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THE GOVERNMENT OF
PHILIPPINES
MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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Rehabilitating the La Mesa Watershed

GCash, ABS-CBN Foundation plant 88,000 seedlings and launch new trees in GForest

GCash, the country's leading mobile wallet, together with the ABS-CBN Foundation, has once again achieved a big win for the environment after planting over 88,000 seedlings in La Mesa Watershed via the GForest, the sustainability feature on the GCash app.

"Together with the ABS-CBN Foundation, GCash continues to uphold its goal of promoting environmental conservation and sustainability. GForest has been making a concrete impact in the reforestation efforts of the country and we believe that each tree contributed by GForest can ultimately create meaningful and positive changes in our country and the environment," GCash president and CEO Martha Sazon said.

Kicked off in 2022, the joint initiative between the leading e-wallet and ABS-CBN Foundation aims to help drive climate change awareness, encourage more Filipinos to do green activities, and ultimately, preserve and enrich the La Mesa Watershed, the primary source of drinking water for Metro Manila's over 12 million population.

This is also in support of the "Save the La Mesa Watershed Project" and its 22 years of long-standing efforts in reforestation and protecting the vital watershed. GCash, along with its partners aim to plant 2.3 Million trees across the country by this year.

"It is truly an honor to team up with GCash as we aim to achieve our common goal of conserving the environment. We look forward to continuing working with GCash and creating a greener and brighter future for all Filipinos," ABS-CBN Foundation managing director Roberta Lopez Feliciano said.

GCash users can now easily take part in planting new trees in La Mesa Ecopark using the GForest feature on the GCash app. This includes the Malapaya Tree (85K trees), a new species recently added in GForest, which can grow up to 50 meters. This tree is a good source for the manufacture of plywood and a variety of common-use products like matchsticks and popsicle sticks. It can also be used as



a replacement for non-biodegradable food containers.

Other new trees that can now be planted are the Lago and Lipote trees. The Lago tree (46K trees) can grow up to around 35 meters and is a good material for making furniture, cabinets, and plywood. Meanwhile, the Lipote tree (28K trees) can grow up to around 15 meters. Its fruits can also be eaten, raw or cooked, and are used in making preserves, jellies, wine, pickles, and

beverages. It is also known to help treat diabetes, hypertension, and high cholesterol.

"Many Filipinos care about the environment but don't know how to actively take part in environmental protection. This is a barrier that GForest addresses. By using GCash and GForest, making a positive and impactful difference is now easier, and more convenient," GCash AVP for sustainability CJ Alegre said.

To become a 'green hero', GCash users simply need to frequently use the app's convenient financial services, products, and offerings, such as Send Money, Pay Bills, GCredit, GSave, and more, which will be converted into green energy on GForest. Moreover, by doing more efficient and environmentally friendly digital transactions on the app, GCash also enables users to lessen their carbon footprint. With the green energy

points they have collected, they can plant virtual trees on the app, which are then converted into actual trees by GCash together with its partners, and will be planted in its partner sites nationwide.

Beyond providing safe and convenient digital financial solutions to Filipinos, GCash is also steadfast in creating more partnerships to help the country achieve a better, greener, and more sustainable future.



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PH weighs ESG compliance amid social concerns

By BERNIE CAHILES-MAGKILAT

The Philippines is moving towards implementing full mandatory disclosure of ESG (Environment, Social, Governance) compliance by all businesses in the country, but emphasized the need to find balance amid social concerns being a developing country.

This was emphasized by Trade and Industry Secretary Alfredo E. Pascual at the EU Sustainable Investment Summit in Brussels last year with the theme "Striving for Transparency Globally".

In aligning with ESG compliance metrics, Pascual emphasized that the Philippines must balance this goal against its social concerns.

"We have to worry about the welfare of our people. To what extent do we balance environmental sustainability with social sustainability?" he asked.

For instance, the Philippines has to balance between the use of cheaper coal because that is locally available and more affordable for the poor than importing expensive high calorific value coal with lower carbon emission.

"How do you balance that, that's something that has to be looked into as well," he said.

In formulating a harmonized global ESG compliance metrics, he said, "We might need to also throw in the issue of social sustainability."

Pascual further said that although the Philippines had a "very tiny" carbon footprints in the context of the global emission, "We're doing our part, we have



DTI SEC. ALFREDO E. PASCUAL

our own greenhouse gases reduction commitments."

To be able to measure how the country is meeting its commitment, the government through the Securities and Exchange Commission requires publicly listed companies to disclose compliance to the requirement.

"It's still a on a comply or explain basis," he said but eventually "there will be mandatory requirements

for full disclosure and eventually the disclosure requirement will be extended to all corporations registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission."

With respect to banks, the central bank has the responsibility. "We expect the banks to also play the role in enforcing disclosure by corporations," he said.

One policy for the banks could be "without disclosure, no loan."

Banks will play its role in getting clients make full disclosure to show they have all the plans to avoid adding to the emission into the atmosphere, Pascual said.

The Philippines has no equivalent to the taxonomy measure in the EU, but Pascual assured that it is using the global standards like for disclosure by public listed companies. The most popular so far is the GRI standards.

"We are aligned with global standards," said Pascual. The problem, he said, is that there are so many standards.

With that, Pascual batted for the harmonization of standards to be led by the bigger economies.

"We are prepared to consider aligning ourselves with a harmonized standard," he added.



Gokongwei Group focuses on sustainability through stewardship

One of the core values at the Gokongwei Group is stewardship. For the group, the stewardship of its business means ensuring financial success in a sustainable and socially responsible way. That is why the stewardship of its businesses is closely linked to how the group approaches sustainability.

The Gokongwei group looks at how well it runs its business by holistically considering the impact on the environment, its communities, and the customers it serves – all of which, in the end, enable the continuity of the conglomerate's overall success.

Thus, the group recognizes the importance of having a sustainability agenda integrated into its management process and with top management's commitment.

Guiding the group's Sustainability agenda is the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from which we developed our Sustainability Framework that is anchored on its Purpose – an unrelenting commitment to provide its customers with better choices, creating shared success with its stakeholders.

The Gokongwei Group's Sustainability Framework consists of five key areas that represent topics most material to its businesses and stakeholders, namely: 1) Shared Success, 2) Climate Action, 3) Resource Efficiency and Circularity, 4) Better Choices, and 5) Employee Engagement and Development.

This framework enables the group to identify where its business units can make the biggest impact and make significant contributions in tackling local and global environmental, economic, and social challenges for greater sustainability, responsible long-term growth, and shared success for generations to come.

Here are some concrete examples of how the conglomerate embeds sustainability in its businesses:

Shared success

The group continually grows and invests in new businesses as it enables its people and partners to grow with them. In the Gokongwei Group ecosystem,

it has about 10,000 local suppliers that provide products and services to various Gokongwei Group businesses, who, in turn, collectively give jobs to thousands of Filipino citizens. About 77 percent of the economic value generated by the group goes to its suppliers.

Around 20,000 local sugarcane farmers provide their produce to Universal Robina Corporation which are processed to become sugar consumed in meals or used as ingredients in the snacks URC delivers to its customers.

Besides buying the sugarcane from the farmers, URC also provides farming assistance to improve their productivity such as education on farm technology, farm equipment, fertilizer loan assistance, seed pieces for high-yielding cane varieties, and harvesting and hauling assistance.

URC also actively reaches out to local potato farmers to enable them to increase their yield through high-quality Granola potato seeds donation. Since 2019, more than 365 tons of potato seeds have been distributed to 2,716 farmers from selected cooperatives in the Cordillera Administrative Region, Davao del Sur, and Bukidnon.

To date, the farmer beneficiaries of the program have earned a collective amount of ₱350-million net income, averaging ₱135,000 net income per farmer per planting cycle.

Through its philanthropic arm the Gokongwei Brothers Foundation, the Gokongwei Group engages communities in the area of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education.

As the largest private sector provider of scholarships in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education in the country, GBF for 30 years now has dedicated itself to contributing to the country's progress by giving learners access to quality education through its various scholarship programs.

Apart from operating its own school, the GBF Technical Training Center, the foundation has also endowed the Ateneo de Manila University with the John Gokongwei School of Management and the Gokongwei Brothers School of Education and Learning Design, and

the De La Salle University with the Gokongwei College of Engineering. These endowments fund scholarships, teacher training, facilities enhancements, and academic research.

Climate action

The Gokongwei Group aims for a low-carbon transition for its businesses, scale up climate finance, and strengthen climate-related risk management.

Robinsons Land Corporation (RLC) continues to maximize the use of renewable energy in its malls. To date, the current total capacity is at 30.67MW for its 24 malls nationwide.

From its first installation in Robinsons Palawan with a 1.2MW capacity, RLC has moved on and installed solar panels in Robinsons Starmills in Pampanga, becoming its largest renewable energy-powered mall with a total



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capacity of 2.8MW. This year RLC will continue to install solar panels in 4 additional malls.

Moreover, RLC and the Manila Electric Company have partnered to advance their thrust to protect the environment and reduce carbon emissions with the launch of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations in several Robinsons Malls branches nationwide.

On September 28, 2022, Cebu Pacific operated a Singapore to Manila passenger flight powered by sustainable aviation fuel (SAF), becoming the first Philippine carrier to incorporate SAF into its commercial operations.

The leading Philippine carrier's maiden commercial SAF flight was made on an Airbus A321neo using 35 percent blended SAF produced by Neste, the world's largest producer of renewable diesel and jet fuel, and supplied by Shell Eastern Petroleum.

Launched in 2016, the One Million Trees Project of JG Summit Olefins Corp. (JGSOC) aims to plant one million indigenous and fruit-bearing tree seedlings in Batangas, the host province of JGSOC's petrochemical business, and in other areas where re-greening and forest rehabilitation projects are needed.

The project reached its halfway mark last July 2022. To date, 88 percent of the donated and planted tree seedlings have benefited various localities in Batangas province, while 12 percent have gone to various government agencies, civic groups, schools, and employee volunteers.

This includes the seedlings planted in Boracay Wetland No. 8 in Malay, Aklan, which up until recently, had been adopted by JGSOC as part of its sustainability activities and in support of the Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force's rehabilitation of the island.

Resource efficiency and circularity

The Gokongwei Group optimizes its use of natural resources and foster circularity in all its businesses.

URC has led the launch of Juan Goal for Plastics (JGFP), a Gokongwei Group ecosystem initiative focused on collecting, recovering, and diverting plastic waste as part of its overall goal to achieve plastic neutrality.

These include long-term collaborative projects on waste management that cover community engagement and linking with local recyclers.

Under this program, several plastic collection sites have been set up in the country, such as in La Carlota sugar mill in Negros Occidental, Barangay Bagong Ilog in Pasig City, and General Mariano Alvarez (GMA), Cavite, in partnership with the respective LGUs.

Here PET bottles and other types of plastic waste are collected regularly in exchange for cash with matching weight for "environmental points."

In partnership with RLC, JGFP collections booth has also been rolled out in Robinsons Galleria, Robinsons Malls in Ermita, Las Piñas, and Magnolia to conduct regular collection drives every payday week-end, offering a drop-weight-redeem scheme for clean and dry plastic waste.

Better choices

The Gokongwei Group innovates for more responsible products and services to offer better choices to Filipinos and enable them to live the life they want.

Robinsons Cyberscape Gamma office tower in Pasig City by RL Commercial REIT (RCR), the real estate investment trust backed by RLC was recently declared as the Philippines' first EDGE-certified REIT building.

EDGE, or Excellence in Design for Greater Efficiencies, is an international green building certification system that focuses purely on energy, water, and embodied energy in materials (a calculation of all the energy used to produce the materials that make up a building) for a quantitative approach to sustainability.

Robinsons Cyberscape Gamma's EDGE certificate was presented by the Philippine Green Building Initiative (PBGI) following a thorough evaluation and audit, which showed how the building's resource-efficient design resulted in reductions of 34 percent in energy, 31 percent in water, and 69 percent in materials' embodied energy compared to a local base case.

URC is also working on introducing healthier products that meets their defined wellness criteria (e.g. lower sodium, lower sugar, etc.) in its products.

The firm strives to offer consumers with high quality and healthy nutritional food and beverage choices to consumer with products such as Nova multigrain chips, C2 Plus Immuno-C with Vitamin C and Zinc, C2 Plus Fiber, Vitamin C Maxx honey lemon candies, soybean milk-based Vitasoy, among others. ▶ **SS-24**



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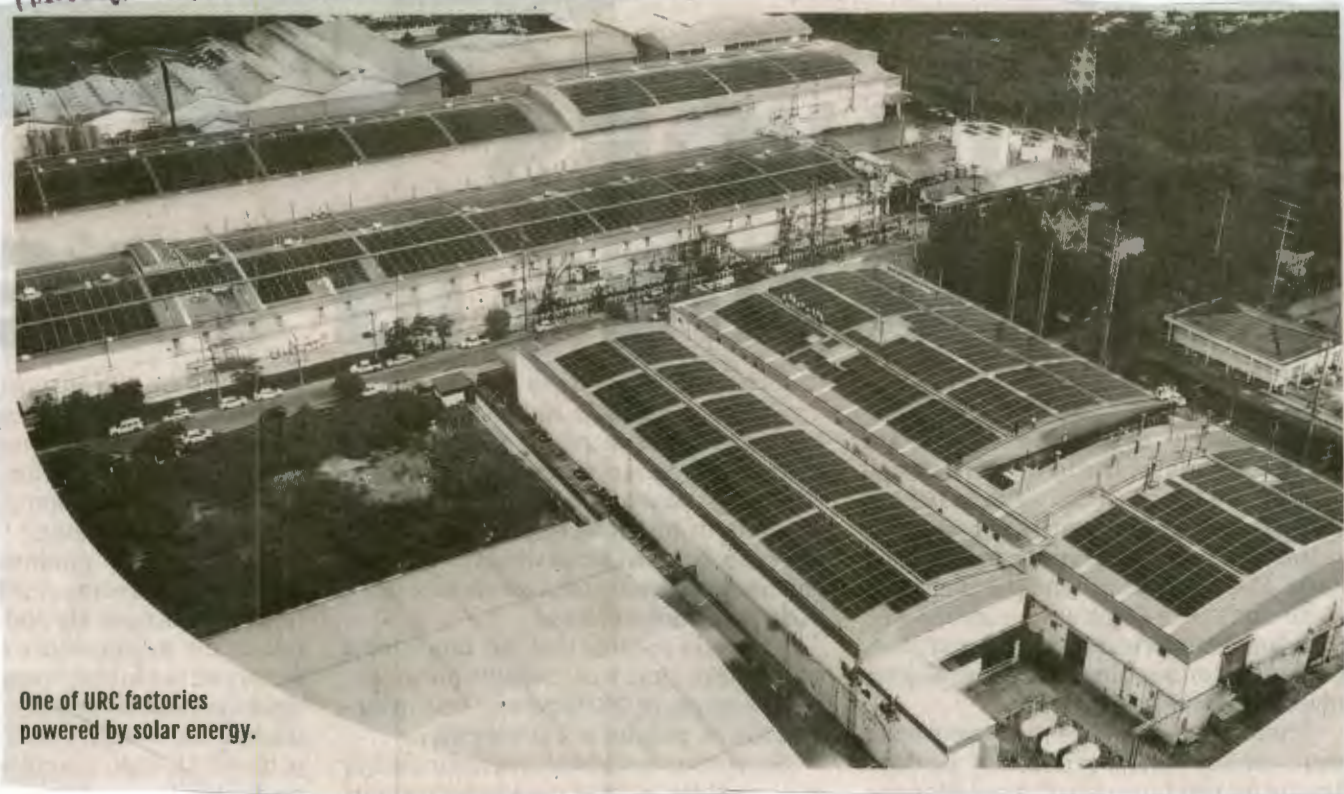
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One of URC factories powered by solar energy.

Gokongwei Group focuses... SS-22 ◀

Robinsons Supermarket through its Healthy You Products brand offers healthy and nutritional food products, such as organic brown and red rice, durum wheat pasta, tomato sauce and extra virgin olive oil, whole wheat sugar free bread, sugar free wheat bread, double fiber wheat bread, and sugar free wheat pan de sal, etc. which are available in all in stores at much lower prices than those found in imported health products shops.

Employee Engagement and Development

The Gokongwei Group nurtures its people by investing in their growth and well-being.

As the group ensures leadership and people development, it continues strengthening its digital learning systems and platforms by providing self-directed learning content, allowing employees to have the flexibility and

ease of access to learning anytime, anywhere.

These initiatives include JG Craft Cafe and Learning Brews, URC University Virtual Learning Plan, and CEB University on the Go, among others.

Worker safety and well-being are top priorities in the conglomerate. It has continued to provide employees, their dependents, and third-party workers with teleconsultation services for them to access medical consultation in the safety of their homes. This is catered to both COVID and non-COVID cases.

In addition, for employees needing mental well-being advice, access to a mental health expert is also available via teleconsultation.

To strengthen the well-being culture, monthly webinars are being conducted on diverse well-being topics, such as occupational safety and health from subject matter experts.



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Environment groups in pursuit of sustainable, green solutions

Breaking free from waste, climate change, environmental dangers, and toxics

By JEL SANTOS

Be it on land or under water, advocates and watchdogs have made considerable impact in protecting the earth and its people — from the drastic effects of climate change, toxic chemicals, waste, and other environmental dangers which include harmful practices and threatening policies created by humans.

For the EcoWaste Coalition, the main goal is to remain vigilant in ensuring “a zero waste and toxics-free society where communities enjoy a safe and healthy environment” by pursuing “sustainable and just solutions to waste, climate change, and chemical issues.”

“As a coalition, we shall collaborate with communities to advance simple, local, and holistic approaches and solutions to address waste, chemical pollution, and climate change,” the group said on its

website, sharing its objectives to ensure zero waste, clean production, environmental justice, and safer, healthier communities.

For the Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya), it’s protecting the environment and the livelihood of people from the devastating impacts of climate change and destructive projects involving the country’s bodies of water.

“In the face of systemic threats, livelihood of small fishers brought about by destructive projects and the devastating impacts of climate

change, small fishers organize themselves for their welfare and rights. Aside from carrying out mass mobilizations on various sectoral and national issues, Pamalakaya members also collaborate with non-government organizations for community-based programs that would address some of their specific demands, particularly on livelihood and mitigation programs,” the Pamalakaya described its roles in an interview with the Manila Bulletin.

To break free from environmental challenges, both groups have been taking big and bold moves for years.

Breaking free from waste

Every year, the EcoWaste starts its campaign against zero waste right early with warnings against the waste brought about by New Year revelries — mounds of garbage consisting of food waste, disposable beverages, food containers, and firecracker and firework debris, among others.

“Some of the sweepers and waste collectors have to work in the early hours of New Year’s Day to remove garbage from the streets before people wake up,” said EcoWaste Zero Waste Campaigner Jove Benosa.

Just this month, the group reminded the public that according to the National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC), Metro Manila’s projected waste generation in 2022 was 3.6 million tons per year. For 2023, this is



Activist group Saniakaz held a climate walk and released a dove in Colon St., Cebu City as they condemn the use of coal power plant and to encourage others not to pollute to fight climate change. (Juan Carlo de Vela)

projected to reach 3.7 million tons.

“Our society cannot continue depleting the earth’s diminishing resources and churning out waste with little or no regard to their consequences,” Benosa pointed out.

“Let us learn and celebrate how zero waste strategies can help us cut back on what we dispose of, turn waste into resources and promote green jobs without incineration while reducing the emission of dangerous pollutants such as dioxins, greenhouse gases, and heavy metals,” he went on.

The group also made a call this month to minimize fiesta trash, which includes plastic banderitas, polystyrene plastic containers, plastic cups, plates and cutlery, plastic bags, plastic bottles for water and sugary beverages, plastic straws, and numerous products packages.

Reusing and recycling are highly encouraged, as well.

“To prevent and reduce waste, manufacturers need to switch to sustainable business practices such as by adopting eco-design and extending their responsibility to what they make throughout the product life cycle, including managing the waste,” the official stressed. “To prevent and reduce waste, we, the people, should consume with health and the environment in mind, shun single-use plastics, sort out our discards, and make reuse, repair, recycling and composting a habit.”

To note, based on government

estimates, food and organic discards constitute 52 percent of Metro Manila’s waste, 41 percent are recyclables, and seven percent are residuals.

Breaking free from toxic chemicals

As a toxics watchdog, the EcoWaste is seriously monitoring, as well, the toxic chemicals in plastic items, including toys and school supplies putting children at risk.

“Plastics containing toxic chemicals that pose hazards to human health and the environment should not be manufactured and recycled. Like in the case of single-use plastics or SUPs, the world needs to act decisively to phase them out as recycling will not solve this toxic problem,” EcoWaste Coordinator Aileen Lucero warned.

Lucero stressed that plastic pollution is “not just a simple problem, but a complex environmental, health, justice, and climate issue,” emphasizing that 99 percent of plastic are derived from fossil fuels.

Per studies, some 400 million tons of plastic are manufactured every year and only less than 10 percent of which are recycled, while the rest end up being incinerated, disposed in landfills, or dumped in bodies of water.

Breaking free from marine threats

When it comes to protecting marine resources, the Pamalakaya has always been on guard, either by taking the lead on its own or by partnering with other organizations for community-based programs.

In Zambales, the group partnered with the Center for Environmental Concerns through the Integrated Coastal Resource Management Program.

“The project aimed to monitor the state of coastal and marine resources in

the province, especially in the midst of rampant nickel mining that pollutes the fishing grounds,” the group described in a statement.

Meanwhile, during the 18th Congress, Pamalakaya worked with Makabayan legislators in filing the House Bill declaring Manila Bay as a “reclamation-free zone” to protect the fishing communities from massive displacement and Manila Bay from further degradation.

“The measure was refilled in the 19th Congress under House Bill 2026,” it added.

The group also launched campaign for mangrove reforestation, especially in critical areas like Manila Bay, to restore and revive the marine and aquatic species threatened by destructive projects.

Breaking free from fishers’ woes

Aside from protecting marine resources, fisherfolk whose livelihoods depend on the bodies of water are also constantly assisted by the Pamalakaya.

“The Earth Island Institute-Asia Pacific held a Marine Wildlife Responders training with members of Haligi n Batangueñong Anakdagat, Pamalakaya provincial chapter, to equip fishers with proper knowledge on how to deal with marine mammals in municipal waters. This is Pamalakaya’s effort to further preserve marine species and resources, it was disclosed.

Moreover, in partnership with the Panay Disaster Response, the local chapter of Pamalakaya in Barotac Viejo, Iloilo constructed their very first Tambon 2 prototype, a disaster-resilient and environment-friendly fishing gear for the local fishers.



Cagayan cops planted over 100,000 trees in support to the climate change. (Cagayan PNP)



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MWSS: Kaliwa dam project gets tribes' nod; tunneling in progress

By **Krixia Subingsubing**
@krixiasINQ

The P12.2-billion, Chinese-funded Kaliwa Dam could be completed by 2026 and operational the following the year, the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) said on Wednesday, adding the controversial project would "no longer be derailed" after eight tedious years of securing permits for its construction.

The MWSS and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) confirmed they had secured a certification precondition (CP) for the project, or the document saying it had obtained the free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) of the 46 tribal communities that would be affected. This does not mean

that opposition to the dam has completely gone away, according to the NCIP Calabarzon regional director, Carlos Buasen.

Major tribal leaders, like Octavio Pranada of the Dumagat-Remontados, have been convinced that the dam would not submerge their ancestral domains, the Inquirer learned.

P160M indemnity

The MWSS also agreed to pay a P160-million one-time indemnity fee to IP communities in Rizal and Quezon provinces, who will continue to receive an annual share from the first 25 years of the dam's operations, Buasen told the Inquirer.

Pranada, the oldest and highest leader of his tribe that has lived for generations in Rizal, said the MWSS had explained



PHASE 1 The entrance to the Kaliwa Dam project site in Teresa, Rizal province. Tunneling activities—or Phase 1 of the project—began in the municipality in December. Photo taken on Dec. 19, 2022. —VOLT CONTRERAS

to them that the risks once associated with the Laiban Dam—a project pursued during the first Marcos administration—were not present in Kaliwa.

With the CP's issuance, the MWSS can now proceed with securing other permits needed

for the project, said MWSS Administrator Leonor Cleofas.

These include, among others, a clearance from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, since parts of the dam project would pass through protected

areas in the Sierra Madre.

2 phases

The project consists of two major phases: the 22-kilometer tunneling works and the actual dam construction.

The MWSS and the Department of Public Works and Highways began tunneling in the project site within the municipality of Teresa, Rizal, in December last year. This phase is expected to be completed in mid-2026.

Dam construction may begin once the "46 families" directly affected by the project are relocated, Cleofas said.

The MWSS has pushed for the Kaliwa Dam as the answer to Metro Manila's dwindling water supply. Once finished, the project is expected to pro-

vide 600 million liters per day to augment the needs of some 17 million residents in Mega Manila, according to MWSS Chair Elpidio Vega.

Residents of Rizal and Quezon have repeatedly complained about the dam and other major construction projects being pursued at their expense for the benefit of the Metro Manila population.

But Public Works Secretary Manuel Bonoan urged critics of the project "not to point fingers and debate on technicalities and policies... and [pay] attention and understand how external forces influence sustainable water."

"Water shortages will be a thing of the past, particularly (once) the Kaliwa Dam project (has come) to fruition," Vega said. "We cannot afford to pause." INQ



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MWSS: Kaliwa Dam starts operation 2027

The contract with China Energy is design and build, including the detailed engineering design, which is now 100 percent complete

BY MARIA ROMERO
@tribunephil_mbr

The China-backed New Centennial Water Source-Kaliwa Dam Project, deemed as a solution to the perennial water problem of Metro Manila, will start providing supply to consumers by early 2027.

At a forum on Wednesday, Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System administrator Leonor Cleofas said project contractor China Energy Engineering Corporation Limited aims to finish the water facility before the end of 2026.

"The contract with China Energy is design and build, including the detailed engineering design, which is now 100 percent complete. There are two major components of the project, which are the tunneling and the construction of the dam," Cleofas said.

"It has started with tunneling and it will be complete by the middle of 2026. At the same time, if the validation of the settlement of 46 families is accomplished, the dam will also begin and MWSS is endeavoring to complete

the dam by 2026," she added.

Once the entire facility is up and running by then, Cleofas said consumers can immediately start benefiting from the water project by early 2027.

Kaliwa Dam is a 60-meter-high concrete gravity dam on the Kaliwa River that will have a reservoir surface area of 291 hectares. It is regarded as the solution to an expected water shortage in Metro Manila and nearby provinces.

It will have a maximum gross reservoir volume of 57 million cubic meters and a discharge capacity of 600 million liters a day.

It is a flagship project of former President Rodrigo Duterte's "Build, Build, Build" infrastructure program. Now, the Marcos administration still prioritizes the project under the "Build, Better, More" scheme.

According to MWSS Chairman of the

Board of Trustees Justice Elpidio Vega, the Kaliwa Dam is the only viable long-term solution that will provide redundancy to the Angat Dam, currently Metro Manila's main water source.

"Kaliwa dam is a viable source, even if there are obstacles, we persevere and focus on the goal of preparing the medium- to long-term sources for Metro Manila. We cannot afford to pause and we have to work together in ensuring an adequate supply of potable water in the country," Vega said.

"The future of MM's water security rests heavily on us and the two concessionaires. MWSS resolved not to repeat the 2019 water fiasco," he added.

Despite protests from green groups, the MWSS firmly stood that the water project strictly follows environmental laws to ensure that the project is sustainable and it will not harm the communities adjacent to the project site.

This year alone, Department of Public Works and Highways Assistant Secretary for Regional Operations in NCR Antonio V. Molano Jr. said P380 million has been

earmarked for flood control projects in Infanta and General Nakar in Quezon province.



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MWSS expects Kaliwa Dam to be completed by 2026

THE Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) expects a crucial dam project that will augment water supply in the nation's capital to be completed by the end of 2026 after it secured the necessary permits for its development.

"The Kaliwa dam has two big components — one is the tunneling and the other one is the dam. The tunnel boring machine stretches from Teresa to Morong," said Leonor C. Cleofas, administrator of MWSS, referring to the two towns in Rizal province. "At the same time, if we can fulfill the validation of resettlement for the 46 families, then we can start with the dam."

"The MWSS is endeavoring to complete the dam by the end of 2026," Ms. Cleofas said in a virtual briefing on Wednesday.

Last year, the MWSS said the development of the Kaliwa Dam is pushing through after the signing of a memorandum of agreement with the indigenous peoples of Rizal and Quezon provinces.

"Our contact with China is 'design and build.' This includes the detailed engi-

neering design, which is 100% complete. The tunnel boring machine started in December last year," she said.

Ms. Cleofas added that both Maynilad Water Services, Inc. and Manila Water Co., Inc. would develop a water treatment plant in Teresa, Rizal once the dam and tunnel are finished.

"Coinciding with the operation of the treatment plant, we can expect the supply of 600 million liters per day (MLD) that will be added to other water sources," she said.

Since the MWSS is expecting the Kaliwa Dam to be completed by the end of 2026, additional water supply is expected by 2027, Ms. Cleofas said.

Last month, the MWSS warned of a possible supply shortage by 2024 due to population growth while new water sources are non-existent.

The government's Kaliwa Dam project, also known as the New Centennial Water Source project, aims to address the expected water crisis in Metro Manila and adjacent provinces. — **Ashley Erika O. Jose**



PHILSTAR FILE PHOTO / EFIGENIO TOLEDO IV

A MAN arrives at a shallow part of Agos River, where the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System is planning to build a dam.



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Trees could cut urban heat mortality – study

PARIS: Planting more trees in urban areas to lower summertime temperatures could decrease deaths directly linked to hot weather and heat waves by a third, researchers said Wednesday.

Modelling found that increasing tree cover to 30 percent would shave off 0.4 degrees Celsius (0.7 degrees Fahrenheit) locally; on average, during hot summer months, they reported in *The Lancet*.

Of the 6,700 premature deaths attributed to higher temperatures in 93 European cities in 2015, one-third could have been prevented, according to the findings.

► **MortalityA2**

■ MORTALITY FROM A1

Trees

Currently, just under 15 percent of urban environments in Europe, on average, are covered by some kind of foliage.

The study is the first to project the number of premature deaths due to higher temperatures in cities that could be prevented by additional tree cover, said lead author Tamara Lungman, a researcher at the Barcelona Institute for Global Health.

"We already know that high temperatures in urban environments are associated with negative health outcomes, such as cardiorespiratory failure, hospital admission and premature death," he said in a statement.

"Our goal is to inform local policy and decision-makers about the benefits of strategically integrating green infrastructure into urban planning in order to promote more sustainable, resilient and healthy urban environments."

Cities record higher temperatures than surrounding suburbs or countryside due to the so-called urban heat island effect.

This extra heat is caused primarily by a lack of vegetation, exhaust from air conditioning systems, along with dark-hued asphalt and building materials that absorb and trap warmth.

Climate change has already amplified the problem. Last year, Europe saw its hottest summer on record, and second warmest year.

Health benefits

Heat waves around the world are seeing record-breaking peaks, and have increased in duration in recent decades.

Today, cold conditions still cause more deaths in Europe than hot weather. But climate models project that heat-related illness and death will present a bigger burden to health services within a decade.

"This is becoming increasingly urgent as Europe experiences more extreme temperature fluctuations caused by climate change," said Lungman.

The researchers estimated mortality rates for people over 20 years old between June and August 2015, accounting for 57 million inhabitants in total.

This data was analyzed in relation to daily average city temperatures in two modelling scenarios.

The first compared the city temperature with and without urban heat islands. The second simulating temperature reduction if tree cover was increased to 30 percent.

On average, the temperature in cities was 1.5 C warmer during summer 2015 than in the surrounding countryside.

Across all cities, 75 percent of the total population lived in areas at least 1 C warmer, while 20 percent experienced temperatures at least 2 C higher.

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Biodegradable plastics may end up doing more harm than good

By David Fickling

FOR those guilt-ridden about the environmental damage caused by everyday consumer purchases, there are myriad paths toward forgiveness. Stick your bottles, cans, and Amazon cartons into the recycling box. Buy the organic cold brew that's made with 100% renewable power. Minimize the carbon from your ski holiday flight with Peruvian rainforest offsets.

Then there's biodegradable plastics. It's hard to cut polymers from your life when boxed blueberries are so temptingly cheap and so healthy — but perhaps we can at least mitigate the effects if we buy them in a box that will turn into compost?

Chemicals companies are paying attention. Production capacity for plant-derived and biodegradable products will triple over the coming five years to 6.3 million metric tons, according to European Bioplastics, an industry association. That sounds like a drop in the ocean next to the roughly 400 million tons a year plastics market, but it could grow rapidly. Project Drawdown, a climate think-tank, envisages between 92 million tons and 357 million tons of bioplastics production by 2050.

If you think the only problem posed by plastics is waste management, we should be welcoming this trend. Biodegradable plastics are meant to break down in the environment in weeks or months, rather than the decades or centuries that conventional ones can hang around. However, with consumption of polymers predicted to double by 2040, another issue ought to come into focus: emissions.

Like gasoline, Vaseline, and asphalt, most of the world's plastics are byproducts of the oil



SAMOUR ENVIRO-UNSPASH/

In breaking down, biodegradable plastics release their carbon back into the environment — particularly as methane, one of the most potent greenhouse gases. As a result, life-cycle emissions may end up being greater than those from conventional alternatives.

refining industry, accounting for about 8% of total oil consumption. That proportion is likely to rise drastically in the coming decades as electric vehicles displace combustion engines in road transport, reducing the share of the oil barrel going into fuel. They differ from fossil fuels in a crucial way, however. Using a ton of jet kerosene pumps more than three tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, as burning pulls apart its hydrocarbon molecules. A plastic pipe, on the

other hand, is only useful if it remains chemically stable. Its carbon must remain locked tight inside its chemical structure, or it will weaken and shatter.

Biodegradable plastics change that dynamic. In breaking down, they release their carbon back into the environment — particularly as methane, one of the most potent greenhouse gases. As a result, life-cycle emissions may end up being greater than those from conventional alternatives. One 2020 US study of poly(lactic acid,

or PLA, derived from cornstarch and commonly used in disposable food containers, found that its total emissions were greater than those of conventional plastics, except in cases where it remained inert after being trashed.

Not all bioplastics are created equal. The same study found that bio-polyethylene, a plant-derived polymer that doesn't break down, may suck up more carbon than it emits. That calculation demonstrates that biodegradability is just one of

a series of good and bad factors relating to different varieties of plastics, rather than a simple and absolute positive.

The greatest risk is that we allow the virtuous glow of compostable polymers to blind us to their potential downsides. While most biodegradable plastics are made from biomass such as starches and crop residues, they can also be made from fossil fuels. That's a worst-of-all-worlds situation, in which the emissions released in landfill aren't even offset by carbon sucked out of the atmosphere by the plants used as feedstock. It may also be the segment of the bioplastics market that grows fastest over the coming years. PBAT — a fossil-derived alternative to the polyethylene used in plastic wrapping, bags and bottles — appears to be winning the race in China, with a government-commissioned study forecasting production will hit 7 million metric tons in 2025, compared to 1 million tons for PLA.

One advantage of the mountains of waste created by our voracious appetite for plastics is that it's a highly visible problem. That means we're motivated to tackle it. If the dozen developing countries that generate nearly nine-tenths of the world's marine plastic could lift their waste management to developed-economy levels, the oceans would be drastically cleaner. Improving recycling rates worldwide from current levels of less than 10% to those of more than 40% common for packaging in Europe would help even more.

Emissions from plastic degradation — an invisible process taking place deep underground, and producing no emotive imagery of floating debris, tangled turtles, or overflowing waste dumps — may be far more insidious. Bioplastics "are not permanent solutions because they still reaffirm the take-make-waste linear economy mindset," said Alice Zhu, a researcher into plastic pollution at the University of Toronto.

To businesses, the green aura given off by bioplastics is an advantage, helping to reconcile busy consumers to the polymers we use every day. In environmental terms, that's precisely the problem: they risk absolving us of the need to carry out the basic work of reducing, reusing and recycling. Ultimately, that's the only way that we'll deal with our plastics addiction. ■

BLOOMBERG OPINION



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Daily Tribune

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News Briefs

Sea turtle hatchlings released

BACOLOD CITY – A total of 45 sea turtle hatchlings were released by Bantay Dagat personnel of Sipalay City in Negros Occidental province at the Poblacion Beach on Wednesday morning.

Bantay Dagat coordinator Edsel Toledo said they found the nest end of November 2022 and secured it until the eggs hatched, which usually happens after 60 days.

The hatchlings came from one of the three nests closely monitored by the Bantay Dagat, he added. Toledo said the species of the hatchlings is still being determined.

This is the third time sea turtle hatchlings were released in Sipalay City this year, after two batches of hatchlings were returned to their natural habitat in January. PNA



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18 mysterious whale deaths on US East Coast in 2 months baffling environmentalists

HOUSTON, United States – A string of mysterious whale deaths along the US East Coast has prompted a group of mayors in the state of New Jersey to call for an "immediate moratorium" on offshore wind farms.

The announcement from 12 mayors came Monday following reports that another humpback whale was found dead off the New Jersey and New York coastline.

The whale washed ashore in Lido Beach, New York, bringing the total to at least six dead whales, but possibly eight, in the region in the past two months, according to the mayors. That brings the total to 18 dead whales along the US East Coast in that time, according to a report from the USA Today newspaper.

The mayors want to stop the current offshore wind energy development until federal and state scientists can assure the public that ocean noise related to wind farms poses no threat to whales.

"While we are not opposed to clean energy, we are concerned about the impacts these projects may already be having on our environment," they wrote in a letter to Washington, D.C. officials.

A dead humpback was spotted Saturday off the coast of Long Beach Island. Officials said it was not clear if the

Lido Beach whale could be the same.

"This is the sixth stranded humpback whale reported in New Jersey, and the 18th large whale stranding along the East Coast, since December 1," said Andrea Gomez, a spokesperson for the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), in an interview with USA Today's Asbury Park Press.

NOAA said ship strikes and fishing gear entanglements are among the most common causes of death in humpback whales. The agency said the unusually high number of whale deaths among humpbacks dates to 2016 before offshore wind energy exploration began in the Atlantic Ocean.

The environmental activist group Greenpeace said caution is the best way to approach the whale deaths.

"There is a lot at stake, and we need answers to ensure we are doing what's best for people and the planet," Arlo Hemphill of Greenpeace USA said in a statement. "At this time, due to the lack of evidence suggesting harm from offshore wind development, Greenpeace's position remains that the best way to protect whales is to create ocean sanctuaries, eliminate single-use plastics at the source, and stop our dependency on oil and gas." **AA**



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Pateros intensifies waste segregation

BY ALVIN MURCIA
@tribunephil_alvi

The local government of Pateros is intensifying its waste segregation program as it announced new schedules for garbage collection.

Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, people can put out their biodegradable garbage and for the non-biodegradable waste, the schedule is every Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday.

Non-compliance of an existing ordinance will mean a fine of P1,000 and non-collection of garbage.



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Davao de Oro niyanig ng 6.1 lindol

Inuga ng magnitudo 6.1 na lindol ang Davao de Oro nitong Miyerkoles nang gabi.

Sa ulat ng Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs), ganap na ika-6:44 ng gabi nang maitala ang sentro ng lindol sa New Bataan.

May lalim itong 11 kilometro at tectonic ang origin.

Intensity 5 naman ang rumama sa Nabunturan, Davao de Oro.

Habang Intensity 3 sa Kidapawan City, Cotabato; Alabel, Sarangani; Tupi, South Cotabato; Bislig City, Surigao del Sur.

Intensity 2 sa Cabadbaran City, Agusan del Norte; Libona at Malaybalay, Bukidnon; Don Marcelino, Davao Occidental; Abuyog, Leyte; Cagayan de Oro, Misamis Oriental; Malapatan, Glan, Kiamba, Sarangani; Norala, General Santos City, Koronadal City at Tampakan, South Cotabato; at Tandag, Surigao del Sur.

Inaasahan naman ang aftershocks, ayon sa Phivolcs. (Issa Santiago)



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Mt. Kanlaon nagpapansin

NAGPAPAPANSIN kaya inilagay sa alert level 1 ang Bulkang Kanlaon matapos makapagtala ng anim na volcanic earthquake sa paligid nito, ayon sa Philippine Institute of Volcanology and ~~Seismology~~ (Phivolcs).

Sinabi ng Phivolcs na wala namang iniulat na pag-singaw ng usok sa bunganga ng bulkan.

Nabatid pa sa Phivolcs sa isinagawang obserbasyon sa bulkan na may nakitang pamamaga sa bunganga nito. Kaugnay nito, mahigpit na

ipinagbabawal ng Phivolcs ang pagpasok sa 4 kilomete: (4 km) radius permanent danger zone o PDZ sa paligid ng bulkan.

Ipinagbabawal din ang pagpapalipad ng anomang uri ng eroplano, malapit sa tuktok ng bulkan dahil sa banta ng pagsabog.

Itinuturing ang Mt. Kanlaon na aktibong bulkan dahil sa mga nakalipas na pag-aalboroto nito.

Matatagpuan ito sa lalawigan ng Negros Occidental at Negros Oriental.

SANTI CELARIO



Republic of the Philippines Department of Environment and Natural Resources... DENR ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 2023-02

SUBJECT: IMPLEMENTING RULES AND REGULATIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 1188

Pursuant to Section 11 of Republic Act No. 1188, otherwise known as 'An Act Institutionalizing the Extended Producer Responsibility On Plastic Packaging Waste...'

SECTION 1. Title. These Rules shall be known and cited as the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the EPR Act of 2022...

SECTION 2. Purpose. These Rules are promulgated to review, where applicable, DENR Administrative Order No. 2001-34...

SECTION 3. Scope. The EPR IRR shall lay down the powers and functions of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources...

SECTION 4. Construction. The EPR IRR shall be liberally construed to carry out the national policy of adopting a systematic, comprehensive, and ecological solid waste management program...

PART II. DECLARATION OF STATE POLICY SECTION 5. Basic Policy. It is hereby declared the policy of the State to adopt a systematic, comprehensive, and ecological solid waste management program which shall:

- 6.1 Ensure the protection of public health and environment;
6.2 Utilize environmentally-sound methods that maximize the utilization of valuable resources and encourage resource conservation and recovery;
6.3 Set guidelines and targets for solid waste avoidance and volume reduction through source reduction and waste minimization measures...

PART III. DEFINITION OF TERMS SECTION 6. Definition of Terms. For the purpose of this EPR IRR, the following words, phrases, abbreviations, or acronyms shall have the following meanings:

- 6.1 'Act' shall refer to Republic Act No. 9003, otherwise known as the 'Philippine Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000';
6.2 'Bureau' or 'EMB' shall refer to the Environmental Management Bureau;
6.3 'Buy-back center' shall refer to a recycling center that purchases or otherwise accepts recyclable materials from the public for the purpose of recycling such materials...

- 6.34 'Non-environmentally accessible products or packaging' or 'NEAP' shall refer to products or packaging that are unsafe in production, use, post-consumer use, or that produce or release harmful by-products when discarded;
6.35 'Obligated enterprises' shall refer to:
(a) Large Enterprises, as defined in the foregoing paragraph 6.27 of this EPR IRR;
(b) Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) where the total value of assets of all enterprises carrying the same brand, label, or trademark exceeds that of medium enterprises under Republic Act No. 9501;
6.36 'Open dump' shall refer to a disposal area wherein the solid wastes are indiscriminately thrown or disposed of without due planning and consideration for environmental and health risks...

promote recycling and re-use of resources and to reduce the volume of waste for collection and disposal.

- 6.60 'Solid waste' or 'Municipal Solid Waste' or 'MSW' shall refer to all discarded household, commercial waste, non-hazardous industrial, port/harbor and industrial waste, street sweeping, construction and demolition waste, and other non-hazardous-toxic solid waste. Unless specifically noted otherwise, the term 'solid waste' as used in the Act shall not include:
(a) waste identified or listed as hazardous waste of a solid, liquid, contained gaseous or semi-solid form which may cause or contribute to an increase in mortality or in serious illness, incapacitation, or cause irreversible bodily damage or substantial harm to the health of persons and other organisms;
(b) infectious waste from hospitals such as equipment, instruments, utensils, and fomites of a disposable nature from patients who are suspected to have or have been diagnosed as having communicable diseases and must therefore be isolated as required by public health agencies, laboratory wastes such as pathological specimens (i.e., all tissues, specimens of blood elements, excreta, and secretions obtained from patients or laboratory animals), and diagnostic formulas that may harbor or transmit pathogenic organisms, and surgical operating room pathological specimens and disposable plastic attendants' gloves, and disposable materials from outpatient areas and emergency rooms; and
(c) waste resulting from mining activities, including contaminated soil and dewatered tailings;
6.64 'Solid waste management facility' shall refer to the discipline associated with the control of generation, storage, collection, transfer and transport, processing, and disposal of solid wastes in a manner that is in accord with the best principles of public health, safety, engineering, conservation, aesthetics, and other environmental considerations, and that is also responsive to public attitudes;
6.65 'Solid waste management facility' shall refer to any resource recovery system or component thereof, any system, program, or facility for resource conservation, any facility for collection, storage, transportation, processing, treatment, or disposal of solid waste;
6.66 'Source reduction' shall refer to the reduction of solid waste before it enters the waste stream by methods such as product design, materials substitution, materials reuse and packaging reduction;
6.67 'Reuse and repackaging' shall refer to the sorting of solid waste into some or all of its components and reusing them as raw materials or components at the point of origin;
6.68 'Special waste' shall refer to household hazardous wastes such as paints, thinners, household batteries, lead-acid batteries, spray cansisters and the like. These include wastes from residential and commercial sources that comprise of bulky waste, consumer electronics, white goods, yard wastes that are collected separately, batteries, oil, and tires. These wastes are usually handled separately from other residential and commercial wastes;
6.69 'Storage' shall refer to the interim containment of solid waste after generation and prior to collection for ultimate recovery or disposal;
6.70 'Sustainable consumption and production' shall refer to the use of services and related products that respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life, while reducing the use of natural resources and toxic materials, as well as the emission of wastes and pollutants over the life cycle of the service or product, so as not to jeopardize the needs of future generations;
6.71 'Transfer stations' shall refer to those facilities used to receive solid wastes, separate, sort, and store them, and to bring a better quality of life, while reducing the use of natural resources and toxic materials, as well as the emission of wastes and pollutants over the life cycle of the service or product, so as not to jeopardize the needs of future generations.

PART IV. INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES AND MECHANISMS SECTION 7. Composition and Membership of the Commission. Pursuant to Section 4 of the EPR Act of 2022, the Commission shall be composed of eight (8) members from the government sector and two (2) members from the private sector. The government sector shall be represented by the heads of the following agencies in their ex-officio capacity:

- (1) Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR);
(2) the Inter-agency Local Government Council (ILGC);
(3) Department of Science and Technology (DOST);
(4) Department of Health (DOH);
(5) Department of Trade and Industry (DTI);
(6) Department of Agriculture (DA);
(7) Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB); and
(8) Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP)
The private sector shall be represented by the following:
(a) Three (3) representatives from nongovernment organizations (NGOs) with track record and expertise on the following aspects or fields:
i. waste reduction;
ii. recycling and;
iii. resource recovery;
of solid waste management;
(b) A representative from the recycling, composting, or resource recovery and processing industry; and
(c) A representative from the manufacturing industry, packaging industry, or Obligated Enterprises.

The Department Secretary and a private sector representative of the Commission shall serve as chairman and vice-chairman, respectively. The Commission may, from time to time, call on any other concerned agencies or entities as it may deem necessary. The Secretaries/Heads of the member agencies of the Commission shall formulate action plans for their respective agencies in accordance with the National Solid Waste Management Framework and the EPR Framework for Plastic Packaging Waste.

SECTION 8. Selection Process and Tenure of Office for the Private Sector Representatives. The representatives from the private sector shall be appointed by the Secretary. The representatives from the private sector shall have a tenure of three (3) years, subject to renewal and subsequent endorsement by the Secretary.

SECTION 9. Role of the National and Regional Ecology Centers. There shall be established under the oversight function of the Commission, a National Ecology Center or NEC to be headed by the Assistant Director of the Bureau in an ex-officio capacity. Regional Ecology Centers will also be established and headed by Bureau Regional Directors in their ex-officio capacity. The Ecology Centers shall provide technical expertise, information, training, and networking services for the implementation of the provisions of the Act and the EPR Act of 2022.

Specifically, the NEC shall perform the following functions:

- 9.1 Facilitate training and education in integrated ecological solid waste management through the following:
9.1.1 formulation of training programs for LGUs and private sector on the proper management of solid wastes;
9.1.2 development of training programs on the technical operations of solid waste management facilities;
9.1.3 formulation of uniform and standardized training programs for deputized enforcers and implementers;
9.1.4 development of an accreditation and certification system for the conduct of holding of training programs on solid waste management; and
9.1.5 in collaboration with the training institutions and academic institutions, conduct research and development in the field of solid waste management, information, and dissemination system focusing, inter alia, on the following areas:
9.2 Establish and manage a comprehensive solid waste management information database, in coordination with the DTI, and other concerned agencies and dissemination system focusing, inter alia, on the following areas:
9.2.1 on solid waste generation and management techniques as well as the management, technical and operational approaches to resource recovery;
9.2.2 on processors/recyclers, the list of materials being recycled or brought by them and their respective prices;
9.2.3 on the rate of recovery and diversion of each type of plastic waste, updated semi-annually. For this purpose, the NEC may require the Obligated Enterprises for their respective areas, the Collectors and the PROs to submit regular semi-annual updated reports on their data;
9.2.4 on the costs of recovery and diversion of each type of plastic waste that may serve, among others, as a basis for the Pollution Adjudication Board on the request for loss under Section 48(j) of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022. For this purpose, the NEC may require the Obligated Enterprises, the Collectors, and the PROs to submit and detail the regular semi-annual updated reports on their data;
9.2.5 on information on technologies (existing, alternative, and emerging) that promote clean production and efficient solid waste management.
The NEC, in consultation with the Commission and the Bureau, shall adopt the most applicable technological tools that will enable its database to (a) perform analytics and generate data and information for policy formulation, priority setting, program and project development, or decision-making; (b) prepare and host information portals, dashboards, visualizations, and (c) other relevant functions.
9.3 Promote the development of a recycling market through the establishment of a national network that will enhance the opportunity to recycle.
9.4 Maintain an EPR Registry that contains the registered EPR programs submitted by Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, or PROs. It shall also include and maintain in the registry the registered EPR Programs of MSMEs that are voluntarily implementing their EPR Programs.



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- 9.5 Develop and maintain a database, which includes digital formats, subject to the provisions of Section 44-B of the Act, on Commission information of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, and ensure that it is reliable, effective, secure, transparent, and accessible to the public.

The Ecology Centers shall give primary consideration of making the information generated, collected, recorded, and stored accessible to the general public and such information shall include data for solid waste management plans, the National Framework, the National Status Report, and all other relevant information necessary to ecological solid waste management.
- 9.6 Receive sampling and assessment reports submitted pursuant to second paragraph of Section 44-H of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022 and undertake the necessary action on such reports, or complaints from citizens against a waste generator, an Obligated Enterprise, PRO, or waste management entity, for the purpose of improving compliance with the law;
- 9.7 Provide or facilitate expert assistance in pilot testing of solid waste management facilities;
- 9.8 Act as the hub for networking of LGUs, NGOs and industry on compliance with the pertinent provisions of the EPR Act of 2022;
- 9.9 Act as an information hub of cleaner production/cleaner technologies on solid waste management that have been identified as such through the Environmental Technology Verification Process under DENR-DOST Joint Administrative Order No. 2006-01;
- 9.10 Develop, test, and disseminate model on waste minimization and reduction testing procedures for evaluating options;
- 9.11 Within one (1) year after the effectivity of the EPR Act of 2022, provide an assessment on the volume or footprint of other generated wastes, for priority inclusion in the EPR scheme; and
- 9.12 Within one (1) year after the effectivity of the EPR Act of 2022 and pursuant to the second paragraph of Section 8 of the same law, further identify, review, and update the list of non-environmentally acceptable products and plastic packaging material that shall be phased out, especially those that are highly unnecessary or replaceable, or cannot be efficiently reused, recovered, or recycled, consistent with the provisions of the EPR Act of 2022.

The NEC shall be guided by the provisions of Sections 5, Rule XII, Part II, of the RA 9003 IRR in the conduct of its mandatory reviewing of products and plastic packaging materials and shall submit its report and recommendations thereon to the Commission as its oversight body.

The Assistant Director shall regularly submit reports as may be required by the Commission in its regular meetings. The reports of the NEC shall be consolidated by the Commission Secretary for Commission use.

The NEC shall maintain a multi-sectoral, multi-disciplinary pool of experts including those from the academe, investors, professionals, students, youth, women, and other concerned sectors, who shall be screened according to qualifications set by the Commission.

SECTION 10. Functions of the Commission Secretariat. The Bureau through Solid Waste Management Division, shall provide secretariat support to the Commission. The general functions of the Secretariat shall be the following:

- (a) Prepare all pertinent documents for deliberation by the Commission;
- (b) Record and document the proceedings of the meetings;
- (c) Provide administrative support to the Commission;
- (d) Index and keep all records used and referred to by the Commission; and
- (e) Perform all other functions as may be deemed necessary by the Commission.

PART V. EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY

SECTION 11. National Framework for Extended Producer Responsibility on Plastic Packaging Wastes. Section 44-D of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, encourages Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, and PROs may include any of the following activities and strategies enumerated in Section 44-A of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, in their respective EPR Programs to achieve plastic neutrality:

- 11.1 Reduction of non-environmentally friendly products which may include the following activities and strategies:
 - 11.1.1 adoption of reusable products, or redesign of the products to improve its reusability, recyclability, or retrievability;
 - 11.1.2 inclusion of recycled content or recycled materials in a product;
 - 11.1.3 adoption of appropriate product refilling systems for retailers;
 - 11.1.4 viable reduction plans;
 - 11.1.5 information and education campaign schemes; and
 - 11.1.6 appropriate labeling of products, including the information thereon for the proper disposal of the waste product.
- 11.2 Product waste recovery programs aimed at effectively preventing waste from leaking to the environment, which may include the following activities:
 - 11.2.1 waste recovery schemes through redemption, buy-back, offsetting, or any method or strategy that will efficiently result in the high retrievability, high recyclability, and resource recovery of waste products;
 - 11.2.2 diversion of recovered waste into value chains and value-adding useful products through recycling and other sustainable methods;
 - 11.2.3 transportation of recovered waste to approved recycling, composting, recycling, or other diversion or disposal site in the country;
 - 11.2.4 clean-up of waste leaked to coastal areas, public roads, and other sites; establishment of commercial or industrial waste recycling, composting, thermal treatment, and other waste diversion or disposal facilities for waste products, when investment therein is viable; and
 - 11.2.5 partnership with LGUs, communities, and international waste sectors.
- 11.3 For all other types of product wastes included in the EPR National Framework required under Section 44-A of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, these shall be subject to a separate administrative issuance as may be required by law.

SECTION 12. Adoption, Implementation, and Consideration as Accomplishment of the activities and strategies under Section 44-A of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, for Plastic Packaging Wastes.

Pursuant to Section 44-D of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, or PROs shall, within six (6) months following the effectivity of the Extended Producer Responsibility Act of 2022, establish or phase-in EPR programs for plastic packaging to achieve efficient management of plastic packaging waste, reduced production, importation, supply or use of plastic packaging deemed low in reusability, recyclability or retrievability, and plastic neutrality through efficient recovery and diversion schemes.

The EPR programs may include the activities and strategies stated under paragraphs (a) and (b) of Section 44-A of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, and Sections 11.1 and 11.2 of the EPR IRR. Any of these activities and strategies may also be adopted and submitted to the NEC as an amendment or supplement to their NEC-registered EPR Program.

12.1 Reduction of Non-Environmentally Friendly Packaging Products.

- 12.1.1 Adoption of reusable packaging products, or packaging design to improve their reusability, recyclability or retrievability.
 - 12.1.1.1 This may include replacement of single use packaging with reusable packaging products, or with packaging products designed to improve their reusability, recyclability or retrievability. The activity or strategy shall result in a reduction of the volume of plastic packaging waste when compared to, as baseline quantification, to the volume of plastic packaging product or material relating to the preceding year or its implementation.
 - 12.1.1.2 To facilitate consideration as Plastic Waste Footprint Reduction accomplishment, Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, or PROs shall submit to the NEC, a plan aimed at improving the reusability, recyclability and retrievability of their product packaging material. The plan shall include the following as a minimum:
 - 12.1.1.2.1 Volume and weight, in kilograms, of the packaging material or type related to the reusability, recyclability or retrievability of the packaging products, whether locally manufactured or imported into the country from overseas, and brought into the market in the preceding year.
 - 12.1.1.2.2 Description on how the reusability of their packaging products, or part of their packaging products, will be improved.
 - 12.1.1.2.3 Description on how the reusability or recyclability of the packaging products will be enhanced; the technologies envisaged for the reuse or recycling process; the list of facilities in the Philippines that can manage the recycling process; or the investment required to establish the needed recycling process in case this is not available in the country.
 - 12.1.1.2.4 Description of the measures that could enhance the reusability of the product, including packaging design, simplified identification of the packaging material or its component, collection/return back network which may be established to ensure the retrievability of packaging after use, etc.
 - 12.1.1.2.5 A material or mass balance study, that allows for GHG computation and analysis, on the main materials and processes involved in the plastic waste reduction activity and strategies to support the evidence of their overall environmental benefit in comparison with the baseline. This is consistent with the requirements of the Clean Air Act of 1989 (RA 8749), Climate Change Act of 2009 (RA 9729), and the "Guidelines on Mainstreaming, Cascading, and Institutionalizing Climate Change Concerns in the Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) Priority Programs" (DAO No. 2021-22).
 - 12.1.1.2.6 An implementation timeframe, with targets, related to the reusability, recyclability and retrievability of the plastic packaging products.

12.1.2 Inclusion of recycled content or recycled materials in packaging materials

- 12.1.2.1 The use of recycled content or recycled materials in manufacturing of packaging products, may be accounted as one of the measures to achieve product neutrality under the EPR programs of an Obligated Enterprise, Collective, or PRO. The neutrality shall consider, not only the amount of material effectively recycled (representing the amount of waste of the same materials removed from the environment), but also the efficiency of the recycling process. The efficiency may be measured as the ratio between the recyclable waste minus recyclable waste discarded in the process over

recyclable waste input, as well as the material or mass balance including GHG release associated with the recycling process.

Efficiency = $\frac{\text{Recyclable waste input} - \text{Recyclable waste discarded}}{\text{Recyclable waste input}} \times 100$

Source: Performance Measurement for Extended Producer Responsibility in Brazil Colombia (2017)

12.1.2.2 To facilitate consideration as a Plastic Waste Footprint Reduction accomplishment, Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, or PROs shall submit to the NEC, a plan aimed at setting a target percentage of recycled content to be included in their product. The plan shall include the following as a minimum:

- 12.1.2.2.1 Volume and weight, in kilograms, of the packaging material or type of the current content of recycled materials in their products, arranged by material, as well as a recycling target as a percentage by weight of recycled polymeric plastic material achieved;
- 12.1.2.2.2 Description of the process or strategy envisaged to achieve higher content of recycled materials compared to the baseline;
- 12.1.2.2.3 A material or mass balance study, that allows for GHG computation and analysis, on the main materials and processes involved in the plastic waste reduction activity and strategies to support the evidence of their overall environmental benefit in comparison with the baseline. This is consistent with the requirements of the Clean Air Act of 1989 (RA 8749), Climate Change Act of 2009 (RA 9729), and the "Guidelines on Mainstreaming, Cascading, and Institutionalizing Climate Change Concerns in the Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) Priority Programs" (DAO No. 2021-22); and
- 12.1.2.2.4 An implementation timeframe with recycling targets achieved by material or/and product components.

12.1.3 Adoption of appropriate product refilling systems for retailers

12.1.3.1 The reduction of plastic packaging waste that may be achieved through increased distribution or deployment of refilling systems for retailers, compared to the baseline volume of plastic packaging waste released to the market from the year prior to the adoption and implementation of the refilling system, may be on (a) single-use containers to achieve plastic neutrality under the EPR Act of 2022. In this method, the achievement of plastic neutrality shall not be based on the volume of plastic packaging waste released to the market from the year prior to the adoption and implementation of the refilling system. A mass balance between the mass of the single-use containers avoided and the reusable containers reaching that end of life over the same period shall serve as basis for the determination of plastic neutrality or offsetting.

12.1.3.2 To facilitate consideration as a Plastic Waste Footprint Reduction accomplishment, Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, or PROs shall submit to the NEC, a plan aimed at reducing the volume of plastic packaging waste released to the market from the year prior to the adoption and implementation of the refilling system. The plan shall include the following as a minimum:

- 12.1.3.2.1 Volume and weight, in kilograms, of the amount of plastic packaging material or type of the current content of single-use containers and their volume, versus the number and volume of reusable containers placed on the market, to allow for verification of the achieved target.
- 12.1.3.2.2 Modalities of implementation of refilling system network, including transportation and distribution, requirements for the re-usable containers, requirements for the refilling stations to be established at distribution points and their management;
- 12.1.3.2.3 Certification schemes for the chain of custody of edible and non-edible goods, including health and safety measures;
- 12.1.3.2.4 List of edible goods that will be distributed through refilling systems (i.e., milk, fruit juices, soft drinks, etc.) expected amount, and associated mass of single-use containers avoided;
- 12.1.3.2.5 List of non-edible goods that will be distributed through refilling systems (i.e., detergents, soaps, oils, balms, lotions, etc.) expected amount, and associated mass of single use containers avoided;
- 12.1.3.2.6 A material or mass balance study, that allows for GHG computation and analysis, on the main materials and processes involved in the plastic waste reduction activity and strategies to support the evidence of their overall environmental benefit in comparison with the baseline. This is consistent with the requirements of the Clean Air Act of 1989 (RA 8749), Climate Change Act of 2009 (RA 9729), and the "Guidelines on Mainstreaming, Cascading, and Institutionalizing Climate Change Concerns in the Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) Priority Programs" (DAO No. 2021-22); and
- 12.1.3.2.7 An implementation timeframe with targets by product distributed.

12.1.4 Visible reduction rates plan

12.1.4.1 The reduction of waste which may be achieved through the reduction of material (mass), or use of material in the manufacturing of packaging material, compared to the baseline (the year before the implementation of this EPR activity or strategy), may be accounted as one of the measures to achieve plastic neutrality under the EPR programs.

12.1.4.2 For plastic containers and plastic bags, considering that their impact on the environment is associated not only with their weight but also with their number and volume, the reduction of their weight using thinner layers (lighter) shall not, by itself, be considered as a valid measure to achieve plastic neutrality. Increase of container volume leading to a smaller number of packaging units shall be considered acceptable if it also results to a reduction of mass of the plastic packaging.

12.1.4.3 To facilitate consideration as a Plastic Waste Footprint Reduction accomplishment, Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, or PROs shall submit to the NEC, a plan aimed at reducing the amount of material (mass), or use of material in the manufacturing of their packaging products, with special reference to packaging materials, as well as the measures and methods on the part from the production of single-use plastic packaging to more sustainable packaging. The plan shall include the following as a minimum:

- 12.1.4.3.1 Volume and weight (in kilograms) of the packaging material or type of the current use of material of material (mass) or use of material in the manufacturing of their packaging products, with special reference to packaging materials, as well as the measures and methods on the part from the production of single-use plastic packaging toward more sustainable and reusable packaging;
- 12.1.4.3.2 An assessment of the reduction of weight and volumetric amount of waste prevented, associated with the reduction of material used in the process;
- 12.1.4.3.3 Reduction rates and technology adopted related to the elimination or improvement of unnecessary, redundant, or poorly engineered packaging;
- 12.1.4.3.4 Reduction rates and technology / process upgrade adopted associated with the shifting from single-use plastic packaging toward more sustainable and reusable packaging;
- 12.1.4.3.5 Reduction rates and technology / process upgrade adopted for the optimization of product design and manufacturing, to avoid process scraps; Consideration for plastic or product neutrality shall be based on the same material and product for which waste has been avoided through diversion when compared to the baseline volume of waste from the year prior to the implementation of this diversion program. The brand of the packaging product or waste diverted is not relevant.
- 12.1.4.3.6 A material or mass balance study, that allows for GHG computation and analysis, on the main materials and processes involved in the plastic waste reduction activity and strategies to support the evidence of their overall environmental benefit in comparison with the baseline. This is consistent with the requirements of the Clean Air Act of 1989 (RA 8749), Climate Change Act of 2009 (RA 9729), and the "Guidelines on Mainstreaming, Cascading, and Institutionalizing Climate Change Concerns in the Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) Priority Programs" (DAO No. 2021-22).
- 12.1.4.3.7 An implementation timeframe with targets by raw material avoided.

12.1.5 Information and education campaign (IEC) schemes

12.1.5.1 To facilitate consideration as an EPR accomplishment through the foregoing method, Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, or PROs shall submit as part of their individual plans, an information and education campaign (IEC) aimed at informing customers about:

- 12.1.5.1.1 Options related to the collection of packaging products made available through their EPR schemes: location of collection points, rewarding schemes, contact numbers, etc.
- 12.1.5.1.2 Options related to refilling systems made available through their EPR schemes: products available through a refilling system, location of distribution of such products, requirements for reusable containers, contact numbers

- 12.1.5.1.3 Guides for responsible consumption to minimize the generation of plastic waste
- 12.1.5.1.4 Guides for the responsible management of plastic waste
- 12.1.5.1.5 Guides related to the recycling symbols placed on the labels.

12.1.6.2 Such information and educational materials shall be prepared as part of the first year of the EPR implementation plan and annually yearly to reflect the progress of the EPR implementation.

12.1.6.3 Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, PROs may also support educational programs and campaigns aimed at disseminating the hierarchy of waste which includes Avoidance, Reduction, Reuse, Recycling, Treatment and Proper Disposal.

12.1.6.4 Partnerships with academic institutions, and civil society, including community and church groups on the development and dissemination of an information and education campaign or program on or for ecological solid waste management.

12.1.6 Appropriate labeling of products and packaging materials to include information thereon to facilitate recovery, reuse, recycling, and proper disposal of waste product and packaging.

12.1.6.1 Eco-labeling is a shared concern of both the government and all enterprises, domestic and foreign. Collaboration is essential to the development and adoption of the appropriate regulation or a mandatory standard for general eco-labels that are internationally acceptable to facilitate international trade and commerce.

12.1.6.2 The Act, under Section 27 (Eco-Labeling), provides that the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) "shall formulate and implement a coding system for packaging materials and products to facilitate recovery, reuse, recycling and re-use." The EPR Act of 2022 included "information for proper disposal of waste products" in the product labels or packaging.

12.1.6.3 Rule XII, Section 4 (Eco-labeling) of the RA 9003 IRR provides that the Department of Trade and Industry-Bureau of Product Standards (DTI-BPS) shall formulate and implement a coding system for packaging materials and products to facilitate waste recycling and re-use. The coding system shall initially be based on ISO 14024 Environmental Labels, particularly, ISO Standard 14024, "Environmental Labelling - Practitioner Programs - Guiding Principles, Practices and Certification Procedures of Manufacturer Type 1 Programs", with criteria to be determined on the basis of life cycle assessment of the product group." The Act and RA 9003 IRR, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022 and its EPR IRR, include information for proper disposal of waste products in the product labels or packaging.

12.1.6.4 Rule XII, Section 4 (Eco-labeling) of the RA 9003 IRR, further provides that "The eco-label shall include simple, accurate, non-deceptive and easily understood information on the key environmental aspects which are considered in the award of the label in order to enable consumers to make informed choices. Provided DTI shall make relevant information about the attributes of the product or service available in the eco-labeling process, shall be available to all interested parties." The EPR IRR requires that the eco-labels be internationally acceptable to facilitate international trade and commerce.

12.1.6.5 As such, the drive towards the development and mandatory adoption of eco-labels shall continue to be led by the DTI, through its DTI-BPS, in collaboration with the Commission, and other government agencies with specific labelling requirements, such as, but not limited to, the Bureau, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Department of Agriculture (DA).

12.1.6.6 Industries and enterprises affected by the requirement for the development of standardized eco-labeling for all products and product packaging shall cooperate and collaborate with the DTI-BPS to ensure that the labelling standards adopted not only satisfy the requirements of all applicable laws and regulations of the Philippines but also comply with relevant international standards to facilitate international trade and commerce.

12.1.6.7 Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, or PROs shall submit this activity or strategy as part of their EPR Program. In their initial EPR Programs, they may already disclose, for compliance monitoring purposes, the publicly accessible online platforms where they provide summary information on:

12.1.6.7.1 Compliance with national labelling regulations, such as those required by the DTI-BPS under the Consumer Protection Act of the Philippines (RA 7384), the FDA under the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (RA 3720), or the DA, through its Administrative Order No. 25-3005.

12.1.6.7.2 The proper handling, storage, reuse, recycling, and proper disposal of waste products and plastic waste packaging, in compliance with applicable national laws, rules, and regulations.

12.1.6.7.3 International standards relating to recycling symbols already reflected in their product labels or packaging.

12.1.6.8 The EPR Program shall be subsequently revised to comply with the eco-labeling regulations once these are promulgated by the DTI-BPS.

12.2 Recovery Programs Aimed at Effectively Preventing Waste from Leaking to the Environment

12.2.1 Waste recovery schemes through redemption, buy-back, offsetting, or any method or strategy that will efficiently result in the high retrievability, high recyclability and resource recovery of waste products.

12.2.1.1 The reduction of waste, that may be achieved through the adoption of recovery schemes suitable for the quantity type and location of plastic packaging waste, shall be accounted as one of the measures to achieve product neutrality under the EPR programs.

12.2.1.2 Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, or PROs shall submit to the NEC, a plan that ensures that their plastic packaging waste (or equivalent plastic packaging waste of other brands), are collected at source in specifically arranged collection points. The plan shall include a quantifiable, trackable, and auditable plastic packaging waste reverse-logistic network that identifies waste generators, transporters, collection points, and storage areas as agreed upon with retailers, Local Government Units (LGUs), plastic packaging waste re-users, recyclers, diverters, and operators of MRFs or SLFs, involving, where feasible, informal waste collectors, non-government organizations

12.2.1.3 The recovery schemes shall pay particular attention to the issue of rural areas or small islands which are difficult to reach, to ensure that such areas are covered.

12.2.1.4 The plan shall include a material or mass balance study, that allows for GHG computation and analysis, on the main materials and processes involved in the plastic waste reduction activity and strategies to support the evidence of their overall environmental benefit in comparison with the baseline. This is consistent with the requirements of the Clean Air Act of 1989 (RA 8749), Climate Change Act of 2009 (RA 9729), and the "Guidelines on Mainstreaming, Cascading, and Institutionalizing Climate Change Concerns in the Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) Priority Programs" (DAO No. 2021-22).

12.2.1.5 The plan shall also include an implementation timeframe with targets by product/ material recovered.

12.2.2 Diversion of recovered waste into value chains and value adding useful products through recycling and other sustainable methods

12.2.2.1 The reduction of plastic waste that may be achieved through diversion of plastic waste into value chains or value adding useful products may be accounted as one of the measures to achieve product neutrality under the EPR programs. Such diversion may be accomplished through any sustainable methods that promote circular economy, as recognized under the EPR Act of 2022, as EPR IRR, and other administrative issuances of the Department, the Bureau, or other government agencies. Consideration for plastic or product neutrality shall be based on the same material and product for which waste has been avoided through diversion when compared to the baseline volume of waste from the year prior to the implementation of this diversion program. The brand of the packaging product or waste diverted is not relevant.

12.2.2.2 To benefit from this product neutrality option, Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, or PROs shall submit to the NEC, a plan that includes at least amount, expressed in the appropriate unit mass like kilograms, of their packaging (or equivalent packaging of other brands), are diverted into value chains or value adding useful products, based on the following hierarchy:

- 12.2.2.2.1 Reuse as product or as component of product; for instance, collection and cleaning of containers for reuse;
- 12.2.2.2.2 Mechanical recycling; for instance, collection of used PET bottles to manufacture new PET bottles;
- 12.2.2.2.3 Mechanical recycling of material for the manufacturing of other products; for instance, collection and recycling of PET bottles to manufacture other PET items;
- 12.2.2.2.4 Chemical Recycling to convert plastics to monomers as feedstock to the petrochemical industry;
- 12.2.2.2.5 Other Recycling for construction materials, arts and crafts, among others;
- 12.2.2.2.6 Co-processing, if applicable and allowed for the specific material, product, or waste; for instance, co-processing of non-recyclable or low-quality



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plastic waste in cement bins to recover energy and material.

12.2.2.7 Waste-to-energy pursuant to standards and guidelines set forth by the Department and other relevant agencies.

12.2.2.8 Safe disposal in ELFs.

12.2.2.3 The yearly waste diversion/recycling plan arranged by product and materials, with targets by diversion modality, shall be submitted to facilitate fair appreciation and determination of the accomplishments.

12.2.2.4 The movement of collected EOL products or wastes to the recycling, treatment, or disposal facilities shall be documented through a quantifiable, traceable, and auditable recording system that would reflect source to destination to recycling, treatment, or proper disposal. Once the wastes have been recycled, treated, or properly disposed, the recycler, trader, or disposal facility operator shall issue a Certificate in the name of the Obligated Enterprise, Collective, or PRO.

12.2.2.5 The plan shall include a material or mass balance study, that allows for GHG computation and analysis, on the main materials and processes involved in the plastic waste value diversion or recycling activity and strategies to support the evidence of their overall environmental benefit in comparison with the baseline. This is consistent with the requirements of the Clean Air Act of 1990 (RA 8749), Climate Change Act of 2009 (RA 9729), and the Guidelines on Monitoring, Cascading, and Interconnecting Climate Change Programs in the Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) Priority Programs (DAO No. 2021-22).

12.2.2.3 Transportation of recovered wastes to the appropriate composting, recycling or other diversion or disposal site in the country.

Obligated Enterprises, Collectives or PROs shall submit as part of their EPR Program, the methodology through which the movement of recovered or collected plastic packaging waste to recycling, composting, recycling or other diversion or disposal site shall be reliably tracked and documented in a quantifiable, traceable, and auditable manner in collaboration with their collaborators or partners in the implementation of their EPR Program.

12.2.4 Clean-up of waste leaked to coastal areas, public roads, and other sites

12.2.4.1 The legacy of packaging waste contaminating the environment, with specific reference to shorelines and the marine environment, falls retroactively within the responsibility of the relevant obligated enterprises and their respective members who have leaked into the environment. Given, however, the complexity of the clean-up of sites contaminated by certain waste typologies, and to ensure safe recovery and proper transport and delivery to the appropriate composting, recycling or other diversion or disposal site, the participation of Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, or PROs in the environment, shall be coordinated in advance with the LGUs and with the local offices of the Bureau or the Department.

12.2.4.2 The product neutrality achieved through participation in the clean-up of these areas shall be calculated based on actual waste content that correspond to the plastic waste footprint of the Obligated Enterprise, Collective, or PRO, for recovery and transport to the appropriate recycling, treatment, or disposal site.

12.2.4.3 The Obligated Enterprises or the Collectives or PROs to which they belong may refuse to participate in clean-up activities where the illegal waste dumpsites have been established directly or indirectly, or otherwise tolerated, by the LGUs or other government agencies in violation of the prohibition against the establishment and operation of open dumps under Section 37 of the Act.

12.2.5 Establishment of commercial or industrial scale recycling, composting, thermal treatment, and other waste diversion or disposal facilities for waste products, when investment therein is viable.

12.2.5.1 In case the existing recycling facilities are not sufficient to ensure the EPR target required in terms of capacity, quality, or technology for the collection and recycling of plastic packaging waste, the Obligated Enterprises, or the Collectives or PROs, may formally elevate the issue to the NEC, under the EPR Sustainability Collaboration provisions in Section 17.2 of the EPR Act for consideration as a possible public-private partnership (PPP) venture.

12.2.5.2 In elevating issue, Obligated Enterprises, Collectives or PROs, by themselves or together with other similar situated Collectives, Enterprises, Collectives, or PROs, shall submit to the NEC a business case or pre-feasibility study that identifies the project and investment requirements and includes, at the minimum:

12.2.5.2.1 Waste typology and reasonably projected amount, as expressed in kilograms per month or per year.

12.2.5.2.2 The appropriate commercial or industrial scale facilities that utilize sustainable recycling technologies or methods that promote circular economy, as locally and internationally recognized.

12.2.5.2.3 Possible cash or non-cash investments and risk sharing arrangements within the context of public private partnership (PPP) modalities, under Philippine law or Ordinances of LGUs.

12.2.5.2.4 Relevant assumptions to ensure project feasibility and sustainability.

12.2.5.2.5 Investment recovery periods, and any direct or indirect government or non-government support.

12.2.5.2.6 Contract Management and Regulatory Framework.

12.2.6 Partnership with LGUs, communities, and informal waste sectors.

Obligated Enterprises, or the Collectives or PROs to which they belong, may establish collaboration partnerships with LGUs, communities and informal waste sector for, among others, the following purposes:

12.2.6.1 Partnership with LGUs to:

12.2.6.1.1 Support LGU activities related to the collection and recycling of plastic waste, ensure a better coordination among public and private sector in the field of solid waste prevention, recycling, and collection, enhance synergies among the private and public sector.

12.2.6.1.2 Contribute to the LGU activities on collection and recycling of plastic waste through awareness raising campaigns and communications.

12.2.6.1.3 Coordinate on permitting and licensing issues related to investment in recycling and disposal facilities envisaged under the EPR schemes.

12.2.6.1.4 Ensure that the collection and recycling/treatment covers areas which are difficult to be accessed, like rural areas or small islands.

12.2.6.2 Partnership with communities to support, as part of their EPR and CSR schemes, the needs of communities on social and environmental issues, with focus on but not limited to collection and recycling systems. This may include development of infrastructures, training, awareness raising initiatives, cultural events, environmental awards for students and workers, etc.

12.2.6.3 Partnership with the informal waste recovery sector: Informal collectors who are involved in collection initiatives especially in cases the EPR program may impact on their activities. This partnership shall ensure a formal coverage of the activities of informal collectors which may be an important resource to ensure the collection of EOL at source and shall promote the creation of formal business which may participate in the implementation of EPR schemes.

Partnership with informal collector will be implemented in such a way to ensure that as a minimum, the national rules related to occupational health, right of employees and environmental protection are complied with at any stage.

Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, or PROs establishing partnerships with the informal collector shall ensure that such standards and rules are complied with and may introduce higher standards or safeguard systems in case these are more protective than the national rules. Such standard or safeguard systems may be instance cover: Social Inclusion; Gender equality; Grievance mechanisms; Child labor; Occupational Health; Fair wage policies.

12.3 Incorporation of Activities and Strategies in the EPR Program. The adoption, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the specific activities and strategies and their respective requirements as stated in the foregoing Sections 12.1 and 12.2 in accordance with Section 44-A of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, may already be reflected in the EPR Program submitted for initial registration or subsequently submitted by the Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, or PROs as a supplement or amendment thereto in accordance with the process provided in Section 16.4 of the EPR Act.

12.4 Crediting Plastic Waste Footprint Reduction Accomplishments: The NEC, in close coordination with the Bureau, the Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, or PROs, shall formulate and recommend to the Department a system for crediting of Plastic Waste Footprint Reduction Accomplishments that ensures a fair determination and recognition of the initiatives, activities and strategies in the foregoing Section 12.1, in due consideration with the Country's Intensity Determined Contribution (IDC) and avoids double counting of accomplishments.

(3) Plastic bags, which include single-use plastic bags, for carrying or transporting of goods, and provided or utilized at the point of sale; and

(4) Polystyrenes.

SECTION 14. Obligated Enterprises. Pursuant to Article 2, Sections 3 (3-4) and (w-2), and Section 44-B of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, the following enterprises that generate plastic packaging waste are the product producers obliged to implement EPR programs:

14.1 Large Enterprises:

14.1.1 Brand Owner who sells or supplies any commodity under a brand, label or identity using a product producer, or a material supplied to it by another manufacturer, or supplier; and

14.1.2 Product Manufacturer or importer that supplies its commodities for the use of the general consumer, or distributes the same as a material product of a brand owner. Provided that for purposes of Article 2 of Chapter III-A of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, in case the commodities are manufactured, assembled, or processed by a product manufacturer for another Obligated Enterprise which affixes its own brand name, the latter shall be deemed as the manufacturer.

14.2 MSMEs when the total value of assets of all enterprises carrying the same brand, label or trademark exceeds that of medium enterprises as prescribed by Republic Act No. 9901.

While MSMEs are not covered by the EPR Act of 2022, they are however encouraged to practice EPR voluntarily or be a part of the network of Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, or PROs practicing EPR.

14.3 Such other persons and entities as may be determined by the Secretary.

SECTION 15. EPR Mandates. Pursuant to Section 44-D of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, Obligated Enterprises shall, within a period of six (6) months following the effectivity of the EPR Act of 2022, establish or phase-in EPR programs for plastic packaging to achieve efficient management of plastic packaging waste, reduced production, importation, supply, use of plastic packaging deemed low in reusability, recyclability or retrievability, and plastic neutrality through efficient recovery and diversion schemes.

15.1 The EPR programs may include the activities and strategies stated under Sections 12.1 and 12.3 hereof, and Section 44-A of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, provided that their EPR mechanisms and strategies that shall be submitted to the Commission, through the NEC.

15.2 Obligated Enterprises shall institute an EPR program, either individually or collectively, with or without a PRO, in the herein defined Collective or PRO such as, registration, implementation, and audit of their EPR Program.

15.3 The Obligated Enterprises or the Collectives or PROs to which they belong shall:

15.3.1 Maintain updated statistics of the amount of products that they or their respective members released to the market and the amount of plastic packaging waste recovered from the environment, by type of product and year.

15.3.2 Develop various data management tools to ensure the veracity of the data and information generated or reported during the implementation of their respective EPR Programs, thereby enabling a proper and credible audit thereof and certified reporting in line with the compliance period by an independent third-party auditor in accordance with Section 44-G of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022.

15.3.3 Establish cooperation mechanisms with other Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, and PROs dealing with the same category of plastic products and wastes, or even different categories of products to achieve the shared objective of plastic neutrality.

SECTION 16. Registration of EPR Programs.

16.1 Application Process

16.1.1 An Obligated Enterprise, Collective, or PRO shall submit to the NEC its application for registration of its EPR Program, in triplicate copies (2 originals and 1 legible photocopy), and a compressed archive digital files (ZIP or RAR) containing the typed and PDF files of the required documents as specified in Sections 16.2 and 16.3 hereof.

16.1.2 Within three (3) business days from receipt of the application, the NEC shall complete its examination of the application to determine its completeness in accordance with Section 16.2 and Section 16.3 hereof. The NEC shall then issue the duly designated officer of the applicant with the Order of Payment of the EPR Registration Fees and Annual Compliance Monitoring Fees in accordance with the Schedule of Fees to be issued by the Bureau. The collected registration fees and annual compliance monitoring fees shall accrue to an EPR Special Fund to be created herein.

If the application is incomplete, the NEC shall email the duly designated officer of the applicant on the missing information or documents. The NEC shall have a three (3) business day period, passed within which to resubmit the completeness of the resubmission.

16.1.3 Upon manual or electronic submission of the proof of payment of the aforementioned fees, and within a period of twenty (20) business days from receipt thereof, the NEC shall commence and complete its examination of the application to determine and enter the required fees, and consistency of the EPR Program, its mechanisms, and strategies, with the requirements of the Chapter III-A of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022. If, notwithstanding the payment of the required fees, the EPR Program shall be considered as "registered" and the duly designated officer of the registrant may pick up its duly marked and numbered EPR Program upon the lapses of said period.

16.1.4 The NEC shall affix its security markings and assign the EPR Registry Number on the EPR Program determined to be compliant and submit a copy thereof to the Commission through the Commission Secretary. The NEC shall also email the duly designated officer of the registrant of a copy and with instructions to pick up its duly marked and numbered EPR Program.

16.1.5 In case the NEC determines that the EPR Program contains provisions that are non-compliant or an inconsistency with the requirements of the Chapter III-A of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, it shall email the duly designated officer of the applicant with information on the provisions thereof that were determined to be non-compliant or inconsistent.

Upon resubmission of the EPR Program, as amended to be compliant consistent with the requirements of the Chapter III-A of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, the duly designated officer shall have a new twenty (20) business day period from receipt thereof within which to complete its evaluation thereof.

16.1.6 The distribution of the duly marked and registered copies of the EPR Program shall be as follows:

Registrant - 1 original copy and 1 copy duly certified by the NEC

NEC and the Commission, 1 original copy and the digital file for the database

Bureau Regional Office, 1 copy duly certified copy by the NEC, for compliance monitoring and evaluation purposes.

16.1.7 The Bureau Director may issue a Memorandum Circular to implement the necessary adjustments to (1) the foregoing process flow, once the EPR registration procedure is engaged and interpreted with Bureau's Authority; or (2) shorten the processing periods in accordance with Republic Act No. 11032 or the Ease of Doing Business Law.

16.2 Documentary Requirements for Applications for Registration, pursuant to Section 44-B of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022:

16.2.1 Letter of intent stipulating whether the applicant is applying for EPR Registration as an Obligated Enterprise or as a Collective or aggregation of Obligated Enterprises, with or without a PRO. The Letter shall be signed by the duly designated officer responsible for the EPR Program and for EPR Act of 2022 Compliance and shall provide the contact details (office address, telephone and mobile number, and email address) of said officer. The duly designated officer shall ensure that the NEC is updated as to any changes in his/her contact details.

16.2.2 The Letter shall be supported by the following documents, submitted in triplicate:

16.2.2.1 Original copies of the Special Power of Attorney, Partner's Certificate of Resolution, or Corporate Secretary's Certificate on the designation of the officer responsible for the EPR Program and for EPR Act of 2022 Compliance and the authorization to submit the application for EPR registration of the EPR Program.

16.2.2.2 Legible copy of Certificate of Registration with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) for single proprietorships, Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) for corporations and partnerships, or Coop Registrar of the EPR Program and for EPR Act of 2022 Compliance of the Obligated Enterprise, the lead enterprise of a Collective, or of the PRO.

16.2.2.3 Legible copy of Certificate of Registration with the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR Form No. 2303) of the Obligated Enterprise, the lead enterprise of a Collective, or of the PRO.

16.2.2.4 Copy of valid Mayor's or Business Permit covering the principal place of business of the Obligated Enterprise, the lead enterprise of a Collective, or of the PRO.

16.2.2.5 Additional documentary requirements for Collectives and PROs:

16.2.2.5.1 Organizational structure and leadership

16.2.2.5.2 Membership registration

16.2.2.5.3 Roster of Member Obligated Enterprises

16.2.2.5.4 Roster of MSMEs voluntarily participating in the EPR Program

16.2.2.6 Sworn Statement executed by duly designated officer responsible for the EPR Program and for compliance with EPR Act of 2022 attesting to the veracity of all documents submitted together with the application and undertaking to report in writing to the NEC, any changes on:

16.2.2.6.1 The identity and/or contact details (office address, telephone and mobile number, and email address) of the duly designated officer responsible for the EPR Program and for compliance with EPR Act of 2022.

16.2.2.6.2 Mode of Compliance with the EPR Act of 2022, for example, from an individual Obligated Enterprise to Collective or through PRO, or withdrawal of

separation from a Collective or a PRO to pursue compliance with EPR Act of 2022 as an individual Obligated Enterprise.

16.2.2.3 The roster of members, in the case of Collectives or PROs, and the consequent adjustments to the weight of plastic packaging footprint and to the converted plastic waste diversion targets.

16.2.2.4 Such other relevant information to enable the Bureau and the NEC to monitor and evaluate compliance with their respective EPR Programs in accordance with Section 44-E of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022.

16.2.2.7 The EPR Program, as described in the immediately succeeding section, of the Obligated Enterprise, the Collective, or the PRO.

16.3 Components of an EPR Program. Pursuant to Sections 44-E, 44-F, and 44-H of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, the EPR Program to be submitted by an Obligated Enterprise, a Collective, or a PRO shall include the following information:

16.3.1 Specific type of packaging materials, as defined by Section 44-C of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, and Section 13 of this EPR Act, and the product brands for which they are used, in complying with the requirement, the disclosure of the total weight or volume of per type of packaging material per product brand is not required.

16.3.2 Verifiable weight, expressed in kilograms, of the plastic packaging per type, material form, or converted or aggregated weight of plastic packaging footprint of a specified period. This parameter shall also be known as the "plastic packaging footprint".

16.3.2.1 In the determination of the verifiable plastic packaging footprint, compliance with this requirement shall include those brands which are converted or aggregated weight of plastic packaging footprint even if those are outsourced by the product producer to third-party suppliers or service providers such as distributors, retailers, franchisees, or advertising marketing agencies.

16.3.2.2 To prevent the inadvertent disclosure of confidential information, compliance with this requirement shall be based on the total weight of plastic packaging per type, fluids or flexibles, as defined under Section 44-C of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, regardless of brand, of all of their members.

16.3.2.3 "Specified period" generally refers to a 12-calendar month period.

16.3.2.4 During the first compliance year, also known as the EPR phase-in period (2023-2024), the required disclosure shall be based on the self-declaration of the applicant Obligated Enterprise, Collective, or PRO. This shall be verified during the required compliance audit under Section 44-G of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022. From the second year onwards, the results of which shall serve as the verified and audited basis for the adjustments thereof.

16.3.3 Target weight of plastic packaging footprint to be recovered and diverted for reuse, recycling, treatment, or proper disposal to prevent them from leaking into the environment. This shall be expressed in kilograms and as a percentage of the plastic packaging footprint for the compliance year. This parameter shall also be known as the "plastic waste diversion target".

16.3.3.1 The compliance disclosure herein required on plastic packaging waste recovery for reuse, recycling, offsetting, or proper disposal shall be based on the same type, material form, or general form that an Obligated Enterprise produces, regardless of brand.

For Collectives and PROs, the compliance disclosure herein required on plastic packaging waste recovery for reuse, recycling, offsetting, or proper disposal shall be based on the converted or aggregated weight of plastic packaging footprint of the same type, material forms, or general forms, that their respective members produce.

16.3.3.2 In no case shall the committed plastic waste diversion target be lower than that prescribed for the applicable compliance period under Section 44-F of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022.

To avoid any doubt, the minimum plastic waste diversion target of an Obligated Enterprise, Collective, or PRO that registers their EPR Program in 2024 is not 20% but 40% of the plastic waste diversion target for those that register their EPR Program in 2025 shall be 50%, not 20% of their plastic packaging footprint.

16.3.3.3 Pursuant to Section 44-F of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, the recovery or offsetting of plastic packaging waste, to be credited towards the plastic waste diversion target, shall be based on the type of plastic packaging footprint, regardless of brand. As such, if the plastic packaging footprint is "rigid", it shall only be credited if recovered or offset against "rigid plastic packaging waste", regardless of brand. "Flexibles" cannot be used to offset "rigid".

16.3.3.4 An recovery is not the final step in waste diversion, the EPR Program shall define and describe the post recovery disposition, whether for reuse, recycling, feedstock for processing, waste-to-energy, waste-to-fuel, waste-to-energy or other technological solutions allowed by law, fire, regulation, or for final proper disposal at a Sanitary Landfill Facility (SLF) as defined in the Act.

16.3.3.5 The EPR Program shall clearly identify who in its process flow shall issue the plastic waste diversion certificates in the name of the Obligated Enterprise, the Collective, or the PRO. As a measure to ensure the integrity and veracity of the contents thereof, the plastic waste diversion certificate shall be notarized in accordance with the prevailing rules on notarization issued by the Supreme Court of the Philippines.

16.3.3.6 It is the aggregated total weight of these Sworn Plastic Waste Diversion Certificates, secured during the applicable compliance period, that shall serve as among the principal bases to determine compliance with the applicable minimum plastic packaging waste diversion targets set under Section 44-F of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, and shall be the subject of verification, validation, compliance audit, and certification by the independent third-party auditor to be engaged by the Obligated Enterprise, Collective, or the PRO in accordance with Section 44-G of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022.

16.3.3.7 The Obligated Enterprise, the Collective, or the PRO shall ensure the accuracy, reliability, and integrity of all information and reports from their members that shall serve as among the principal bases to determine compliance with the applicable minimum plastic packaging waste diversion targets set under Section 44-F of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, and shall be the subject of verification, validation, compliance audit, and certification by the independent third-party auditor to be engaged by the Obligated Enterprise, Collective, or the PRO in accordance with Section 44-G of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022.

16.3.4 Other EPR Programs for plastic packaging waste avoidance, reduction, or redesign of plastic packaging to improve its reusability or recyclability.

16.3.4.1 Section 44-A and Section 44-D of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, encourage Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, and PROs to include and implement, as part of their EPR Program, the activities and strategies enumerated therein and detailed in Sections 12.1 and 12.2 of this EPR Act, that are aimed at the avoidance and reduction of non-environment friendly products and the effective prevention of waste from leaking to the environment.

16.3.4.2 To the end, the EPR Program, as originally submitted and registered, or as may be subsequently amended in accordance with the procedure prescribed in Section 16.4 of this EPR Act, shall describe how these activities and strategies shall result in the avoidance or reduction of non-environment friendly or preferable products or the prevention of waste from leaking to the environment, and shall be supported by quantifiable, traceable, and auditable data and information that shall be included and subjected to the ECAAR under Section 44-C of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022 and Section 13 of this EPR Act.

16.3.4.3 To enable a fair determination of the (a) volume or weight of product waste avoided or reduced or prevented from leaking into the environment, and (b) accomplishment credits to be accorded, this portion of the EPR program shall be certified by the Obligated Enterprise, Collective, or PRO to the NEC. It shall include the proposed measures or metrics to achieve the fair determination stated in the immediately preceding paragraph.

The NEC shall evaluate the proposal and, in consultation with the Commission, recommend to the Department the accomplishment credits to be accorded to the proposed activity or strategy for avoidance and issuance of the appropriate administrative order or circular.

16.3.5 Labeling of packaging materials to facilitate recovery, reuse, recycling, or proper disposal of packaging materials.

16.3.5.1 As stated in Section 12.1.6 of this EPR Act, compliance with this requirement involves the declaration of measures to ensure that the labeling of products placed on the market in the country complies with the prevailing national rules and regulations related to the labeling of their packaging.

16.3.5.2 Compliance includes posting on publicly accessible websites of the Obligated Enterprise, the Collective, or the PRO, of the summary information related to the recycling or disposal modality of products, information related to the recycling modality of the packaging, and compliance with international standards relating to recycling symbols to facilitate international trade and commerce.

16.3.5.3 As recognized in Section 12.1.6, compliance with future government regulations related to labeling therein shall be supported by way of amendments or supplements to the registered EPR Program.

16.3.6 Status of Implementation.

SECTION 13. Plastic Packaging Covered by EPR. For purposes of this Rule, and in relation to Section 44-C of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, plastic packaging shall refer to products utilized to carry, protect, or pack goods for transportation, distribution, and sale.

Plastic packaging shall include the following:

(1) Satchels, labels, laminates, and other flexible plastic packaging products, whether single layer or multi-layered with plastics or other materials.

(2) Rigid plastic packaging products, whether layered with any other materials, which include containers for beverages, food, home, personal care and consumer products, such as cartons, bottles, cans, or lids and other rigid plastic packaging items, such as cullery, plates, drinking straws, or sticks, large, signage, or labels.



16.3.6.1 The EPR Act shall describe and detail the various components of its EPR implementation program and process flow. These include:

16.3.6.1.1 Implementation parameters and strategies of the EPR program

16.3.6.1.2 Identification, role, or function of each key partner or collaborator, who may come from the local government or private sector, including social enterprise, community, church, civil society, industry groups, their supply and distribution chains, at every stage of the implementation of the EPR Program, particularly on plastic packaging waste footprint collection and recovery, segregation, and diversion for reuse, recycling, offsetting, treatment, conversion, or proper final disposal. Of particular importance is the identification of the partner or collaborator that will issue the in the name of the Obligated Enterprise, Collective, or PRO the Sworn Plastic Waste Diversion Certificate.

These partners or collaborators shall also serve as key data points for the monitoring and evaluation of the EPR Program implementation.

16.3.6.1.4 The system for data collection and database maintenance

16.3.6.1.5 The system for reporting, verification, and accounting of waste footprint generation, recovery, and diversion for reuse, recycling, treatment, conversion, or proper disposal.

16.3.6.1.6 Financing mechanisms or expenses;

16.3.6.1.7 Environmental, social inclusivity, gender equality, anti-exploitation, and other relevant safeguards

16.3.6.2 Geographic Implementation Program or Roll-out Plan:

To achieve the objective of the EPR Act of 2022 on the prevention of marine litter, it is necessary that the EPR Programs include the geographic implementation program or roll-out plan to ensure that the benefits of the various EPR Programs go beyond the boundaries of urban centers and cities.

As an illustration or example, this program or plan may be presented by an Obligated Enterprise, Collective, or PRO, in the following manner:

"Without limiting, restricting, or preventing the participation in our EPR Program of other LGUs, the following is the target geographic implementation or roll-out of our EPR Program:

Table with columns: Compliance Year, General Areas. Rows for 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028.

Compliance with this requirement may serve as inputs for the formulation and implementation of programs, projects, and strategies, aimed at ensuring a better life for public and/or private investments in plastic waste recovery and recycling endeavors.

16.3.6.3 The EPR Program may also include other relevant information that the Obligated Enterprise, Collective, or PROs may voluntarily disclose, such as, other initiatives, approaches, or projects towards waste recovery or the disposition of other types and volume of packaging materials like paper, cartons, glass, metal, wood, that are currently in use but not covered by the EPR Act of 2022.

16.3.7 Status of Compliance

Compliance requires a disclosure of the advance work that has been done by the Obligated Enterprise, Collective, or PRO to prepare for the implementation of the EPR Program. This shall include EPR-related activities accomplished prior to the enactment of the EPR Act of 2022.

16.4 Amendments to the Registered EPR Program

16.4.1 If the Obligated Enterprise, Collective, or PRO wishes to introduce amendments to its Registered EPR Program, it shall submit, in triplicate copies, a written request for said purpose to the NEC, clearly indicating as EPR Program Registry Number and shall present the amendments/supplements in a 3-column matrix format, where:

Column 1 shall state the original provision sought to be amended or supplemented. If the amendment involves the introduction of a new provision, the entry shall be "New". Column 2 shall state the text of the amended or supplemented provision or the new provision, as the case may be. Column 3 shall state the reason for the amendment, supplement, or new provision.

16.4.2 The NEC shall complete its evaluation of the request within seven (7) business days from receipt thereof. The focus of the evaluation is to ensure that the amendment, supplementary, or new provisions are compliant with the requirements of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022. Depending on the complexity of the new, amendatory, or supplemental provisions, the NEC may extend its evaluation period to not more than twenty (20) business days from the lapse of the original seven (7) business day period.

If compliant, the NEC shall affix its security marking, assign the serialized registry number that associates it with the Original EPR Program Registry Number, and provide a copy of its evaluation to the Obligated Enterprise, Collective, or PRO. The NEC shall release the security marked and numbered copy of the request and retains upon payment of the fees therefor. If determined to be non-compliant, the NEC shall return the request with written information as to the reasons behind its findings.

16.5 Changes in the Mode of Compliance with the EPR Act of 2022. This Rule shall govern a situation where an Obligated Enterprise wishes to change its mode of compliance with the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022.

16.5.1 If an Obligated Enterprise with a duly registered individual EPR Program wishes to transition its mode of compliance to join a Collective or a PRO, it shall submit, in triplicate copies, a written request to the NEC, submitting its proof of acceptance of membership in the Collective or the PRO and requesting for the discontinuation of its EPR Program Registry Number.

16.5.2 If an Obligated Enterprise that is a member of a Collective or a PRO with a Registered EPR Program, withdraws its membership therefrom, it shall submit, in triplicate copies, a written request to the NEC, together with:

16.5.2.1 Written Clearance from the Collective or PRO indicating its conformity to the withdrawal of membership and stating therein the withdrawing member's plastic packaging footprint per type of plastic packaging waste and status of compliance with the targets set under Section 44-F of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, for the compliance year. The Collective or the PRO shall not unreasonably withhold or delay the issuance of the herein required clearance.

16.5.2.2 Compliance with Sections 16.2 and Section 16.3 of this EPR IRR as an Obligated Enterprise complying individually.

The NEC shall evaluate and process the request and application in accordance with Section 16.1 of this EPR IRR.

SECTION 17. EPR Compliance Monitoring and Sustainability Collaboration.

17.1. EPR Act of 2022 Compliance Monitoring.

The NEC, in coordination with the Bureau, shall monitor and evaluate the compliance of Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, or PROs with their respective EPR Programs. The NEC shall submit regular reports to the Commission.

For this purpose, the Bureau, shall formulate and issue the Procedural Manual on the compliance monitoring and evaluation of EPR Programs and on the required submission of annual compliance reports by Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, or PROs in accordance with the last paragraph of Section 44-E and with Section 44-G of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022.

17.2 EPR Sustainability Collaboration.

Pursuant to the 2nd paragraph of Section 44-H of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, the NEC, in consultation with the Commission, the Bureau, the Obligated Enterprises, the Collectives, or the PROs, shall establish a system or parameters necessary to make the EPR Act of 2022 compliance effective, efficient, and sustainable.

These shall include standards, rules, or guidelines for the parameters set in Section 44-H of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, and incorporated as components of the EPR Program under Section 16.3 of this EPR IRR. The collaboration shall also identify challenges to overcome and the best practices to improve the overall implementation of the EPR Act of 2022.

SECTION 18. Compliance Period for Plastic Packaging Recovery Programs.

With the objective of establishing and phasing-in recovery programs that will achieve plastic neutrality, Section 44-F of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, set the following targets for the recovery of plastic product footprint generated during the immediately preceding year:

Table with columns: Date, Percentage. Rows for 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028 and every year thereafter.

The manner for determining compliance with the targets set for recovery or offset, and diversion targets are already stated in Section 16.3(e), hereof. The Bureau shall evaluate the compliance with the applicable targets prescribed under Section 44-F and with the compliance audit requirements under Section 44-G of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022.

SECTION 19. Audits. These Rules are issued pursuant to Section 44-G of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022.

19.1 Purpose and Scope of Audit.

19.1.1 Obligated enterprises, Collectives, or PROs shall engage an independent

third-party auditor to conduct a compliance audit and certify the veracity of the reported plastic product footprint generation, recovery, and overall EPR program compliance using uniform standards established by the Department.

19.1.2 The scope coverage of the EPR Act of 2022 Compliance Audit Report or "ECAR" shall include:

19.1.2.1 Footprint Declaration of Obligated Enterprises or their PROs for the volume in terms of weight in kilograms of the Flexible and Rigid plastic packaging brought into the market for the preceding year. "Flexibles" includes those plastic packaging materials defined under subparagraphs (c), and (d) of Section 44-C of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022.

19.1.2.2 Recovery or plastic packaging waste diversion by waste diversers based on third-party audited diversion or credits for the recovery, transport, recycling, or treatment or final S/LF disposal during the immediately preceding year.

19.1.2.3 Delineation of the equivalent plastic packaging waste footprint reduction resulting from other EPR programs such as, the redesign of plastic packaging to improve reusability, recovery, or recyclability, or the use of refilling systems to replace plastic packaging that would otherwise have been introduced to the market, pursuant under Section 44-A, subparagraph (a), of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022.

19.1.2.4 Confirmation of records, reports, or information, or particular portions thereof, that the Obligated Enterprise, Collective, or PRO considers and declares to be "CONFIDENTIAL". Confidential information, as herein defined, means information the public disclosure of which would reveal trade secrets, production or sales figures, or methods and processes unique to the enterprise, or other similar information that tend to adversely affect its competitive position.

19.1.3 To develop the uniform standards for EPR Act of 2022 auditing and reporting, the NEC, in close coordination with the Bureau, shall collaborate with, among others, with the Auditing and Assurance Council (AASC) of the Philippines (to be designated as the "Auditing Standards Body") in developing a manual for the EPR Act of 2022 and to develop and implement the system for the accreditation of EPR Act of 2022 independent third-party auditors shall also be developed and implemented.

19.1.4 The NEC and the Bureau shall endeavor to have the aforementioned compliance auditing and accreditation system approved, adopted and issued by the Department on or before the September 30, 2023. Information and Education campaigns shall be implemented through the mass media to ensure that all key stakeholders are ready for compliance audit by January 2024.

19.2 Management of Confidential Information.

Pursuant to the 2nd paragraph of Section 44-O of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, and as stated in Section 44-P of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, through the Bureau, shall evaluate the confidentiality requested by an Obligated Enterprise, Collective, or PRO, as confirmed by the independent third party auditor. Once the Bureau approves the request for confidentiality, an audited disclosure of said confidential information shall be dealt with in accordance with the appropriate administrative or criminal laws, rules, and regulations.

As such, the Bureau and the NEC shall also exercise prudence and caution in the management of information, particularly those to which public access is granted, to avoid or prevent any violation of the approved confidentiality.

19.3 Intermittent measures for the Compliance Audit

19.3.1 Pending the formal adoption of the uniform standards for compliance auditing and reporting required by the EPR Act of 2022, the Obligated Enterprises or PROs shall establish and implement an accounting, data recording, and auditing system for their respective EPR Programs, guided by the general scope stated in the foregoing Section 19.1.2, to monitor and assess their recovery or the disposition of other types and volume of packaging materials like paper, cartons, glass, metal, wood, that are currently in use but not covered by the EPR Act of 2022. These systems may also serve as working models for consideration during the preparation of the uniform compliance audit standards. These systems may also be subsequently adjusted to comply with the adopted uniform standards.

19.3.2 The independent third-party auditor to be engaged by the Obligated Enterprise or the PRO for its EPR Act of 2022 and Program compliance audit shall not be an officer or employee of the Obligated Enterprise, nor any of the members of the PRO, nor any of its affiliates.

19.3.3 Pending the issuance of the Rules on the Accreditation of Third Party Auditor for EPR Act of 2022 compliance audits, and given the importance that the EPR Act of 2022 accords to the ECAR, minimum qualifications of the independent third-party auditor that shall, in the meantime, conduct the compliance audit and certify the veracity and accuracy of the ECAR, is that the auditor shall be a Certified Public Accountant, who shall indicate together with its signature the following information:

- 19.3.3.1 Certified Public Accountant (CPA) Certificate Number
19.3.3.2 Board of Accountancy/Professionals Regulation Commission (BAR/COP) Registration Number with date of issue and of expiration
19.3.3.3 Professional Tax Receipt No. with date and place of issue
19.3.3.4 Tax Identification Number

19.3.4 For the year 2023, and as stated in the foregoing Section 16.3.2, the ECAR shall also validate the accuracy of the self-declared volume of plastic packaging waste to be brought into the market, also known as the plastic waste footprint, and shall be indicative as to the veracity and accuracy of the plastic waste footprint volume or weight, as based on audited and verifiable base.

19.4 Schedule for the submission of the ECAR and actions thereon.

19.4.1 The deadline schedule for the submission to the Bureau by the Obligated Enterprise, Collective, or PRO of the ECAR covering the plastic product footprint generated, recovered, and properly diverted, for the immediately preceding year shall be on or before the first working day immediately thereafter of the current year. To illustrate:

Table with columns: Reporting Period, Ending Period, ECAR Due date. Rows for January 1, 2024, January 1, 2025, January 1, 2026.

19.4.2 The Bureau may invite the duly designated officer of the Obligated Enterprise, Collective, or PRO and its independent third-party auditor to discuss, clarify, verify, or validate the submitted ECAR.

19.4.3 If the Bureau deems it necessary, it may, at its own expense, commission the conduct of a separate compliance audit to be conducted by a similarly qualified independent third-party auditor.

19.4.4 Any person may also initiate proceedings under Section 48(g) of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, before the Department's Pollution Adjudication Board (PAB) upon receipt of generated or recovered footprint, employment of any scheme to maliciously evade the responsibility of an enterprise under the EPR Act of 2022 or tamper its compliance with the provisions of Section 44-F of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, the PAB shall hear and adjudicate the case. Other legal or administrative remedies may be pursued by the Department in accordance with applicable laws or regulations.

19.4.5 The ECAR on plastic product footprint generated and recovered by the Obligated Enterprises shall be made available to the public through the website of the Department, the Bureau, the Commission, and the NEC, subject to the rules on confidentiality or other laws. The NEC shall also consolidated aggregated data or total footprint of all Obligated Enterprises and the percentage accomplished/offset shall be made available to the public.

PART VI: INCENTIVES AND COST RECOVERY UNDER THE EPR ACT OF 2022

SECTION 20. Incentives. Pursuant to Section 7 of the EPR Act of 2022, the following are the incentives and cost recovery mechanisms:

20.1 Rewards and recognitions, monetary or otherwise, shall be provided to individuals, private organizations and entities, Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, and PROs, including non-government or civil society organizations, that have undertaken outstanding and innovative projects, technologies, processes and techniques or activities in reuse, recycling, and reduction, including those that are engaged in the development and use of environmentally acceptable or preferable alternatives to plastics. The Program for Rewards under this Rule shall be included in the budget proposals of the Bureau and the Department.

20.2 The following incentive schemes provided under Section 7 of the EPR Act of 2022 shall be available, subject to existing rules and regulation issued by the responsible government agencies, to encourage LGUs, enterprises, or private entities, including Obligated Enterprises, PROs, and NGOs, to develop or undertake an effective solid waste management, including recovery and diversion of plastic product footprint, or actively participate in any program geared towards the promotion thereof as provided for in the EPR Act of 2022.

20.2.1 Fiscal Incentives.

20.2.1.1 Tax incentives - Any provision of law to the contrary notwithstanding, any individual, enterprise, or other registered business enterprise may apply for incentives following the approval process provided under Title 201 (Tax Incentives) of the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997, as amended, for eligible activities. Provided, That such activities shall follow the standard processes of the identification of qualified activities under the Strategic Investment Priority Plan (SIPP).

20.2.1.2 The EPR expenses of Obligated Enterprises, PROs, and private enterprises shall be considered as necessary expenses deductible from gross income subject to the substitution rule under Section 34(A)(1) of the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997, as amended.

20.2.1.3 Tax and Duty Exemption of Donations, Legacies and GIF. All legacies, gifts and donations to LGUs, enterprises or private entities, for the support and implementation of the EPR program for socially acceptable, effective and efficient solid waste management shall be exempt from all internal revenue taxes and customs duties, and shall be deductible in full from the gross income of the donor for income tax purposes. The standard procedures for such exemptions are contained in the Tariff and Customs Code, Section 105-108.

PART VII: PROHIBITED ACTS, PENALTIES AND SUITS

SECTION 21. Specific Offenses and Penalties under the EPR Act of 2022.

21.1. Section 8 of the EPR Act of 2022 amends Section 46 of the Act to add a new Section 46(g), that punishes the following acts and prescribes the corresponding fines therefor: XXX

(g) Any Obligated Enterprises that fails to register under Section 44-E or fails to comply with Section 44-F of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022,

First Offense not less than Five million pesos (P5,000,000.00) but not exceeding Ten million pesos (P10,000,000.00)

Second Offense not less than Ten million pesos (P10,000,000.00) but not exceeding Fifteen million pesos (P15,000,000.00)

Third Offense not less than Fifteen million pesos (P15,000,000.00) but not exceeding Twenty million pesos (P20,000,000.00) for the third offense and automatic suspension of business permit until the requirement of the EPR Act of 2022, is complied with XXX

In case of failure to meet the targets set under Section 44-F of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, the Obligated Enterprises shall pay the same fines set above, or a fine twice the cost of recovery and diversion of the footprint or its shortfall, whichever is higher. The Bureau, in collaboration with the NEC, shall develop, issue, publish, and regularly update its methodology for the determination of the cost of recovery and diversion of the plastic waste footprint or its shortfall.

The penalty shall be imposed whether the non-compliance is the result of failure to register under Section 44-E of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, failure to submit documents, misdeclaration of generated or recovered footprint, employment of any scheme to maliciously evade the responsibility of an enterprise under the EPR Act of 2022, or tamper its compliance with the provisions of Section 44-F of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022.

21.2. Jurisdiction over violations of Section 46(g) of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022.

The Pollution Adjudication Board (PAB) of the Department shall hear and adjudicate cases of violations of Section 46(g) of the Act, as amended by Section 8 of the EPR Act of 2022 and impose appropriate fines therefor.

For this purpose, the PAB shall, within one (1) year upon the effectivity of the EPR IRR, formulate and promulgate (a) its rules and procedures for the adjudication of cases for acts punishable under the aforementioned Section 46(g) and (b) its Fine Rating System to define and prescribe the graduation of possible fines under the same Section 46(g).

Where a Collective or a PROs with a registered EPR Program fails to meet the compliance targets set for the compliance year under Section 44-F of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, it shall cooperate with the PAB in the identification of its non-performing member-Obligated Enterprises that may be held liable under the provisions of Section 48(g) of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022. If the Collective or PRO refuses or fails to disclose the non-performing member-Obligated Enterprises, all the members thereof shall be liable for the shortfall and accorded the appropriate penalties.

21.3. Disposition of Fines Collected under Section 46(g) of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022.

The Fines imposed and collected by the PAB for violations under Section 46(g) of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, shall be deposited into the EPR Special Fund to be created pursuant to Section 10.1.2. of this EPR IRR

PART VIII: APPROPRIATIONS, BUDGET, REQUIREMENTS, AND ORGANIZATIONAL ADJUSTMENTS FOR THE EPR ACT OF 2022

SECTION 22. Annual Budget. Pursuant to Section 10 of the EPR Act of 2022, and subject to the applicable rules, regulations and guidelines of the Department of Budget and Management, the Department shall, in collaboration with the Commission, the National Science Center, and the Bureau, include the sums necessary for the effective implementation of the EPR Act of 2022 in its annual budget proposals under the General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 23. Expenses of Obligated Enterprises. Obligated enterprises and/or their respective Collectives or PROs shall be responsible for the funds necessary to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of the EPR Act of 2022, in compliance with the EPR Act of 2022, and this EPR IRR.

SECTION 24. Organizational Adjustments and Other Requirements. To ensure the effective and efficient implementation of the EPR Act of 2022, the Bureau and the NEC shall immediately prepare and submit to the Department the following additional proposals for its disposition and/or endorsement to the appropriate government agencies for disposition and action:

24.1 Data and Information sharing to assist the Department and the Bureau in the identification of large enterprises, including importers, that are required to register as Obligated Enterprises under Section 44-E of the Act. The Bureau shall define data or information to be requested from other government agencies, such as, the Department of Finance, Bureau of Customs, Bureau of Internal Revenue, Securities and Exchange Commission, or the Philippine Statistics Authority.

24.2 Development of Environmental Law Compliance Auditing Standards and a Sustainability Reporting Tools as mandated by the environmental laws of the Philippines, and not otherwise covered by the ECAR as herein defined.

24.3 EPR Act of 2022 capacity development or enhancement trainings for the Commission, the NEC, the Department, the Bureau, and other government and private sector stakeholders, to be endorsed to the NEA and Development Partners and/or offered by way of collaboration to industry or sectoral groups including learning or training institutes.

24.4 Organizational adjustments to the Bureau, its Regional Offices, the NEC, and the DENR-PAB Secretariat to identify and define the additional personnel, with corresponding positions, job descriptions, and qualifications, required to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of the EPR Act of 2022, as well as compliance monitoring, evaluation, and enforcement. The Department shall endorse this proposal to the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) and to the Civil Service Commission (CSC).

24.6 Conduct of a Cost-Of-Service Review and Analysis to determine the reasonableness of fees and charges that are currently being imposed or that may be imposed to ensure that the Bureau's Data Centers, EPR Portals, and other environmental management and monitoring tools are self-sustaining and graduate out of budget dependency for operators and maintenance.

24.8 Other priority activities requiring congressional, inter-agency, development partner, or budgetary support and assistance.

PART IX: CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT AND MANDATORY REVIEW

SECTION 25. Joint Congressional Oversight Committee. Pursuant to Section 12 of the EPR Act of 2022, there is hereby created a Joint Congressional Oversight Committee to monitor the implementation of the Act and to oversee the functions of the implementing agencies. The Committee shall be composed of five (5) Senators and five (5) Representatives to be appointed by the Senate President and Speaker of the House of Representatives, respectively. The Oversight Committee shall be co-chaired by the Chairpersons of the Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change of the Senate and the Committee on Ecology of the House of Representatives.

SECTION 26. Mandatory Review. Pursuant to Section 9 of the EPR Act of 2022, within five (5) years after the effectivity of the EPR Act of 2022, or as the need arises, Congress shall review the accomplishments, and impact of the EPR Act of 2022, as well as the performance of its implementing agencies, and the compliance of Obligated Enterprises to achieve the objectives of the EPR Act of 2022, for the purpose of determining the necessity of a remedial legislation mandating for more stringent footprint recovery targets, higher incentives, or phase-out of certain types of single-use plastic packaging.

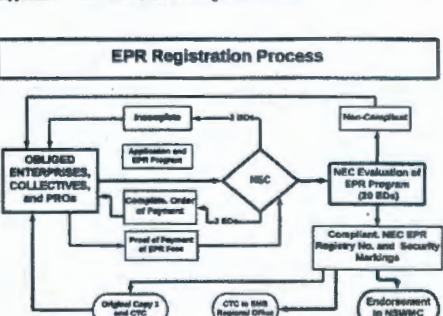
PART X: FINAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 27. Separability Clause. If any provision of this Order shall be held invalid or unconstitutional, the other portions or provisions hereof which are not affected shall continue in full force and effect.

SECTION 28. Repealing Clause. All Orders and other similar issuances inconsistent herewith are hereby revoked, amended, or modified accordingly.

SECTION 29. Effectivity. This Order shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in a newspaper of general circulation and upon acknowledgment of the receipt of the copy thereof by the Office of the National Administrative Registrar (ONAR).

Ames A Republic Act No. 11890, otherwise known as "An Act Establishing the Extended Producer Responsibility On Plastic Packaging Waste, Amending for this purpose Republic Act No. 9803, otherwise known as the "Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2008", also known as by its short title as the "Extended Producer Responsibility Act of 2023"



SECTION 21. Specific Offenses and Penalties under the EPR Act of 2022.



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JAN 24 2023

**DENR ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
NO. 2023 - 02**

**SUBJECT: IMPLEMENTING RULES AND REGULATIONS OF REPUBLIC
ACT NO. 11898**

Pursuant to Section 11 of Republic Act No. 11898, otherwise known as "An Act Institutionalizing The Extended Producer Responsibility On Plastic Packaging Waste", amending for this purpose Republic Act No. 9003, otherwise known as the "Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000", also known by its short titles as the "Extended Producer Responsibility Act of 2022" or as "EPR Act of 2022", and by virtue of Executive Order No. 192, Series of 1987, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources hereby adopts and promulgates the following rules and regulations.

PART I: GENERAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 1. Title. These Rules shall be known and cited as the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the EPR Act of 2022 (hereto attached as "Annex A"), or hereinafter referred to as "EPR IRR", for brevity

SECTION 2. Purpose. These Rules are promulgated to revise, where applicable, DENR Administrative Order No. 2001-34, Series of 2001, otherwise known as the "Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 9003" or "RA 9003 IRR" and to incorporate and prescribe therein the procedures and guidelines for the implementation of the EPR Act of 2022 in order to facilitate compliance therewith and achieve the objectives thereof.

SECTION 3. Scope. The EPR IRR shall lay down the powers and functions of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Department of Trade and Industry, all other concerned agencies and local government units, the rights and obligations of stakeholders and the rights and duties of the people with respect to the implementation of the EPR Act of 2022.

SECTION 4. Construction. The EPR IRR shall be liberally construed to carry out the national policy of adopting a systematic, comprehensive, and ecological solid waste management program, institutionalizing the extended producer responsibility mechanism as a practical approach to efficient waste management, in accordance with internationally accepted principles on sustainable consumption and production, circular economy, and producers' full responsibility throughout the life cycle of their product.

PART II. DECLARATION OF STATE POLICY

SECTION 5. Basic Policy. It is hereby declared the policy of the State to adopt a systematic, comprehensive, and ecological solid waste management program which shall:

- 5.1. Ensure the protection of public health and environment;
- 5.2. Utilize environmentally-sound methods that maximize the utilization of valuable resources and encourage resources conservation and recovery;
- 5.3. Set guidelines and targets for solid waste avoidance and volume reduction through source reduction and waste minimization measures, including composting, recycling, re-use, recovery, green charcoal process, and others, before collection, treatment, and disposal in appropriate and environmentally-sound solid waste management facilities in accordance with ecologically sustainable development principles;
- 5.4. Ensure the proper segregation, collection, transport, storage, treatment, and disposal of solid waste through the formulation and adoption of the best environmental practices in solid waste management excluding incineration;
- 5.5. Promote national research and development programs for improved solid waste management and resource conservation techniques, more effective institutional arrangement and indigenous and improved methods of waste reduction, collection, separation, and recovery;
- 5.6. Encourage greater private sector participation in solid waste management;
- 5.7. Retain primary enforcement and responsibility of solid waste management with local government units while establishing a cooperative effort among the national government, other local government units, non-government organizations, and the private sector;
- 5.8. Encourage cooperation and self-regulation among waste generators through the application of market-based instruments;
- 5.9. Integrate public participation in the development and implementation of national and local comprehensive, and ecological solid waste management programs;
- 5.10. Strengthen the integration of ecological solid waste management and resource conservation and recovery topics into the academic curricula of formal and non-formal education in order to promote environmental awareness and action among the citizenry; and
- 5.11. Institutionalize the extended producer responsibility mechanism as a practical approach to efficient waste management, focusing on waste reduction, recovery and recycling, and the development of environment-friendly products that advocate the internationally accepted principles on sustainable consumption and production, circular economy, and producers' full responsibility throughout the life cycle of their product.



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PART III. DEFINITION OF TERMS

SECTION 8. Definition of Terms. For the purpose of this EPR IRR, the following words, phrases, abbreviations, or acronyms shall have the following meanings:

- 6.1. "Act" shall refer to Republic Act No. 9003, otherwise known as the "Philippine Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000".
- 6.2. "Bureau" or "EMB" shall refer to the Environmental Management Bureau.
- 6.3. "Buy-back center" shall refer to a recycling center that purchases or otherwise accepts recyclable materials from the public for the purpose of recycling such materials.
- 6.4. "Circular economy" shall refer to an economic model of creating value by extending product lifespan through improved design and servicing and relocating ways from the end of the supply chain to the beginning. This intends to efficiently utilize resources by its continual use and aims to retain the highest utility and value of products, components, and materials at all times, through sharing, leasing, reuse, repair, refurbishment, and recycling in an almost closed loop.
- 6.5. "Collection" shall refer to the act of removing solid waste from the source or from a common storage point.
- 6.6. "Collective" shall refer to a group of Obligated Enterprises that organized themselves, not as a producer responsibility organization (PRO), to implement a common platform for the implementation of their Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) program.
- 6.7. "Commission" shall refer to the National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC) created under Section 4 of RA 9003, as amended by Section 4 of the EPR Act of 2022.
- 6.8. "Confidential information" shall refer to a record, report, or information, or particular portion thereof determined by the Bureau to be confidential pursuant to Section 44-G of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, as when the public disclosure thereof would divulge trade secrets, production or sales figures, or methods and processes unique to the enterprise that would otherwise tend to adversely affect its competitive position.
- 6.9. "Composting" shall refer to the systematic decomposition of organic matter by micro-organisms, mainly bacteria and fungi, into a humus-like product.
- 6.10. "Department" shall refer to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.
- 6.11. "Disposal" shall refer to the discharge, deposit, dumping, spilling, leaking, or placing of any solid waste into or in any land.
- 6.12. "Disposal site" shall refer to a site where solid waste is finally discharged and deposited.
- 6.13. "ECAR" shall refer to the EPR Compliance Audit Report required under Section 44-G of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022.
- 6.14. "Ecological Solid Waste Management" or "ESWM" shall refer to the systematic administration of activities which provide for segregation at source, segregated transportation, storage, transfer, processing, treatment, and disposal of solid waste and all other waste management activities which do not harm the environment.
- 6.15. "Environmentally acceptable" shall refer to the quality of being re-usable, biodegradable, or compostable, recyclable and not toxic or hazardous to the environment.
- 6.16. "Environmentally preferable" shall refer to products or services that have a lesser or reduced effect on human health and the environment when compared with competing products or services that serve the same purpose. This comparison may consider raw materials acquisition, production, manufacturing, packaging, distribution, reuse, operation, maintenance or disposal of the product or service.
- 6.17. "Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)" shall refer to the environmental policy approach and practice that requires producers to be environmentally responsible throughout the life cycle of a product, especially its post-consumer or end-of-life stage.
- 6.18. "Generation" shall refer to the act or process of producing solid waste.
- 6.19. "Generator" shall refer to a person, natural or juridical, who last uses a material and makes it available for disposal or recycling.
- 6.20. "GHG" shall refer to Greenhouse Gas.
- 6.21. "Hazardous waste" shall refer to solid waste or combination of solid waste which because of its quantity, concentration, or physical, chemical, or infectious characteristics may: cause, or significantly contribute to an increase in mortality or an increase in serious irreversible, or incapacitating reversible, illness; or pose a substantial present or potential hazard to human health or the environment when improperly treated, stored, transported, or disposed of, or otherwise managed.
- 6.22. "High recyclability" shall refer to a condition wherein the value for recovery and reprocessing of a product is high, due to its design, composition, content, and density, among other things.
- 6.23. "High retrievability" shall refer to a condition wherein after use of a product, a significant volume of its waste can be recovered, properly recycled, processed, or disposed of, on account of its high value for recovery, recycling, or reprocessing.
- 6.24. "Importer" shall refer to a natural or juridical person engaged in bringing consumer goods into the Philippines, intended to be sold, whether in original packaging or to be repackaged for distribution, to the general public.
- 6.25. "Informal Waste Sector" or "IWS" shall refer to individuals, families, groups, associations, or enterprises engaged in the recovery of waste materials for livelihood and income either on a full-time or part-time basis. They work with/without any formal recognition by any government accreditation, licensing or regulating agency. They have no social and economic security and work under substandard and unhealthy work conditions and have limited access to basic services. They are classified as: itinerant waste collectors/buyers, jumpers at collection trucks, garbage crew ("paleros"), waste reclaimers and unlicensed junk shops.
- 6.26. "ISO" shall refer to International Organization for Standardization.
- 6.27. "Large enterprises" shall refer to any business entity whose total assets, inclusive of those arising from loans but exclusive of the land on which the particular business entity's office, plant and equipment are situated, are exceeding that of medium enterprises stated under Republic Act No. 9501, otherwise known as the "Magna Carta for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises".
- 6.28. "Life Cycle Assessment" or "LCA" shall refer to the compilation and evaluation of the inputs, outputs, and the potential environmental impacts of a product system throughout its life cycle.
- 6.29. "Mass Balance", or "Material Balance", refers to an application of the principle of conservation of mass to the analysis of physical systems. It may be exhaustive (all the materials of the system are taken into account) or partial (only materials of interest are taken into account).
- 6.30. "Materials Recovery Facility" or "MRF" shall include solid waste transfer station or sorting station, drop-off center, a composting facility, and a recycling facility.
- 6.31. "MSME" shall refer to Micro, Small, Medium Scale Enterprises as defined and covered by Republic Act No. 9501, otherwise known as "An Act to Promote Entrepreneurship by Strengthening Development and Assistance Programs to Micro, Small and Medium scale Enterprises, Amending for the purpose Republic Act No. 8977, as amended, otherwise known as the 'Magna Carta for Small Enterprises'".
- 6.32. "Municipal wastes" shall refer to wastes produced from activities within local government units which include a combination of domestic, commercial, institutional, and industrial wastes and street litter.
- 6.33. "National Ecology Center" or "NEC" shall refer to the Center established in accordance with Section 5 of the EPR Act of 2022 under the oversight functions of the Commission.
- 6.34. "Non-environmentally acceptable products or packaging" or "NEAP" shall refer to products or packaging that are unsafe in production, use, post-consumer use, or that produce or release harmful by-products when discarded.
- 6.35. "Obligated enterprises" shall refer to:
 - (a) Large Enterprises, as defined in the foregoing paragraph 6.27 of this EPR IRR, that generates plastic packaging waste and are required to implement an EPR program under Section 44-B of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022.
 - (b) Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) where the total value of assets of all enterprises carrying the same brand, label, or trademark exceeds that of medium enterprises under Republic Act No. 9501.
- 6.36. "Open dump" shall refer to a disposal area wherein the solid wastes are indiscriminately thrown or disposed of without due planning and consideration for environmental and health standards.



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6.37. "OPMS" shall refer to the Online Permitting and Monitoring System of the Bureau.

6.38. "Opportunity to recycle" shall refer to the act of providing a place for collecting source-separated recyclable material, located either at a disposal site or at another location more convenient to the population being served, and collection at least once a month of source-separated recyclable material from collection service customers and to providing a public education and promotion program that gives notice to each person of the opportunity to recycle and encourage source separation of recyclable material.

6.39. "Person(s)" shall refer to any being, natural or juridical, susceptible to rights and obligations, or of being the subject of legal relations.

6.40. "Plastic" shall refer to a synthetic material made from a wide range of organic polymers such as polyethylene terephthalate, high density polyethylene, low density polyethylene, polypropylene, polystyrene, PVC, and nylon that can be processed to form solid objects of various shapes.

6.41. "Plastic neutrality" shall refer to a system or its desired outcome where, for every amount of plastic product footprint created, an equivalent amount thereof is recovered or removed from the environment by the product producers through an efficient waste management system.

6.42. "Plastic packaging" shall refer to the polymer material designed to protect a product from environmental factors, or carry goods for transportation, distribution, and sale, including service necessities and more particularly described under Section 44-C of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022.

6.43. "Plastic Waste Diversion Targets" shall refer to the volume or weight of plastic packaging waste that an Obligated Enterprise, Collective, or PRO commits to recover for reuse, recycling, treatment, or proper disposal in their EPR Program, the minimum of which is prescribed in Section 44-F of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022.

6.44. "Plastic Waste Diversion Accomplishment" shall refer to the volume or weight of plastic packaging waste that an Obligated Enterprise, Collective, or PRO actually recovers for reuse, recycling, offsetting, or proper disposal in accordance with its registered EPR Program, and as verified, validated, and certified by an independent third-party auditor through the ECAR submitted to the Bureau in accordance with Section 44-G of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022.

6.45. "Plastic Waste Footprint Reduction" shall refer to the consequent reduction in plastic packaging footprint and in plastic waste footprint diversion targets due to the adoption and implementation of waste avoidance and prevention activities and strategies, such as retail refilling stations or product or packaging redesign, under Section 44-A of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022 and Part V of the EPR IRR.

6.46. "PNS" or Philippine National Standards shall refer to the product and performance or use-oriented standards developed by the Bureau of Philippine Standards of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI-BPS) that serve to assure consumers that the products had passed its standards for certification pursuant to RA4109 and reiterated by RA7394.

6.47. "Post-consumer material" shall refer only to those materials or products generated by a business or consumer which have served their intended end use, and which have been separated or diverted from solid waste for the purpose of being collected, processed, and used as a raw material in the manufacturing of recycled product, excluding materials and by-products generated from, and commonly used within an original manufacturing process, such as mill scrap.

6.48. "Private Sector" shall refer to a natural or juridical entity other than public sector which, for purposes of the Act and these Rules, include but are not limited to non-government organizations, the academe and civil society.

6.49. "Producer Responsibility Organization" or "PRO" shall refer to the organization, voluntarily formed or authorized by obliged enterprises under Section 44-H of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, that shall serve as the viable platform to implement their EPR Program.

6.50. "Product footprint" shall refer to a measure of the amount of goods produced, imported, distributed, or supplied by a product producer, and deemed to cause damage to the environment.

6.51. "Product producer" shall refer to any of the following persons:

- (a) brand owner who sells or supplies any commodity under a brand, label or identity using a product it produced, or a material supplied to it by another manufacturer, or supplier; and
- (b) product manufacturer or importer that supplies its commodities for the use of the general consumer or distributes the same as a material product of a brand owner: Provided, That for purposes of Article 2 of Chapter III-A of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, in case the commodities are manufactured, assembled, or processed by a product manufacturer for another Obligated Enterprise which affixes its own brand name, the latter shall be deemed as the manufacturer.

6.52. "Product waste" shall refer to disposed post-consumer material including product rejects and recalls.

6.53. "Receptacles" shall refer to individual containers used for the source separation and the collection of recyclable materials.

6.54. "Recovered material" shall refer to material and by-products that have been recovered and diverted from solid waste for the purpose of being processed and used as a raw material in the manufacture of a recycled product or effectively processed or treated to ensure these are prevented from leaking into the environment. For purposes of the required compliances under the EPR Act of 2022, "recovered material" shall also refer to the plastic packaging waste that an obliged enterprise, collective, or PRO recovers for reuse, recycle, offset, or proper disposal in accordance with its registered EPR Program.

6.55. "Recyclable material" shall refer to any waste material retrieved from the waste stream that can still be converted into suitable beneficial use or for other purposes, including, but not limited to, newspaper, ferrous scrap metal, non-ferrous scrap metal, used oil, corrugated cardboard, aluminum, glass, office paper, tin cans, plastics and other materials as may be determined by the Commission.

6.56. "Recycled material" shall refer to post-consumer material that has been recycled and returned to the economy.

6.57. "Recycling" shall refer to the treating of used or waste materials through a process of making them suitable for beneficial use and for other purposes and includes any process by which solid waste materials are transformed into new products in such a manner that the original products may lose their identity, and which may be used as raw materials for the production of other goods or services: Provided, that the collection, segregation and re-use of previously used packaging material shall be deemed recycling under the Act.

6.58. "Resource conservation" shall refer to the reduction of the amount of solid waste that is generated or the reduction of overall resource consumption, and utilization of recovered resources.

6.59. "Resource recovery" shall refer to the collection, extraction, or recovery of recyclable materials from the waste stream for the purpose of recycling, generating energy or producing a product suitable for beneficial use: Provided, such resource recovery facilities exclude incineration.

6.60. "Re-use" shall refer to the process of recovering materials intended for the same or different purpose without the alteration of physical and chemical characteristics.

6.61. "Reverse logistics" shall refer to the process of moving goods from their typical final destination for the purpose of capturing value, or proper disposal. Remanufacturing and refurbishing activities also may be included in the definition of reverse logistics.

6.62. "Sanitary landfill" or "SLF" shall refer to a waste disposal site designed, constructed, operated, and maintained in a manner that exerts engineering control over significant potential environmental impacts arising from the development and operation of the facility.

6.63. "Secretary" shall refer to the Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

6.64. "Segregation" shall refer to sorting and segregation of different materials found in solid waste in order to promote recycling and re-use of resources and to reduce the volume of waste for collection and disposal.

6.65. "Segregation at source" shall refer to a solid waste management practice of separating, at the point of origin, different materials found in solid waste in order to promote recycling and re-use of resources and to reduce the volume of waste for collection and disposal.



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6.66. "Solid waste" or "Municipal Solid Waste" or "MSW" shall refer to all discarded household, commercial waste, non-hazardous institutional, ports/harbors and industrial waste, street sweepings, construction debris, agriculture waste, and other non-hazardous/non-toxic solid waste. Unless specifically noted otherwise, the term "solid waste" as used in the Act shall not include:

- (a) waste identified or listed as hazardous waste of a solid, liquid, contained gaseous or semisolid form which may cause or contribute to an increase in mortality or in serious situations, incapacitate or cause irreversible bodily damage or acute/chronic effect on the health of persons and other organisms;
- (b) infectious waste from hospitals such as equipment, instruments, utensils, and fomites of a disposable nature from patients who are suspected to have or have been diagnosed as having communicable diseases and must therefore be isolated as required by public health agencies, laboratory wastes such as pathological specimens (i.e., all tissues, specimens of blood elements, excreta, and secretions obtained from patients or laboratory animals), and disposable fomites that may harbor or transmit pathogenic organisms, and surgical operating room pathologic specimens and disposable fomites attendant thereto, and similar disposable materials from outpatient areas and emergency rooms; and
- (c) waste resulting from mining activities, including contaminated soil and debris.

6.64. "Solid waste management" shall refer to the discipline associated with the control of generation, storage, collection, transfer and transport, processing, and disposal of solid wastes in a manner that is in accord with the best principles of public health, economics, engineering, conservation, aesthetics, and other environmental considerations, and that is also responsive to public attitudes.

6.65. "Solid waste management facility" shall refer to any resource recovery system or component thereof; any system, program, or facility for resource conservation; any facility for the collection, source separation, storage, transportation, transfer, processing, treatment, or disposal of solid waste.

6.66. "Source reduction" shall refer to the reduction of solid waste before it enters the solid waste stream by methods such as product design, materials substitution, materials re-use and packaging restrictions.

6.67. "Source separation" shall refer to the sorting of solid waste into some or all of its component parts at the point of generation.

6.68. "Special wastes" shall refer to household hazardous wastes such as paints, thinners, household batteries, lead-acid batteries, spray canisters and the like. These include wastes from residential and commercial sources that comprise of bulky wastes, consumer electronics, white goods, yard wastes that are collected separately, batteries, oil, and tires. These wastes are usually handled separately from other residential and commercial wastes.

6.69. "Storage" shall refer to the interim containment of solid waste after generation and prior to collection for ultimate recovery or disposal.

6.70. "Sustainable consumption and production" shall refer to the use of services and related products that respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life, while minimizing the use of natural resources and toxic materials, as well as the emission of wastes and pollutants over the life cycle of the service or product, so as not to jeopardize the needs of future generations.

6.71. "Transfer stations" shall refer to those facilities utilized to receive solid wastes, temporarily store, separate, convert, or otherwise process the materials in the solid wastes, or to transfer the solid wastes directly from smaller to larger vehicles for transport. This term does not include any of the following:

- a. a facility whose principal function is to receive, store, separate, convert, or otherwise process in accordance with national minimum standards;
- b. a facility whose principal function is to receive, store, convert, or otherwise process wastes which have already been separated for re-use and are not intended for disposal; and
- c. the operations premises of a duly licensed solid waste handling operator who receives, stores, transfers, or otherwise processes waste as an activity incidental to the conduct of a refuse collection and disposal business.

6.72. "Waste diversion" shall refer to activities which reduce or eliminate the amount of solid wastes from waste disposal facilities.

6.73. "Waste Diverters" shall refer to the public and/ or private entities or persons that an Obligated Enterprise, Collective, or PRO engages and collaborates with for the implementation of their respective EPR Programs. Waste diverters include households, product distributors or retailers, operators of material recovery facilities (MRF), waste collection systems, transfer stations, junk shops, repair shops, recycling facilities, SLF with pre-disposal sorting/recovery facilities, and other similar facilities for the recovery and diversion of plastic packaging waste for reuse, recycling, or proper disposal in accordance with the provisions of the EPR Act of 2022.

PART IV. INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES AND MECHANISMS

SECTION 7. Composition and Membership of the Commission. Pursuant to Section 4 of the EPR Act of 2022, the Commission shall be composed of eight (8) members from the government sector and five (5) members from the private sector. The government sector shall be represented by the heads of the following agencies in their *ex officio* capacity.

- (1) Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR);
- (2) Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG);
- (3) Department of Science and Technology (DOST);
- (4) Department of Health (DOH);
- (5) Department of Trade and Industry (DTI);
- (6) Department of Agriculture (DA);
- (7) Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA); and
- (8) Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP).

The private sector shall be represented by the following:

(a) Three (3) representatives from nongovernment organizations (NGOs) with track record and expertise on the following aspects or fields:

- i. waste reduction,
- ii. recycling, and
- iii. resource recovery;

of solid waste management;

(b) A representative from the recycling, composting, or resource recovery and processing industry; and

(c) A representative from the manufacturing industry, packaging industry, or Obligated Enterprises.

The Department Secretary and a private sector representative of the Commission shall serve as chairman and vice-chairman, respectively. The Commission may, from time to time, call on any other concerned agencies or sectors as it may deem necessary. The Secretaries/Heads of the member agencies of the Commission shall formulate action plans for their respective agencies to complement the National Solid Waste Management Framework and the EPR Framework for Plastic Packaging Waste.

SECTION 8. Selection Process and Tenure of Office for the Private Sector Representatives. The representatives from the private sector shall be appointed by the President for a term of three (3) years, subject to renewal and subsequent endorsement by the Secretary.

SECTION 9. Role of the National and Regional Ecology Centers. There shall be established, under the oversight function of the Commission, a National Ecology Center or NEC to be headed by the Assistant Director of the Bureau in an *ex-officio* capacity. Regional Ecology Centers will also be established and headed by Bureau Regional Directors in their *ex-officio* capacity. The Ecology Centers shall provide technical expertise, information, training, and networking services for the implementation of the provisions of the Act and the EPR Act of 2022.

Specifically, the NEC shall perform the following functions:

9.1. Facilitate training and education in integrated ecological solid waste management through the following:

9.1.1. formulation of training programs for LGUs and private sector on the proper management of solid wastes;

9.1.2. development of training programs on the technical operations of solid waste management facilities;

9.1.3. formulation of uniform and standardized training programs for deputized enforcers and implementers;

9.1.4. development of an accreditation and certification system for the conduct of holding of training programs on solid waste management; and

9.1.5. in collaboration with the training institutions and academic like Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Department of Education (DepEd), and Commission on Higher Education (CHED), develop an education program that will promote an effective solid waste management system.

9.2. Establish and manage a comprehensive solid waste management information database, in coordination with the DTI, and other concerned agencies and dissemination system focusing, *inter alia*, on the following areas:

9.2.1. on solid waste generation and management techniques as well as the management, technical and operational approaches to resource recovery;

9.2.2. of processors/ recyclers, the list of materials being recycled or brought by them and their respective prices;

9.2.3. on the rate of recovery and diversion of each type of plastic waste, updated semi-annually; For this purpose, the NEC may require the Obligated Enterprises, the Collectives, and the PROs to submit regular semi-annual unaudited reports on the rate;



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9.2.4. on the costs of recovery and diversion of each type of plastic waste that may serve, among others, as basis for the Pollution Adjudication Board on the imposition of fines under Section 49(g) of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022. For this purpose, the NEC may require the Obligated Enterprises, the Collectives, and the PROs to submit and detail the regular semi-annual unaudited reports on these costs; and

9.2.5. on information on technologies (existing, alternative, and emerging) that promote clean production and efficient solid waste management.

The NEC, in consultation with the Commission and the Bureau, shall adopt the most applicable technological tools that will enable its database to (a) perform analytics and generate data and information for policy formulation, policy reform, program and project development, or decision-making, (b) prepare and host information portals, dashboards, visualizations, and (c) other relevant functions.

9.3. Promote the development of a recycling market through the establishment of a national network that will enhance the opportunity to recycle.

9.4. Maintain an EPR Registry that contains the registered EPR programs submitted by Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, or PROs. It shall also include and maintain in its registry the registered EPR Programs of MSMEs that are voluntarily implementing their EPR Program;

9.5. Develop and maintain a database, which includes digital formats, subject to the provisions of Section 44-G on Confidential Information of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, and ensure that it is reliable, effective, secure, transparent, and accessible to the public;

The Ecology Centers shall give primary consideration of making the information generated, collected, recorded, and stored accessible to the general public and such information shall include data for solid waste management plans, the National Framework, the National Status Report, and all other relevant information necessary to ecological solid waste management.

9.6. Receive sampling and assessment reports submitted pursuant to second paragraph of Section 44-H of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022 and undertake the necessary action on such reports, or complaints from any citizen against a waste generator, an Obligated Enterprises, PRO, or waste management entity, for the purpose of improving compliance with the law;

9.7. Provide or facilitate expert assistance in pilot modeling of solid waste management facilities;

9.8. Act as the hub for networking of LGUs, NGOs and industry on compliance with the pertinent provisions of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022;

9.9. Act as an information hub of cleaner production/cleaner technologies on solid waste management that have been identified as such through the Environmental Technology Verification Process under DENR-DOST Joint Administrative Order No. 2006-01;

9.10. Develop, test, and disseminate model on waste minimization and reduction auditing procedures for evaluating options;

9.11. Within one (1) year after the effectivity of the EPR Act of 2022, provide an assessment on the volume or footprint of other generated wastes, for priority inclusion in the EPR scheme; and

9.12. Within one (1) year after the effectivity of the EPR Act of 2022 and pursuant to the second paragraph of Section 9 of the same law, further identify, review, and update the list of non-environmentally acceptable products and plastic packaging material that shall be phased out, especially those that are highly unnecessary or replaceable, or cannot be efficiently reused, recovered, or recycled, consistent with the provisions of the EPR Act of 2022.

The NEC shall be guided by the provisions of Section 5, Rule XII, Part III, of the RA 9003 IRR in the conduct of its mandatory review of the list of non-environmentally acceptable products and plastic packaging materials and shall submit its report and recommendations thereon to the Commission as its oversight body.

The Assistant Director shall regularly submit reports as may be required by the Commission in its monthly meetings. The reports of the NEC shall be consolidated by the Commission Secretariat for submission to the Commission.

The NEC shall maintain a multi-sectoral, multi-disciplinary pool of experts including those from the academe, inventors, practicing professionals, business and industry, youth, women, and other concerned sectors, who shall be screened according to qualifications set by the Commission.

SECTION 10. Functions of the Commission Secretariat. The Bureau through Solid Waste Management Division, shall provide secretariat support to the Commission. The general functions of the Secretariat shall be the following:

- Prepare all pertinent documents for deliberation by the Commission;
- Record and document all the proceedings of the meetings;
- Provide administrative support to the Commission;
- Index and keep all records used and referenced by the Commission; and
- Perform all other functions as may be deemed necessary by the Commission.

PART V. EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY

SECTION 11. National Framework for Extended Producer Responsibility on Plastic Packaging Waste. Section 44-D of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, encourages Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, and PROs may include any of the following activities and strategies enumerated in Section 44-A of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, in their respective EPR Programs to achieve plastic neutrality:

11.1. Reduction of non-environment friendly products which may include the following activities and strategies:

- 11.1.1. adoption of reusable products, or redesign of the products to improve its reusability, recyclability, or retrievability;
- 11.1.2. inclusion of recycled content or recycled materials in a product;
- 11.1.3. adoption of appropriate product refilling systems for retailers;
- 11.1.4. viable reduction rates plan;
- 11.1.5. information and education campaign schemes; and
- 11.1.6. appropriate labeling of products, including the information thereon for the proper disposal of the waste product.

11.2. Product waste recovery programs aimed at effectively preventing waste from leaking to the environment, which may include the following activities:

- 11.2.1. waste recovery schemes through redemption, buy-back, offsetting, or any method or strategy that will efficiently result in the high retrievability, high recyclability, and resource recovery of waste products;
- 11.2.2. diversion of recovered waste into value chains and value-adding useful products through recycling and other sustainable methods;
- 11.2.3. transportation of recovered waste to the appropriate composting, recycling, or other diversion or disposal site in the country;
- 11.2.4. clean-up of waste leaked to coastal areas, public roads, and other sites;
- 11.2.5. establishment of commercial or industrial scale recycling, composting, thermal treatment, and other waste diversion or disposal facilities for waste products, when investment therein is viable; and
- 11.2.6. partnership with LGUs, communities, and the informal waste sectors.

11.3. For all other types of product wastes included in the EPR National Framework required under Section 44-A of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, these shall be subject to a separate administrative issuance as may be required by law.

SECTION 12. Adoption, Implementation, and Consideration as Accomplishment of the activities and strategies under Section 44-A of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, for Plastic Packaging Waste.

Pursuant to Section 44-D of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, or PROs shall, within six (6) months following the effectivity of the Extended Producer Responsibility Act of 2022, establish or phase-in EPR programs for plastic packaging to achieve efficient management of plastic packaging waste, reduced production, importation, supply or use of plastic packaging deemed low in reusability, recyclability or retrievability, and plastic neutrality through efficient recovery and diversion schemes.

The EPR programs may include the activities and strategies stated under paragraphs (a) and (b) of Section 44-A of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, and Sections 11.1 and 11.2 of the EPR IRR. Any of these activities and strategies may also be adopted and submitted to the NEC as an amendment or supplement to their NEC-registered EPR Program.

12.1. Reduction of Non-Environment Friendly Packaging Products.

12.1.1. Adoption of reusable packaging products, or packaging design to improve their reusability, recyclability or retrievability.

12.1.1.1. This may include replacement of single use packaging with reusable packaging products, or with packaging products designed to improve their reusability, recyclability or retrievability. The activity or strategy shall result in a reduction of the volume of plastic packaging waste when compared to, as baseline quantification, to the material consumption by packaging product or material relating to the preceding year its implementation.

12.1.1.2. To facilitate consideration as Plastic Waste Footprint Reduction accomplishment, Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, or PROs shall submit to the NEC, a plan aimed at improving the reusability, recyclability and retrievability of their product packaging material. The plan shall include the following as a minimum:

12.1.1.2.1. Volume and weight, in kilograms, of the packaging material or type related to the reusability, recyclability or retrievability of the packaging products, whether locally manufactured, or imported into the country from overseas, and brought into the market in the preceding year.

12.1.1.2.2. Description on how the reusability of their packaging products, or part of their packaging products, will be improved.



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- 12.1.1.2.3. Description on how the reusability or recyclability of the packaging products will be enhanced; the technologies envisaged for the reuse or recycling process; the list of facilities in the Philippines that can manage the recycling process, or the investment required to establish the needed recycling process in case this is not available in the country.
- 12.1.1.2.4. Description of the measures that could enhance the retrievability of the product, including packaging design, simplified identification of the packaging material or its component, collection/ take back network which will be established to ensure the retrievability of packaging after use, etc.
- 12.1.1.2.5. A material or mass balance study, that allows for GHG computation and analysis, on the main materials and processes involved in the plastic waste reduction activity and strategies to support the evidence of their overall environmental benefit in comparison with the baseline. This is consistent with the requirements of the Clean Air Act of 1999 (RA 8749), Climate Change Act of 2009 (RA 9729), and the "Guidelines on Mainstreaming, Cascading, And Institutionalizing Climate Change Concerns in the Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) Priority Programs" (DAO No. 2021-22).
- 12.1.1.2.6. An implementation timeframe, with targets, related to the reusability, recyclability and retrievability of the plastic packaging products.

12.1.2. Inclusion of recycled content or recycled materials in packaging materials

12.1.2.1. The use of recycled content or recycled materials in manufacturing of packaging products, may be accounted as one of the measures to achieve product neutrality under the EPR programs of an Obligated Enterprise, Collective, or PRO. The neutrality shall consider, not only the amount of material effectively recycled (representing the amount of waste of the same materials removed from the environment), but also the efficiency of the recycling process. The efficiency may be measured as the ratio between the recyclable waste input minus recyclable waste discarded in the process over recyclable waste input, as well as the material or mass balance including GHG release associated with the recycling process.

$$\text{Efficiency} = \frac{\text{Recyclable waste input} - \text{Recyclable waste discarded}}{\text{Recyclable waste input}} \times 100$$

Source: Performance Measurement for Extended Producer Responsibility in British Columbia (2017)

12.1.2.2. To facilitate consideration as a Plastic Waste Footprint Reduction accomplishment, the Obligated Enterprise, Collective, or PRO shall submit to the NEC, a plan aimed at setting a target percentage of recycled materials to be included in their product. The plan shall include the following as a minimum:

- 12.1.2.2.1. Volume and weight, in kilograms, of the packaging material or type of the current content of recycled materials in their products, arranged by material, as well as a recycling target as a percentage by weight of recycled polymeric plastic material achieved;
- 12.1.2.2.2. Description of the process or strategy envisaged to achieve higher content of recycled materials compared to the baseline;
- 12.1.2.2.3. A material or mass balance study, that allows for GHG computation and analysis, on the main materials and processes involved in the plastic waste reduction activity and strategies to support the evidence of their overall environmental benefit in comparison with the baseline. This is consistent with the requirements of the Clean Air Act of 1999 (RA 8749), Climate Change Act of 2009 (RA 9729), and the "Guidelines on Mainstreaming, Cascading, And Institutionalizing Climate Change Concerns in the Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) Priority Programs" (DAO 2021-22); and
- 12.1.2.2.4. An implementation timeframe with recycling targets achieved by material or/and product components

12.1.3. Adoption of appropriate product refilling systems for retailers

- 12.1.3.1. The reduction of plastic packaging waste that may be achieved through increased distribution or deployment of refilling systems for retailers, compared to the baseline volume of plastic packaging waste released to the market from the year prior to the adoption and implementation of the refilling system, may be considered as one of the measures to achieve plastic neutrality under the EPR Act of 2022. In this method, the achievement of plastic neutrality shall not be based on the collection of an equivalent waste container but on the amount of single use plastic containers that shall no longer be released to the market due to the refilling system. A mass balance between the mass of the single-use containers avoided and the reusable containers reaching their end of life over the same period shall serve as basis for the determination of plastic neutrality or offsetting.
- 12.1.3.2. To facilitate consideration as a Plastic Waste Footprint Reduction accomplishment through the foregoing method, that is generally limited to products that may be sold in bulk, such as powders, liquids, gels, etc., Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, or PROs shall submit to the NEC, a plan that sets a target volume (in kilograms or liters) of their product that shall be distributed through refilling system in the period covered by EPR program over the baseline volume (in liters or kilograms) of product placed on the market in the Philippines from the year before the implementation of the refilling systems of the EPR program, by implementing agreements with product retailers, such as supermarkets, shops, distributors, to avoid or reduce the use of single-use containers. The plan shall include the following as a minimum:
 - 12.1.3.2.1. Volume and weight, in kilograms, of the packaging material or type of the current amount of single-use containers and their volume, versus the number and volume of reusable containers placed on the market, to allow for verification of the achieved target.
 - 12.1.3.2.2. Modalities of implementation of refilling system network, including transportation and distributions, requirements for the re-usable containers, requirements for tanks to be established at distribution points and their management,
 - 12.1.3.2.3. Certification schemes for the chain of custody of edible and non-edible goods, including health and safety measures.
 - 12.1.3.2.4. List of edible goods that will be distributed through refilling systems (i.e., water, oil, wine, flour, salt, sugar, etc.) expected amount, and associated mass of single-use containers avoided.
 - 12.1.3.2.5. List of non-edible goods that will be distributed through refilling systems (i.e., detergents, soaps, oils, building materials like gypsum and cement, etc.) and associated mass of single use containers avoided.
 - 12.1.3.2.6. A material or mass balance study, that allows for GHG computation and analysis, on the main materials and processes involved in the plastic waste avoidance or reduction activity and strategies to support the evidence of their overall environmental benefit in comparison with the baseline. This is consistent with the requirements of the Clean Air Act of 1999 (RA 8749), Climate Change Act of 2009 (RA 9729), and the "Guidelines on Mainstreaming, Cascading, And Institutionalizing Climate Change Concerns in the Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) Priority Programs" (DAO No. 2021-22), and
 - 12.1.3.2.7. An implementation timeframe with targets by product distributed.

12.1.4. Viable reduction rates plan

- 12.1.4.1. The reduction of waste which may be achieved through the upstream reduction, measured in kilograms, of use of material in the manufacturing of packaging material, compared to the baseline (the year before the implementation of this EPR activity or strategy), may be accounted as one of the measures to achieve plastic neutrality under the EPR programs.
- 12.1.4.2. For plastic containers and plastic bags, considering that their impact on the environment is associated not only with their weight but also with their number and volume, the reduction of their weight using thinner layers (lightening) shall not, by itself, be considered as a valid measure to achieve plastic neutrality. Increase of container volume leading to a smaller numbers of packaging units shall be considered acceptable if it also results to a reduction of mass of the plastic packaging released to or placed on the market.
- 12.1.4.3. To facilitate consideration as a Plastic Waste Footprint Reduction accomplishment, Obligated Enterprises, Collective, or PRO shall submit to the NEC, a plan aimed at reducing the amount of material (measured in kilograms) used in the manufacturing of their packaging products, with special reference to packaging materials, as well as the measures and methods on the shift from the production of single-use plastic packaging to more sustainable packaging. The plan shall include the following as a minimum:



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- 12.1.4.3.1. Volume and weight (in kilograms) of the packaging material or type of the current use of materials, by type of material and product, to be compared with the material reduction plan.
- 12.1.4.3.2. An assessment of the reduction of weight and volumetric amount of waste prevented, associated with the reduction of material used in the process.
- 12.1.4.3.3. Reduction rates and technology adopted related to the elimination or improvement of unnecessary, redundant, or poorly engineered packaging.
- 12.1.4.3.4. Reduction rates and technology / process upgrade adopted associated with the shifting from the production of single use plastic packaging toward more sustainable and reusable packaging
- 12.1.4.3.5. Reduction rates and technology / process upgrade adopted for the optimisation of product design and manufacturing, to avoid process scraps and waste, by material avoided.
- 12.1.4.3.6. A material or mass balance study, that allows for GHG computation and analysis, on the main materials and processes involved in the waste reduction activities and strategies to support the evidence of their overall environmental benefit in comparison with the baseline. This is consistent with the requirements of the Clean Air Act of 1999 (RA 8749), Climate Change Act of 2009 (RA 9729), and the "Guidelines on Mainstreaming, Cascading, And Institutionalizing Climate Change Concerns in the Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) Priority Programs" (DAO No. 2021-22).
- 12.1.4.3.7. An implementation timeframe with targets by raw material avoided.

12.1.5. Information and education campaign (IEC) schemes

- 12.1.5.1. To facilitate consideration as an EPR accomplishment through the foregoing method, Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, or PROs shall submit as part of their individual EPR Program, an information and education campaign (IEC) aimed at informing customers about:
 - 12.1.5.1.1. Options related to the collection of packaging products made available through their EPR schemes: location of collection points, rewarding schemes, contact numbers, etc.
 - 12.1.5.1.2. Options related to refilling systems made available through their EPR schemes: products available through a refilling system, location of distributors of such products, requirements for reusable containers, contact numbers.
 - 12.1.5.1.3. Guides for responsible consumption to minimize the generation of plastic waste.
 - 12.1.5.1.4. Guides for the responsible management of plastic waste
 - 12.1.5.1.5. Guides related to the recycling symbols placed on the labels.
- 12.1.5.2. Such information and educational materials shall be prepared as part of the first year of the EPR implementation plan and updated yearly to reflect the progress of the EPR implementation.
- 12.1.5.3. Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, PROs may also support educational programs and campaigns aimed at disseminating the hierarchy of waste which includes Avoidance, Reduction, Reuse, Recycling, Treatment and Proper Disposal.
- 12.1.5.4. Partnerships with academic institutions, and civil society, including community and church groups on the development and dissemination of an information and education campaign or program on or for ecological solid waste management.

12.1.6. Appropriate labelling of products and packaging materials to include information thereon to facilitate recovery, reuse, recycling, and proper disposal of waste product and packaging.

- 12.1.6.1. Eco-labelling is a shared concern of both the government and all enterprises, manufacturers, and importers. Collaboration is essential to the development and adoption of the appropriate regulation or a mandatory standard for general eco-labels that are internationally acceptable to facilitate international trade and commerce.
- 12.1.6.2. The Act, under Section 27 (Eco-Labeling), provides that the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), "shall formulate and implement a coding system for packaging materials and products to facilitate waste recycling and re-use." The EPR Act of 2022 included "information for proper disposal of waste products" in the product labels or packaging.
- 12.1.6.3. Rule XII, Section 4 (Eco-labelling) of the RA 9003 IRR provides that "the Department of Trade and Industry - Bureau of Product Standards (DTI-BPS) shall formulate and implement a coding system for packaging materials and products to facilitate waste recycling and re-use. The coding system shall initially be based on ISO 14020 series standards, particularly, ISO standard 14024, "Environmental Labelling - Practitioner Programs - Guiding Principles, Practices and Certification Procedures of Multiple Criteria (type 1) Programs", with criteria to be determined on the basis of life cycle assessment of the product group." The Act and its RA 9003 IRR, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022 and its EPR IRR, include information for proper disposal of waste products in the product labels or packaging.
- 12.1.6.4. Rule XII, Section 4 (Eco-labelling) of the RA 9003 IRR, further provides that "The eco-label shall include simple, accurate, non-deceptive and scientifically based information on the key environmental aspects which are considered in the award of the label in order to enable consumers to make informed choices. Provided DTI shall make relevant information about the attributes of the products available to purchasers, and that information on the process and methodologies used in the eco-labelling process, shall be available to all interested parties." The EPR IRR requires that the eco-labels be "internationally acceptable to facilitate international trade and commerce."
- 12.1.6.5. As such, the drive towards the development and mandatory adoption of eco-labels shall continue to be led by the DTI, through its DTI-BPS, in collaboration with the Commission, and other government agencies with specific labelling requirements, such as, but not limited to, the Bureau, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Department of Agriculture (DA).
- 12.1.6.6. Industries and enterprises affected by the requirement for the development of standardized eco-labelling for all products and product packaging shall cooperate and collaborate with the DTI-BPS to ensure that the labelling standards adopted not only satisfy the requirements of all applicable laws and regulations of the Philippines but also comply with relevant international standards to facilitate international trade and commerce.
- 12.1.6.7. Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, or PROs shall submit this activity or strategy as part of their EPR Program. In their initial EPR Programs, they may already disclose, for compliance monitoring purposes, the publicly accessible online platforms where they provide summary information on:
 - 12.1.6.7.1. Compliance with national labelling regulations, such as those required by the DTI-PNS under the Consumer Protection Act of the Philippines (RA 7394), the FDA under the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (RA 3720), or the DA, through its Administrative Order No. 26-2005.
 - 12.1.6.7.2. The proper handling, storage, reuse, recycling, and proper disposal of waste products and plastic waste packaging, in compliance with applicable national laws, rules, and regulations.
 - 12.1.6.7.3. International standards relating to recycling symbols already reflected in their product labels or packaging.
- 12.1.6.8. The EPR Program shall be subsequently revised to comply with the eco-labelling regulations once these are promulgated by the DTI-PNS.



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12.2. Recovery Programs Aimed at Effectively Preventing Waste from Leaking to the Environment

12.2.1. Waste recovery schemes through redemption, buy-back, offsetting, or any method or strategy that will efficiently result in the high retrievability, high recyclability and resource recovery of waste products.

12.2.1.1. The reduction of waste, that may be achieved through the adoption of recovery schemes suitable for the quantity type and location of plastic packaging waste, shall be accounted as one of the measures to achieve product neutrality under the EPR programs.

12.2.1.2. Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, or PROs shall submit to the NEC, a plan that ensures that their plastic packaging waste (or equivalent plastic packaging waste of other brands), are collected at source or at specifically arranged collection points. The plan shall include a quantifiable, traceable, and auditable plastic packaging waste reverse-logistic network that identifies waste collectors, transporters, collection points, and storage areas as agreed upon with retailers, Local Government Units (LGUs), plastic packaging waste re-users, recyclers, diverters, and operators of MRFs or SLFs, involving, where feasible, informal waste collectors, non-government organizations (NGOs), or civil society organizations (CSOs).

12.2.1.3. The recovery schemes shall pay particular attention to the issue of rural areas or small islands which are difficult to reach, to ensure that such areas are covered.

12.2.1.4. The plan shall include a material or mass balance study, that allows for GHG computation and analysis, on the main materials and processes involved in the plastic waste recovery activity and strategies to support the evidence of their overall environmental benefit in comparison with the baseline. This is consistent with the requirements of the Clean Air Act of 1999 (RA 8749), Climate Change Act of 2009 (RA 9729), and the "Guidelines on Mainstreaming, Cascading, and Institutionalizing Climate Change Concerns in the Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) Priority Programs" (DAO No. 2021-22).

12.2.1.5. The plan shall also include an implementation timeframe with targets by product/ material recovered.

12.2.2 Diversion of recovered waste into value chains and value adding useful products through recycling and other sustainable methods

12.2.2.1. The reduction of plastic waste that may be achieved through diversion of packaging waste into value chains or value adding useful products may be accounted as one of the measures to achieve product neutrality under the EPR programs. Such diversion may be accomplished through any sustainable methods that promote circular economy, as recognized under the EPR Act of 2022, its EPR IRR, and other administrative issuances of the Department, the Bureau, or other government agencies. Consideration for plastic or product neutrality shall be based on the same material and product for which waste has been avoided through diversion when compared to the baseline volume of plastic waste from the year prior to the implementation of this diversion program. The brand of the packaging product or waste diverted is not relevant.

12.2.2.2. To benefit from this product neutrality option, Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, or PROs shall submit to the NEC, a plan that ensures that a target amount, expressed in the appropriate unit mass like kilograms, of their packaging (or equivalent packaging of other brands), are diverted into value chain in a way which maximize their re-use as material, products, or component of products, based on the following hierarchy:

12.2.2.2.1. Reuse as product or as component of product; for instance, collection and cleaning of containers for reuse.

12.2.2.2.2. Mechanical recycling; for instance, collection of wasted PET bottles to manufacture new PET bottles.

12.2.2.2.3. Mechanical recycling of material for the manufacturing of other products; for instance, collection and recycling of PET bottles to manufacture other PET items.

12.2.2.2.4. Chemical Recycling to convert plastics to monomers as feedstock to the petrochemical industry

12.2.2.2.5. Alternative Recycling for construction materials, arts and crafts, among others.

12.2.2.2.6. Co-processing, if applicable and allowed for the specific material, product, or waste; for instance, co-processing of non-recyclable or low-quality plastic waste in cement kilns to recover energy and material.

12.2.2.2.7. Waste-to-energy pursuant to standards and guidelines set forth by the Department and other relevant agencies.

12.2.2.2.8. Safe disposal in SLFs.

12.2.2.3. The yearly value diversion/ recycling plan arranged by product and materials, with targets by diversion modality, shall be submitted to facilitate a fair appreciation and determination of the accomplishments.

12.2.2.4. The movement of collected EOL products or wastes to the recycling, treatment, or disposal facilities shall be documented through a quantifiable, traceable, and auditable recording system that would reflect source to destination via recycling, treatment, or proper disposal. Once the wastes have been recycled, treated, or properly disposed, the recycler, treater, or disposal facility operator shall issue a Certificate to and in the name of the Obligated Enterprise, Collective, or PRO.

12.2.2.5. The plan shall include a material or mass balance study, that allows for GHG computation and analysis, on the main materials and processes involved in the plastic waste value diversion or recycling activity and strategies to support the evidence of their overall environmental benefit in comparison with the baseline. This is consistent with the requirements of the Clean Air Act of 1999 (RA 8749), Climate Change Act of 2009 (RA 9729), and the "Guidelines on Mainstreaming, Cascading, and Institutionalizing Climate Change Concerns in the Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) Priority Programs" (DAO No. 2021-22).

12.2.3 Transportation of recovered waste to the appropriate composting, recycling or other diversion or disposal site in the country.

Obligated Enterprises, Collectives or PROs shall submit as part of their EPR Program, the methodology through which the movement of recovered or collected plastic packaging wastes to the appropriate composting, recycling or other diversion or disposal sites shall be reliably tracked and documented in a quantifiable, traceable, and auditable manner in collaboration with their key collaborators or partners in the implementation of their EPR Program.

12.2.4 Clean-up of waste leaked to coastal areas, public roads, and other sites

12.2.4.1. The legacy of packaging waste contaminating the environment, with specific reference to shorelines and the marine environment, falls retroactively within the responsibility of the relevant obligated enterprises whose packaging products have leaked into the environment. Given, however, the complexity of the clean-up of site contaminated by certain waste typologies, and to ensure safe recovery and proper transport or delivery to the appropriate composting, recycling or other diversion or disposal site, the participation of Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, or PROs, in the environmental or coastal clean-up shall be coordinated in advance with the LGUs and with the local offices of the Bureau or the Department.

12.2.4.2. The product neutrality achieved through participation in the clean-up of these areas shall be calculated based on actual waste cleaned up that corresponds to the plastic packaging waste footprint of the Obligated Enterprise, Collective, or PRO, for recovery and transport to the appropriate recycling, treatment, or disposal facilities under Section 16.3 and Section 18 of this EPR IRR. The calculation or estimate may use the Waste Analysis and Characterization (WACS) Guidelines under NSWMC Resolution No. 1380, s. 2020, or any future amendment thereto, to determine the weight of plastic packaging waste diverted from the environment.

12.2.4.3. The Obligated Enterprises or the Collectives or PROs to which they belong may refuse to participate in clean-up activities where the illegal waste dumps were established directly or indirectly, or otherwise tolerated, by the LGUs or other government agencies in violation of the prohibition against the establishment and operation of open dumps under Section 37 of the Act.



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12.2.5 Establishment of commercial or industrial scale recycling, composting, thermal treatment, and other waste diversion or disposal facilities for waste products, when investment therein is viable.

12.2.5.1. In case the existing recycling facilities are not sufficient to ensure the EPR target required in terms of capacity, quality, or technology, for the collection and recycling of the plastic packaging waste, the Obligated Enterprises, or the Collectives or PROs, may formally elevate the issue to the NEC, under the EPR Sustainability Collaboration provisions in Section 17.2 of the EPR IRR for consideration as a possible public-private partnership (PPP) venture.

12.2.5.2. In elevating issue, Obligated Enterprises, Collectives or PROs, by themselves or together with other similarly situated Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, or PROs, shall submit to the NEC a business case or pre-feasibility study that identifies the project and investment requirements and include, at the minimum:

- 12.2.5.2.1. Waste typology and reasonably projected volumes, expressed in kilograms per month or per year.
- 12.2.5.2.2. The appropriate commercial or industrial scale facilities that utilize sustainable recycling technologies or methods that promote circular economy, as locally and internationally recognized.
- 12.2.5.2.3. Possible cash or non-cash investments and risk sharing arrangements within the context of public-private partnerships (PPP) modalities under Philippine law or Ordinances of LGUs.
- 12.2.5.2.4. Relevant assumptions to ensure project feasibility and sustainability.

- 12.2.5.2.5. Investment recovery periods, and any direct or indirect government incentives or subsidies.
- 12.2.5.2.6. Contract Management and Regulatory Framework.

12.2.6 Partnership with LGUs, communities, and informal waste sectors.

Obligated Enterprises, or the Collectives or PROs to which they belong, may establish collaboration partnerships with LGUs, communities and informal waste sector for, among others, the following purposes:

12.2.6.1. Partnership with LGUs to:

- 12.2.6.1.1. Support LGUs activities related to the collection and recycling of plastic waste, ensure a better coordination among public and private sector in the field of solid waste prevention, recycling, and collection, enhance synergies among the private and public sector.
- 12.2.6.1.2. Contribute to the LGU activities on collection and recycling of plastic waste through awareness raising campaigns and communications.
- 12.2.6.1.3. Coordinate on permitting and licensing issues related to investment in recycling and disposal facilities envisaged under the EPR schemes.
- 12.2.6.1.4. Ensure that the collection and recycling / treatment covers areas which are difficult to be accessed, like rural areas or small islands.

12.2.6.2. Partnership with communities: to support, as part of their EPR and CSR schemes, the needs of communities on social and environmental issues, with focus on but not limited to collection and recycling services. This may include development of infrastructures, training, awareness raising initiatives, cultural events, environmental awards for students and workers, etc.

12.2.6.3. Partnership with the informal waste recovery sector: informal collector shall be involved in collection initiatives especially in case the EPR program may impact on their activities. This partnership shall ensure a formal coverage of the activities of informal collectors which may be an important resource to ensure the collection of EOL at source and shall promote the creation of formal business which may participate in the implementation of EPR schemes.

Partnership with informal collector will be implemented in such a way to ensure that as a minimum, the national rules related to occupational health, right of employees and environmental protection are complied with at any stage.

Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, or PROs establishing partnerships with the informal collector shall ensure that such standards and rules are complied with and may introduce higher standards or safeguard systems in case these are more protective than the national rules. Such standard or safeguard systems may for instance concern: Social inclusion; Gender equality, Grievance mechanisms, Child labor, Occupational Health, Fair wage policies.

12.3. Incorporation of Activities and Strategies in the EPR Program. The adoption, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the specific activities and strategies and their respective requirements as stated in the foregoing Sections 12.1 and 12.2 in accordance with Section 44-A of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022 may already be reflected in the EPR Program submitted for initial registration or subsequently submitted by the Obligated Enterprise, Collective, or PRO as a supplement or amendment thereto in accordance with the process provided in Section 16.4 of this EPR IRR.

12.4 Crediting Plastic Waste Footprint Reduction Accomplishments: The NEC, in close coordination with the Bureau, the Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, and PROs, shall formulate and recommend to the Department the adoption of a system for crediting of Plastic Waste Footprint Reduction Accomplishments that ensures a fair determination and recognition of the initiatives, activities and strategies in the foregoing Section 12.1, in due consideration with the Country's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) and avoids double counting of accomplishments.

SECTION 13. Plastic Packaging Covered by EPR. For purposes of this Rule, and in relation to Section 44-C of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, plastic packaging shall refer to products utilized to carry, protect, or pack goods for transportation, distribution, and sale.

Plastic packaging shall include the following:

- (1) Sachets, labels, laminates, and other flexible plastic packaging products, whether single layer or multi-layered with plastics or other materials;
- (2) Rigid plastic packaging products, whether layered with any other materials, which include containers for beverages, food, home, personal care and cosmetic products, including their coverings, caps, or lids and other necessities or promotional items, such as cutlery, plates, drinking straws, or sticks, tarps, signage, or labels;
- (3) Plastic bags, which include single-use plastic bags, for carrying or transporting of goods, and provided or utilized at the point of sale; and
- (4) Polystyrene.



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SECTION 14. Obligated Enterprises. Pursuant to Article 2, Sections 3 (p-4) and (w-2), and Section 44-B of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, the following enterprises that generate plastic packaging waste are the product producers obliged to implement EPR Programs:

14.1 Large Enterprise:

- 14.1.1 Brand Owner who sells or supplies any commodity under a brand, label or identity using a product it produced, or a material supplied to it by another manufacturer, or supplier; and
- 14.1.2 Product Manufacturer or Importer that supplies its commodities for the use of the general consumer, or distributes the same as a material product of a brand owner: *Provided*, That for purposes of Article 2 of Chapter III-A of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, in case the commodities are manufactured, assembled, or processed by a product manufacturer for another Obligated Enterprise which affixes its own brand name, the latter shall be deemed as the manufacturer;

14.2 MSMEs when the total value of assets of all enterprises carrying the same brand, label or trademark exceeds that of medium enterprises as prescribed by Republic Act No. 9501.

While MSMEs are not covered by the EPR Act of 2022, they are however encouraged to practice EPR voluntarily or be a part of the network of Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, or PROs practicing EPR.

14.3 Such other persons and entities as may be determined by the Secretary.

SECTION 15. EPR Mandates. Pursuant to Section 44-D of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, Obligated Enterprises shall, within a period of six (6) months following the effectivity of the EPR Act of 2022, establish or phase-in EPR programs for plastic packaging to achieve efficient management of plastic packaging waste, reduced production, importation, supply, or use of plastic packaging deemed low in reusability, recyclability or retrievability, and plastic neutrality through efficient recovery and diversion schemes.

15.1. The EPR programs may include the activities and strategies stated under Sections 12.1 and 12.2 hereof, and Section 44-A of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, provided that their EPR mechanisms and strategies that shall be submitted to the Commission, through the NEC.

15.2. Obligated Enterprises shall institute an EPR program, either individually or collectively, whether as, with, or without, a PRO. The herein defined Collective or PRO shall serve as the viable platform of the members thereof for the formulation, submission, registration, implementation, and audit of their EPR Program.

15.3. The Obligated Enterprises or the Collectives or PROs to which they belong shall:

15.3.1. Maintain updated statistics of the amount of products that they or their respective members released to the market and the amount of plastic packaging waste recovered from the environment, by type of product and year.

15.3.2. Develop various data management tools to ensure the veracity of the data and information generated or reported during the implementation of their respective EPR Programs, thereby enabling a proper and credible audit thereof and certified reporting thereon for the compliance period by an independent third-party auditor in accordance with Section 44-G of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022.

15.3.3. Establish cooperation mechanisms with other Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, and PROs dealing with the same category of plastic products and wastes, or even different categories of products to achieve the shared objective of plastic neutrality.

SECTION 16. Registration of EPR Programs.

16.1. Application Process

16.1.1. An Obligated Enterprise, Collective, or PRO shall submit to the NEC its application for registration of its EPR Program, in triplicate copies (2 originals and 1 legible photocopy), and a compressed

archive digital file/s (ZIP or RAR) containing the non-editable PDF files of the required documents as specified in Sections 16.2 and 16.3 hereof.

16.1.2. Within three (3) business days from receipt of the application, the NEC shall complete its examination of the application to determine its completeness in accordance with Section 16.2 and Section 16.3 hereof. If complete, the NEC shall email the duly designated officer of the applicant with the Order of Payment of the EPR Registration Fees and Annual Compliance Monitoring Fees in accordance with the Schedule of EPR Fees to be issued by the Bureau. The collected registration fees and annual compliance monitoring fees shall accrue to an EPR Special Fund to be created herein.

If the application is incomplete, the NEC shall email the duly designated officer of the applicant on the missing information or documents. The NEC shall have a new three (3) business day period within which to recheck the completeness of the resubmission.

16.1.3. Upon manual or electronic submission of the proof of payment of the aforementioned Fees, and within a period of twenty (20) business days from receipt thereof, the NEC shall commence and complete its evaluation of the application to determine and ensure the conformity and consistency of the EPR Program, its mechanisms, and strategies, with the requirements of the Chapter III-A of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022. If, notwithstanding the payment of the required fees, the NEC does not act upon the EPR Program within the herein prescribed period, said EPR Program shall be considered as "registered" and the duly designated officer of the registrant may pick up its duly marked and numbered EPR Program upon the lapse of said period.

16.1.4. The NEC shall affix its security markings and assign the EPR Registry Number on the EPR Program determined to be compliant and submit a copy thereof to the Commission through the Commission Secretariat. The NEC shall also email the duly designated officer of the registrant of said actions and with instructions to pick up its duly marked and numbered EPR Program.

16.1.5. In case the NEC determines that the EPR Program contains provisions that are non-compliant or are inconsistent with the requirements of the Chapter III-A of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, it shall email the duly designated officer of the applicant with information on the provisions thereof that were determined to be non-compliant or inconsistent.

Upon resubmission of the EPR Program, as amended to be compliant and consistent with the requirements of the Chapter III-A of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, the NEC shall have a new twenty (20) business day period from receipt thereof within which to complete its evaluation thereon.

16.1.6. The distribution of the duly marked and registered copies of the EPR Program shall be as follows:

Registrant, 1-original copy and 1 copy duly certified by the NEC

NEC and the Commission, 1 original copy and the digital file for the database

Bureau Regional Office, 1 copy duly certified copy by the NEC, for compliance monitoring and evaluation purposes.

16.1.7. The Bureau Director may issue a Memorandum Circular to implement the necessary adjustments to (1) the foregoing process flow once the EPR registration procedure is migrated to and integrated with Bureau's OPMS; or (2) shorten the processing periods in accordance with Republic Act No. 11032 or the Ease of Doing Business Law.



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16.2. Documentary Requirements for Applications for Registration, pursuant to Section 44-E of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022:

16.2.1 Letter of Intent stipulating whether the applicant is applying for EPR Registration as an Obligated Enterprise or as a Collective or aggregation of Obligated Enterprises, with or without a PRO. The Letter shall be signed by the duly designated officer responsible for the EPR Program and for EPR Act of 2022 Compliances and shall provide the contact details (office address, telephone and mobile number, and email address) of said officer. The duly designated officer shall ensure that the NEC is updated as to any changes in his/her contact details.

16.2.2 The Letter shall be supported by the following documents, submitted in triplicate:

16.2.2.1. Original copies of the Special Power of Attorney, Partner's Certificate or Resolution, or Corporate Secretary's Certificate on the designation of the officer responsible for the EPR Program and for EPR Act of 2022 Compliances and the authorization to submit the application for EPR registration of the EPR Program.

16.2.2.2. Legible copy of Certificate of Registration with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) for single proprietorships, Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) for corporations and partnerships, or Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) for cooperatives of the Obligated Enterprise, the lead enterprise of a Collective, or of the PRO.

16.2.2.3. Legible copy of Certificate of Registration with the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR Form No. 2303) of the Obligated Enterprise, the lead enterprise of a Collective, or of the PRO.

16.2.2.4. Copy of valid Mayor's or Business Permit covering the principal place of business of the Obligated Enterprise, the lead enterprise of a Collective, or of the PRO.

16.2.2.5. Additional documentary requirements for Collectives and PROs:

- 16.2.2.5.1. Organizational structure and leadership
- 16.2.2.5.2. Membership requirements
- 16.2.2.5.3. Roster of Member Obligated Enterprises
- 16.2.2.5.4. Roster of MSMEs voluntarily participating in the EPR Program

16.2.2.6. Sworn Statement executed by duly designated officer responsible for the EPR Program and for compliance with EPR Act of 2022 attesting to the veracity of all documents submitted together with the application and undertaking to report in writing to the NEC, any changes on:

16.2.2.6.1. The identity and/or contact details (office address, telephone and mobile number, and email address) of the duly designated officer responsible for the EPR Program and for compliances with EPR Act of 2022.

16.2.2.6.2. Mode of Compliance with the EPR Act of 2022, for example, from an individual Obligated Enterprise to Collective or through PRO, or withdrawal or separation from a Collective or a PRO to pursue compliance with EPR Act of 2022 as an individual Obligated Enterprise.

16.2.2.6.3. The roster of members, in the case of Collectives or PROs, and the consequent adjustments to the weight of plastic packaging footprint and to the committed plastic waste diversion targets.

16.2.2.6.4. Such other relevant information to enable the Bureau and the NEC to monitor and evaluate compliance with their respective EPR Programs in accordance with Section 44-E of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022.

16.2.2.7. The EPR Program, as described in the immediately succeeding section, of the Obligated Enterprise, the Collective, or the PRO.

16.3. Components of an EPR Program. Pursuant Sections 44-E, 44-F, and 44-H of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, the EPR Program to be submitted by an Obligated Enterprise, a Collective, or a PRO shall include the following information:

16.3.1 Specific type of packaging materials, as defined by Section 44-C of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, and Section 13 of this EPR IRR, and the product brands for which they are used. In complying with this requirement, the disclosure of the total weight or volume of per type of packaging material per product brand is not required.

16.3.2 Verifiable weight, expressed in kilograms, of the plastic packaging per type, material form, or general form, brought into the market within a specified period. This parameter shall also be known as the "plastic packaging footprint".

16.3.2.1. In the determination of the verifiable plastic packaging footprint, compliance with this requirement shall include those necessities or promotional items used to promote the product brand/s even if these are outsourced by the product producer to third-party suppliers or service providers such as distributors, retailers, franchisees, or advertising/ marketing agencies.

16.3.2.2. To prevent the inadvertent disclosure of confidential information, compliance with this requirement shall be based on the total weight of plastic packaging per type, Rigids or Flexibles, as defined under Section 44-C of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, regardless of brand.

For Collectives and PROs, the compliance disclosure shall be based on the consolidated or aggregated weight of plastic packaging footprint of the same type, material form, or general form, regardless of brand, of all of their members.

16.3.2.3. "Specified period" generally refers to a 12-calendar month period.

16.3.2.4. During the first compliance year, also known as the EPR phase-in period (2023-2024), the required disclosure shall be based on the self-declaration of the applicant Obligated Enterprise, Collective, or PRO. This shall be verified during the required compliance audit under Section 44-G of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022 and Section 19 of this EPR IRR, the results of which shall serve as the verified and audited basis for the adjustments thereof.

16.3.3 Target weight of plastic packaging footprint to be recovered and diverted for reuse, recycling, treatment, or proper disposal to prevent them from leaking into the environment. This shall be expressed in kilograms and as a percentage of the plastic packaging footprint for the compliance year. This parameter shall also be known as the "plastic waste diversion target".

16.3.3.1. The compliance disclosure herein required on plastic packaging waste recovery for reuse, recycling, offsetting, or proper disposal shall be based on the same type, material form, or general form that an Obligated Enterprise produces, regardless of brand.

For Collectives and PROs, the compliance disclosure herein required on plastic packaging waste recovery for reuse, recycling, offsetting, or proper disposal shall be based on the consolidated or aggregated weight of plastic packaging of the same type, material forms, or general forms, that their respective members produce.

16.3.3.2. In no case shall the committed plastic waste diversion target be lower than that prescribed for the applicable compliance period under Section 44-F, of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022.

To avoid any doubt, the minimum plastic waste diversion target of an Obligated Enterprise, Collective, or PRO that registers their EPR Program in 2024 is not 20% but 40% of the plastic packaging footprint. The minimum plastic packaging waste diversion target for those that register their EPR Program in 2025 shall be 50%, not 20%, of their plastic packaging footprint.



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16.3.3.3. Pursuant to Section 44-F of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, the recovery or offsetting of plastic packaging waste, to be considered or credited as a proper step towards waste diversion accomplishment, shall be based on the type of plastic packaging footprint, regardless of brand. As such, if the plastic packaging footprint is "Rigid", it shall only be credited if recovered or offset against "Rigid plastic packaging waste", regardless of brand. "Flexibles" cannot be used to offset "Rigids" and vice versa.

16.3.3.4. As recovery is not the final step in waste diversion, the EPR Program shall define and describe the post-recovery disposition, whether for reuse, recycling, feedstock for coprocessing, waste-to-fuel, waste-to-energy or other technological applications allowed by law, rule, or regulation, or for final proper disposal at a Sanitary Landfill Facility (SLF) as defined in the Act.

16.3.3.5. The EPR Program shall clearly identify who in its process flow shall issue the plastic waste diversion certificate in the name of the Obligated Enterprise, the Collective, or the PRO. As a measure to ensure the integrity and veracity of the contents thereof, the plastic waste diversion certificate shall be notarized in accordance with the prevailing rules on notarization issued by the Supreme Court of the Philippines.

16.3.3.6. It is the aggregated total weight of these Sworn Plastic Waste Diversion Certificates, secured during the applicable compliance period, that shall serve as among the principal bases to determine compliance with the applicable minimum plastic packaging waste diversion targets set under Section 44-F of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, and shall be the subject of verification, validation, compliance audit, and certification by the independent third-party auditor to be engaged by the Obligated Enterprise, Collective, or the PRO in accordance with Section 44-G of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022.

16.3.3.7. The Obligated Enterprise, the Collective, or the PRO shall ensure the accuracy, reliability, and integrity, of all information and reports from its network of plastic waste collectors, diverters, re-users, recyclers, converters to feedstock of legally allowed technological applications, or operators of SLFs as defined in the Act.

16.3.4 Other EPR Programs for plastic packaging waste avoidance, reduction, or redesign of plastic packaging to improve its reusability or recyclability.

16.3.4.1. Section 44-A and Section 44-D of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, encourage Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, and PROs to include and implement, as part of their EPR Program, the activities and strategies enumerated therein and detailed in Sections 12.1 and 12.2 of this EPR IRR, that are aimed at the avoidance and reduction of non-environment friendly products and the effective prevention of waste from leaking to the environment.

16.3.4.2. To this end, the EPR program, as originally submitted and registered, or as may be subsequently amended in accordance with the procedure prescribed in Section 16.4 of this EPR IRR, shall describe how these activities and strategies shall result in the avoidance or reduction of non-environment friendly or preferable products or the prevention of waste from leaking to the environment. It shall be supported by quantifiable, traceable, and auditable data and information that shall be included and subjected to the ECAR under Section 44-G of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022 and Section 19 of this EPR IRR.

16.3.4.3. To enable a fair determination of the (a) volume or weight of product waste avoided or reduced or prevented from leaking into the environment, and (b) accomplishment credits to be accorded, this portion of the EPR program shall be submitted by the Obligated Enterprise, Collective, or PRO to the NEC. It shall include the proposed measures or metrics to achieve the fair determination stated in the immediately preceding paragraph.

The NEC shall evaluate the proposal and, in consultation with the Commission, recommend to the Department the accomplishment credits to be accorded to the proposed activity or strategy for approval and issuance of the appropriate administrative order or circular.

16.3.5 Labeling of packaging materials to facilitate recovery, reuse, recycling, or proper disposal of packaging materials.

16.3.5.1. As stated in Section 12.1.6 of this EPR IRR, compliance with this requirement involves the declaration of measures to ensure that the labelling of products placed on the market in the country complies with the prevailing national rules and regulations related to the labelling of their packaging.

16.3.5.2. Compliance includes posting on publicly accessible websites of the Obligated Enterprise, the Collective, or the PRO, of the summary information related to the recycling or disposal modality of products, information related to the recycling modality of the packaging, and compliance with international standards relating to recycling symbols to facilitate international trade and commerce.

16.3.5.3. As recognized in Section 12.1.6, compliance with future government labeling regulations referred to therein shall be submitted by way of amendments or supplements to the registered EPR Program.

16.3.6 Status of Implementation:

16.3.6.1. The EPR Program shall describe and detail the various components of its EPR implementation program and process flow. These include:

16.3.6.1.1. Implementation parameters and strategies of the EPR program

16.3.6.1.2. Identification, role, or function of each key partner or collaborator, who may come from the local government or private sector, including social enterprise, community, church, civil society, industry groups, their supply and distribution chains, at every stage of the implementation of the EPR Program, particularly on plastic packaging waste footprint collection and recovery, aggregation, and diversion for reuse, recycling, offsetting, treatment, conversion, or proper final disposal. Of particular importance is the identification of the partner or collaborator that will issue the in the name of the Obligated Enterprise, Collective, or PRO the Sworn Plastic Waste Diversion Certificate.

These partners or collaborators shall also serve as key data points for the monitoring and evaluation of the EPR Program implementation.

16.3.6.1.3. The systems for data collection and database maintenance

16.3.6.1.4. The system for reporting, verification, and accounting of waste footprint generation, recovery, and diversion for reuse, recycling, treatment, conversion, or proper disposal.

16.3.6.1.5. Financing mechanisms or expenses;

16.3.6.1.6. Environmental, social inclusivity, gender equality, anti-exploitation, and other relevant safeguards

16.3.6.2. Geographic Implementation Program or Roll-out Plan:

To achieve the objective of the EPR Act of 2022 on the prevention of marine litter, it is necessary that the EPR Programs include the geographic implementation program or roll-out plan to ensure that the benefits of the various EPR Programs go beyond the boundaries of urban centers and cities.



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As an illustration or example, this program or plan may be presented by an Obligated Enterprise, Collective, or PRO, in the following manner:

Without limiting, restricting, or preventing the participation in our EPR Program of other LGUs, the following is the target geographic implementation or roll-out of our EPR Program:

Compliance Year	General Areas
2023	Metro Manila, Metro Cebu, and Metro Davao
2024	Other Metropolitan Areas: (Metro Angeles, Metro Bacolod, Metro Baguio, Metro Batangas, Metro Cagayan de Oro, Metro Dagupan, Metro Iloilo-Guimaras, Metro Naga, and Metro Olongapo)
2025	Other Highly Urbanized, Independent Component Cities, and 1 st Class Component Cities
2026	2 nd to 6 th Class Component Cities
2027	1 st to 3 rd Class Municipalities
2028	4 th to 6 th Class Municipalities

Compliance with this requirement may serve as inputs for the formulation and implementation of programs, projects, and strategies, aimed at fostering a better investment climate for public and/or private investments in plastic waste recovery and recycling endeavors.

16.3.6.3. The EPR Program may also include other relevant information that the Obligated Enterprise, Collective, or PROs may voluntarily disclose, such as, other initiatives, approaches, or projects towards plastic neutrality, or the disclosure of the other types and volume of packaging materials like paper, cartons, glass, metal, wood, that are currently in use but not covered by the EPR Act of 2022.

16.3.7 Status of Compliance

Compliance requires a disclosure of the advance work that has been done by the Obligated Enterprise, Collective, or PRO to prepare for the implementation of its EPR Program. This may also include EPR-related activities accomplished prior to the enactment of the EPR Act of 2022

16.4. Amendments to the Registered EPR Program

16.4.1 If the Obligated Enterprise, Collective, or PRO wishes to introduce amendments to its NEC-Registered EPR Program, it shall submit, in triplicate copies, a written request for said purpose to the NEC, clearly indicating its EPR Program Registry Number and shall present the amendments/supplements in a 3-column matrix format, where:

Column 1 shall state the original provision sought to be amended or supplemented. If the amendment involves the introduction of a new provision, the entry shall be "New".
Column 2 shall state the text of the amended or supplemented provision or the new provision, as the case may be.
Column 3 shall state the reason for the amendment, supplement, or new provision.

16.4.2 The NEC shall complete its evaluation of the request within seven (7) business days from receipt thereof. The focus of the evaluation is to ensure that the amendatory, supplementary, or new provisions are compliant with the requirements of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022. Depending on the complexity of the new, amendatory, or supplemental provisions, the NEC may extend its evaluation period to not more than twenty (20) business days from the lapse of the original seven (7) business day period.

If compliant, the NEC shall affix its security marking, assign the serialized registry number that associates it with the Original EPR Program Registry Number, and provide a copy of its evaluation to the Commission. The NEC shall release the security marked and numbered copy of the request and matrix upon payment of the fees therefor. If determined to be non-compliant, the NEC shall return the request with written information as to the reason/s behind its findings.

16.5 Changes in the Mode of Compliance with the EPR Act of 2022. This Rule shall govern a situation where an Obligated Enterprise wishes to change its mode of compliance with the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022.

16.5.1 If an Obligated Enterprise with a duly registered individual EPR Program wishes to abandon its mode of compliance to join a Collective or a PRO, it shall submit, in triplicate copies, a written request to the NEC, submitting its proof of acceptance of membership in the Collective or the PRO and requesting for the deactivation of its EPR Program Registry Number.

16.5.2 If an Obligated Enterprise that is a member of a Collective or a PRO with a Registered EPR Program, withdraws its membership therefrom, it shall submit, in triplicate copies, a written request to the NEC, together with:

16.5.2.1 Written Clearance from the Collective or PRO indicating its conformity to the withdrawal of membership and stating therein the withdrawing member's plastic packaging

footprint per type of plastic packaging waste and status of the compliance with the targets set under Section 44-F of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, for the compliance year. The Collective or the PRO shall not unreasonably withhold or delay the issuance of the herein required clearance.

16.5.2.2 Compliance with Sections 16.2 and Section 16.3 of this EPR IRR as an Obligated Enterprise complying individually.

The NEC shall evaluate and process the request and application in accordance with Section 16.1 of this EPR IRR.

SECTION 17. EPR Compliance Monitoring and Sustainability Collaboration.

17.1. EPR Act of 2022 Compliance Monitoring.

The NEC, in coordination with the Bureau, shall monitor and evaluate the compliance of Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, or PROs with their respective EPR programs. The NEC shall submit regular reports to the Commission.

For this purpose, the Bureau, shall formulate and issue the Procedural Manual on the compliance monitoring and evaluation of EPR Programs and on the required submission of annual compliance reports by Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, or PROs in accordance with the last paragraph of Section 44-E and with Section 44-G of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022.

17.2 EPR Sustainability Collaboration:

Pursuant to the 2nd paragraph of Section 44-H of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, the NEC, in consultation with the Commission, the Bureau, the Obligated Enterprises, the Collectives, or the PROs, shall establish a system or parameters necessary to make the EPR Act of 2022 compliances effective, efficient, and sustainable.

These shall include standards, rules, or guidelines for the parameters stated Section 44-H of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, and incorporated as components of the EPR Program under Section 16.3 of this EPR IRR. The collaboration shall also identify challenges to overcome and the best practices to improve the overall implementation of the EPR Act of 2022.

SECTION 18. Compliance Period for Plastic Packaging Recovery Programs.

With the objective of establishing and phasing-in recovery programs that will achieve plastic neutrality, Section 44-F of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022 set the following targets for the recovery of plastic product footprint generated during the immediately preceding year:

December 31, 2023	Twenty Percent (20%)
December 31, 2024	Forty Percent (40%)
December 31, 2025	Fifty Percent (50%)
December 31, 2026	Sixty Percent (60%)
December 31, 2027	Seventy Percent (70%)
December 31, 2028 and every year thereafter	Eighty Percent (80%)

The manner for determining compliance with the targets set for recovery or offset, and diversion targets are already stated in Section 16.3(c), hereof. The Bureau shall evaluate the compliance with the applicable targets prescribed under Section 44-F and with the compliance audit requirements under Section 44-G of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022.



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SECTION 19. Audits. These Rules are issued pursuant to Section 44-G of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022.

19.1 Purpose and Scope of Audit.

19.1.1. Obligated enterprises, Collectives, or PROs shall engage an independent third-party auditor to conduct a compliance audit and certify the veracity of the reported plastic product footprint generation, recovery, and overall EPR program compliance using uniform standards established by the Department.

19.1.2. The scope coverage of the EPR Act of 2022 Compliance Audit Report or "ECAR" shall include:

19.1.2.1. Footprint Declaration of Obligated Enterprises or their PROs for the volume in terms of weight in kilograms of the Flexible and Rigid plastic packaging brought into the market for the preceding year. "Flexibles" includes those plastic packaging materials defined under subparagraphs (a), (c), and (d), while "Rigids" are defined by subparagraphs (b) and (d) of Section 44-C of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022.

19.1.2.2. Recovery or plastic packaging waste diversion by waste diverters based on third-party audited diversion or credits for the recovery, transport, recycling, or treatment or final SLF disposal during the immediately preceding year.

19.1.2.3. Determination of the equivalent plastic packaging waste footprint reduction resulting from other EPR programs such as, the redesign of plastic packaging to improve reusability, recovery, or recyclability, or the use of refilling systems to replace plastic packaging that would otherwise have been introduced to the market, pursued under Section 44-A, subparagraph (a), of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022.

19.1.2.4. Confirmation of records, reports, or information, or particular portions thereof, that the Obligated Enterprise, Collective, or PRO considers and declares to be "CONFIDENTIAL". Confidential information, as herein defined, refers to such information the public disclosure of which would reveal trade secrets, production or sales figures, or methods and processes unique to the enterprise, or other similar information that tend to adversely affect its competitive position.

19.1.3. To develop the uniform standards for EPR Act of 2022 auditing and reporting, the NEC, in close coordination with the Bureau, shall collaborate with, among others, with the Auditing and Assurance Council (AASC) of the Philippines to (a) develop and promulgate a standardized compliance auditing manual for the EPR Act of 2022 and (b) develop and implement the system for the accreditation of EPR Act of 2022 independent third-party auditors shall also be developed and implemented.

19.1.4. The NEC and the Bureau shall endeavor to have the aforementioned compliance auditing manual and the accreditation system approved, adopted and issued by the Department on or before the September 30, 2023. Information and Education campaigns shall be implemented immediately after adoption to ensure that all key stakeholders are ready for compliance audit by January 2024.

19.2 Management of Confidential Information.

Pursuant to the 2nd paragraph of Section 44-G of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, and as stated in the foregoing Section 19.1.2.4, the Department, through the Bureau, shall evaluate the confidentiality requested by an Obligated Enterprise, Collective, or PRO, as confirmed by the independent third-party auditor. Once the Bureau approves the requested confidentiality, any unauthorized disclosure of said confidential information shall be dealt with in accordance with the appropriate administrative or criminal laws, rules, and regulations.

As such, the Bureau and the NEC shall also exercise prudence and caution in the management of information, particularly those to which public access is granted, to avoid or prevent any violation of the approved confidentiality.

19.3 Interim measures for the Compliance Audit

19.3.1. Pending the formal adoption of the uniform standards for compliance auditing and reporting required by the EPR Act of 2022, the Obligated Enterprises or PROs shall establish and implement an accounting, data recording, and auditing system for their respective EPR Programs, guided by the general scope stated in the foregoing Section 19.1.2, to monitor and assess their compliance performance with EPR Act of 2022 and their respective EPR programs. These systems may also serve as working models for consideration during the preparation of the uniform compliance audit standards. These systems may also be subsequently adjusted to comply with the adopted uniform standards.

19.3.2. The independent third-party auditor to be engaged by the Obligated Enterprise or the PRO for its EPR Act of 2022 and Program compliance audit shall not be an officer or employee of the Obligated Enterprise, nor any of the members of a Collective, nor of the PRO, nor any of its affiliates.

19.3.3. Pending the issuance of the Rules on the Accreditation of Third-Party Auditors for EPR Act of 2022 compliance audits, and given the importance that the EPR Act of 2022 accords to the ECAR, minimum qualifications of the independent third-party auditor that shall, in the meantime, conduct the compliance audit and certify the veracity and accuracy of the ECAR is that the auditor shall be a Certified Public Accountant, who shall indicate together with its signature the following information:

- 19.3.3.1. Certified Public Accountant (CPA) Certificate Number
19.3.3.2. Board of Accountancy/Professional Regulation Commission (BOA/PRC) Registration Number with date of issue and of expiration
19.3.3.3. Professional Tax Receipt No. with date and place of issue
19.3.3.4. Tax Identification Number

19.3.4. For the year 2023, and as stated in the foregoing Section 16.3.2, the ECAR shall also validate the accuracy of the self-declared volume of plastic packaging waste to be brought into the market, also known as the plastic waste footprint, and shall include the ECAR any adjustments thereto. The objective is to render the 2024, and subsequent years, plastic waste footprint volume or weight, as based on audited and verifiable basis.

19.4 Schedule for the submission of the ECAR and actions thereon.

19.4.1. The deadline schedule for the submission to the Bureau by the Obligated Enterprise, Collective, or PRO of the ECAR covering the plastic product footprint generated, recovered, and properly diverted, for the immediately preceding year shall be on June 30 or the first working day immediately thereafter of the current year. To illustrate -

Table with 3 columns: Beginning Period, Ending Period, ECAR Due date. Rows for 2023, 2024, and 2025.

19.4.2. The Bureau may invite the duly designated officer of the Obligated Enterprise, Collective, or PRO and its independent third-party auditor to discuss, clarify, verify, or validate the submitted ECAR.

19.4.3. If the Bureau deems it necessary, it may, at its own expense, commission the conduct of a verification compliance audit to be conducted by a similarly qualified independent third-party auditor.

19.4.4. Any person may also initiate proceedings under Section 49(g) of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, before the Department's Pollution Adjudication Board. Upon prima facie evidence of falsification of documents, misdeclaration of generated or recovered footprint, employment of any scheme to maliciously evade the responsibility of an enterprise under the EPR Act of 2022 or tamper its compliance with the provisions of Section 44-F of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, the PAB shall hear and adjudicate the case. Other legal or administrative remedies may be pursued by the Department in accordance with applicable laws or regulations.

19.4.5. The ECAR on plastic product footprint generated and recovered by the Obligated Enterprises shall be made available to the public through the websites of the Department, the Bureau, the Commission, and the NEC, subject to the rules on confidentiality rules under Section 19.2 hereof. Only consolidated aggregated data or total footprint of all Obligated Enterprises and the percentage accomplished/offset shall be made available to the public.

PART VI: INCENTIVES AND COST RECOVERY UNDER THE EPR ACT OF 2022

SECTION 20. Incentives. Pursuant to Section 7 of the EPR Act of 2022, the following are the incentives and cost recovery mechanisms:

20.1. Rewards and recognitions, monetary or otherwise, shall be provided to individuals, private organizations and entities, Obligated Enterprises, Collectives, and PROs, including non-government or civil society organizations, that have undertaken outstanding and innovative projects, technologies, processes and techniques or activities in reuse, recycling, and reduction, including those that are engaged in the development and use of environmentally acceptable or preferable alternatives to plastics. The Program for Rewards under this Rule shall be included in the budget proposals of the Bureau and the Department.

20.2. The following incentive schemes provided under Section 7 of the EPR Act of 2022 shall be available, subject to existing rules and regulation issued by the responsible government agencies, to encourage LGUs, enterprises, or private entities, including Obligated Enterprises, PROs, and NGOs, to develop or undertake an effective solid waste management, including recovery and diversion of plastic product footprint, or actively participate in any program geared towards the promotion thereof as provided for in the EPR Act of 2022.



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20.2.1. Fiscal Incentives –

- 20.2.1.1. Tax incentives - Any provision of law to the contrary notwithstanding, Obligated Enterprises or PROs acting on their behalf, and other registered business enterprises may apply for incentives following the approval process provided under Title XIII (Tax Incentives) of the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997, as amended, for eligible activities: *Provided*, That such activities shall undergo the standard processes in the identification of qualified activities under the Strategic Investment Priority Plan (SIPP).
- 20.2.1.2. The EPR expenses of Obligated Enterprises, PROs, and private enterprises shall be considered as necessary expenses deductible from gross income subject to the substantiation requirements for necessary business expenses deductible from gross annual income in accordance with Section 34(A)(I) of the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997, as amended.
- 20.2.1.3. Tax and Duty Exemption of Donations, Legacies and Gift. All legacies, gifts and donations to LGUs, enterprises or private entities, including NGOs, for the support and maintenance of the program for socially acceptable, effective and efficient solid waste management shall be exempt from all internal revenue taxes and customs duties, and shall be deductible in full from the gross income of the donor for income tax purposes. The standard procedures for such exemptions are contained in the Tariff and Customs Code, Section 105-106.

PART VII: PROHIBITED ACTS, PENALTIES AND SUITS

SECTION 21. Specific Offenses and Penalties under the EPR Act of 2022.

21.1. Section 8 of the EPR Act of 2022 amends Section 49 of the Act to add a new Section 49(g), that punishes the following acts and prescribes the corresponding fines therefor:

x x x

(g) Any Obligated Enterprise that fails to register under Section 44-E or fails to comply with Section 44-F of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022,

First Offense	not less than Five million pesos (P5,000,000.00) but not exceeding Ten million pesos (P10,000,000.00)
Second Offense	not less than Ten million pesos (P10,000,000.00) but not exceeding Fifteen million pesos (P15,000,000.00)
Third Offense	not less than Fifteen million pesos (P15,000,000.00) but not exceeding Twenty million pesos (P20,000,000.00) for the third offense and automatic suspension of business permit until the requirement of the EPR Act of 2022, is complied with

x x x

In case of failure to meet the targets set under Section 44-F of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, the Obligated Enterprise shall pay the same fines set above, or a fine twice the cost of recovery and diversion of the footprint or its shortfall, whichever is higher. The Bureau, in collaboration with the NEC, shall develop, issue, publish, and regularly update its methodology for the determination of the cost of recovery and diversion of the plastic waste footprint or its shortfall.

The penalty shall be imposed whether the noncompliance is the result of failure to register under Section 44-E of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, falsification of documents, misdeclaration of generated or recovered footprint, employment of any scheme to maliciously evade the responsibility of an enterprise under the EPR Act of 2022, or tamper its compliance with the provisions of Section 44-F of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022.

21.2. Jurisdiction over violations of Section 49(g) of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022.

The Pollution Adjudication Board (PAB) of the Department shall hear and adjudicate cases of violations or offenses under Section 49(g) of the Act, as amended by Section 8 of the EPR Act of 2022 and impose appropriate fines therefor.

For this purpose, the PAB shall, within one (1) year upon the effectivity of the EPR IRR, formulate and promulgate (a) its rules and procedures for the adjudication of cases for acts punishable under the aforementioned Section 49(g) and (b) its Fine Rating System to define and prescribe the graduation of imposable fines under the same Section 49(g).

Where a Collective or a PROs with a registered EPR Program fails to meet the compliance targets set for the compliance year under Section 44-F of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, it shall cooperate with the PAB in the identification of its non-performing member-Obligated Enterprise/s that may be held liable under the provisions of Section 49(g) of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022. If the Collective or PRO refuses or fails to disclose the non-performing member-Obligated Enterprise/s, all the members thereof shall be liable for the shortfall and accorded the appropriate penalties.

21.3. Disposition of Fines Collected under Section 49(g) of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022.

The Fines imposed and collected by the PAB for violations under Section 49(g) of the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, shall be deposited into the EPR Special Fund to be created pursuant to Section 16.1.2. of this EPR IRR.

PART VII: APPROPRIATIONS, BUDGET, REQUIREMENTS, AND ORGANIZATIONAL ADJUSTMENTS FOR THE EPR ACT OF 2022

SECTION 22. Annual Budget. Pursuant to Section 10 of the EPR Act of 2022, and subject to the applicable rules, regulations, and guidelines of the Department of Budget and Management, the Department shall, in collaboration with the Commission, the National Ecology Center, and the Bureau, include the sums necessary for the effective implementation of the EPR Act of 2022 in its annual budget proposals under the General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 23. Expenses of Obligated Enterprises. Obligated enterprises and/or their respective Collectives or PROs shall be responsible for the funds necessary to operationalize and maintain the EPR programs, in compliance with the Act, as amended by the EPR Act of 2022, and this EPR IRR.

SECTION 24. Organizational Adjustments and Other Requirements. To ensure the effective and efficient implementation of the EPR Act of 2022, the Bureau and the NEC shall immediately prepare and submit to the Department the following additional proposals for its disposition and/or endorsement to the appropriate government agencies for disposition and action.

- 24.1. Data and Information sharing to assist the Department and the Bureau in the identification of large enterprises, including importers, that are required to register as Obligated Enterprises under the EPR Act of 2022. The Bureau shall define data or information to be requested from other government agencies, such as, the Department of Finance, Bureau of Customs, Bureau of Internal Revenue, Securities and Exchange Commission, or the Philippine Statistics Authority.
- 24.2. Development of Environmental Law Compliance Auditing Standards and Sustainability Reporting tools as mandated by the environmental laws of the Philippines, and not otherwise covered by the ECAR as herein defined.
- 24.3. EPR Act of 2022 capacity development or enhancement trainings for the Commission, its NEC, the Department, the Bureau, and other government and private sector stakeholders, to be endorsed to the NEDA and Development Partners and/or offered by way collaboration to industry or sectoral groups including learning or training institutes.
- 24.4. Organizational adjustments to the Bureau, its Regional Offices, the NEC, and the DENR-PAB Secretariat to identify and define the additional personnel, with corresponding positions, job descriptions, and qualifications, required to ensure the effective and efficient EPR Act of 2022 compliance assistance to stakeholders, and compliance monitoring, evaluation, and enforcement. The Department shall endorse this proposal to the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) and to the Civil Service Commission (CSC).
- 24.5. Conduct of a Cost-Of-Service Review and Analysis to determine the reasonableness of fees and charges that are currently being imposed or that may be imposed to ensure that the Bureau's Data Centers, EPR Portals, and other environmental management and monitoring tools are self-sustaining and graduate out of budget dependency for operations and maintenance.
- 24.6. Other priority activities requiring congressional, inter-agency, development partner, or budgetary support and assistance.



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PART IX: CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT AND MANDATORY REVIEW

SECTION 25. Joint Congressional Oversight Committee. Pursuant to Section 12 of the EPR Act of 2022, there is hereby created a Joint Congressional Oversight Committee to monitor the implementation of the Act and to oversee the functions of the implementing agencies. The Committee shall be composed of five (5) Senators and five (5) Representatives to be appointed by the Senate President and Speaker of the House of Representatives, respectively. The Oversight Committee shall be co-chaired by the Chairpersons of the Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change of the Senate and the Committee on Ecology of the House of Representatives."

SECTION 26. Mandatory Review. Pursuant to Section 9 of the EPR Act of 2022, within five (5) years after the effectivity of the EPR Act of 2022, or as the need arises, Congress shall review the accomplishments, and impact of the EPR Act of 2022, as well as the performance of its implementing agencies, and the compliance of Obligated Enterprises to achieve the objectives of the EPR Act of 2022, for the purpose of determining the necessity of a remedial legislation mandating for more stringent footprint recovery targets, higher incentives, or phase-out of certain types of single-use plastic packaging.

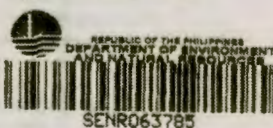
PART X: FINAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 27. Separability Clause. If any provision of this Order shall be held invalid or unconstitutional, the other portions or provisions hereof which are not affected shall continue in full force and effect.

SECTION 28. Repealing Clause. All Orders and other similar issuances inconsistent herewith are hereby revoked, amended, or modified accordingly.

SECTION 29. Effectivity. This Order shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in a newspaper of general circulation and upon acknowledgment of the receipt of the copy thereof by the Office of the National Administrative Register (ONAR).

MARIA ANTONIA YULO LOYZAGA
Secretary



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Annex A Republic Act No. 11898, otherwise known as "An Act Institutionalizing The Extended Producer Responsibility On Plastic Packaging Waste, Amending for this purpose Republic Act No. 9003, otherwise known as the "Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000", also known as by its short title as the "Extended Producer Responsibility Act of 2022"

Appendix 1 Illustration of the EPR Registration Process

