio-political landscape of the United States, created the idea of Earth Day – gathering together environmental activists, bipartisan politicians, university student organizations and everyday citizens. On that first Earth Day celebration, more than 20 million people rallied for a healthy sustainable environment. The widespread movement was also responsible for the creation of important legislation such as the Clean Air, Clean Water and Endangered Species Acts as well as the formation of the Environmental Protection Agency.

The success of the first Earth Day has evolved into an annual event encompassing 192 countries and 1 billion people actively participating. On Earth Day and Earth Month, I join the billions of people across the globe not only to celebrate, but once again contribute what I can to the movement in my current capacity as a policymaker. I will be introducing legislation that seeks to establish the Guam Renewable Energy as an Essential Need (GREEN) Fund Act that will fund our sustainable future through utilizing renewable energy technology and providing a

## Building a renewable mindset

Written by BY SEN. BEN PANGELINAN  
Thursday, 24 Apr 2014 03:00am

---

medium for families to integrate those technologies into their own homes.

The legislation takes a monumental step forward in addressing the funding of renewable energy systems and encouraging and assisting working families to invest in renewable energy solutions. This measure will serve to complement the efforts already underway by other local and federal agencies and departments. I look forward to its introduction and passage as a way of bringing viable renewable energy solutions to our people while building a greater awareness among all members of our community. It will assist the Guam Power Authority in meeting the goals I earlier established in Public Law 29-62 which requires that GPA's energy production be at 5 percent from renewable resources by the year 2015 and increasing that percentage of production every five years until their renewable portfolio is at 25 percent by 2035.

With humble roots that began decades ago by passionate and brave individuals, we too must join in the protection of our environment and natural resources. The burden of protecting our island's natural resources is one that we all share and will continue to share for generations to come. The everyday conveniences that we take for granted have detrimental effects on our natural environment – which, in part, we are seeing in the form of global warming today. With such great cost to our environment there is great urgency that we take on even greater responsibility. Therefore, let us celebrate and continually celebrate every single day as if it were Earth Day so that we all can remember not only what has come to pass but of what is necessary to move forward positively into the future. After all, what kind of island do you envision will be left for our children if we do nothing to protect our environment and natural resources today?

Si Yu'os Ma'åse'.