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NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



DENR launches watershed protection campaign seven months after Cagayan flooding nightmare

Published June 30, 2021, 1:30 PM

by [Elson Quismorio](#)

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) launched on Wednesday, June 30 a watershed protection drive that was arguably triggered by the massive flooding experienced by Cagayan Valley last year at the hands of typhoon “Ulysses”.



DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu (Screengrab from Zoom meeting)

No less than DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu led the virtual launch of the Save Our Watershed (SOW) campaign on the last day of Philippine Environment Month.

“Let us be constantly reminded that appropriate stewardship is needed in our watersheds...it is on this premise that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources is launching today a national campaign to save our watersheds,” Cimatu said in his speech.

According to Cimatu, there are “more than 130 critical watersheds in the country that desperately need immediate protection and rehabilitation to minimize erosion and improve water yield.” “Watersheds do two things: if we have a lot of rain, it will prevent flooding, possibly. If there are no rains or typhoons, the water in the watershed as the reservoir will now become small streams and small creeks that will run to the river,” he explained.





A key partner of the DENR in the endeavor is the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Eigo Azukizawa, JICA-Philippine office chief, was on hand during the mixed live and online event.

“We also like to point out another important reason for launching this campaign, which is to stress the importance and role of watershed especially for a country that is hit by an average of 20 typhoons or tropical depressions annually,” he said.

“Time and time again we are reminded of how destructive these typhoons are such as the case when typhoon Ulysses hit the Philippines last November 2020,” Azukizawa noted.

He said the flooding of Cagayan affected three million people and caused an estimated P10 billion worth of damages in both agriculture and infrastructure. He said that the incident is “one that we want to prevent from happening again in the future.”



JICA-Philippine office chief Eigo Azukizawa (Screengrab from Zoom meeting)

“In the aftermath of this typhoon, many key issues were identified as contributing factors in one of the worst flooding ever to happen in Cagayan region. And one of these reasons is the continuing forest degradation and logging of native species in watersheds that are expected to retain soil and regulate water in the area,” Azukizawa said.

DENR-Forest Management Bureau (FMB) director, Assistant Secretary Marcial Amaro Jr., said the agency’s objective with the SOW is “to propose through an executive issuance a formal document that would serve as a basis for a more less harmonized, uniform approach toward managing and protecting sustaining the services provided by our watersheds.” Amaro said the DENR is already drafting a proposed executive order to that effect.

What it all boils down to, according to Cimatu, is finding ways to protect watersheds from degradation and abuse.

“How will we save our watersheds? We have to protect it. We should not cut any trees in the watershed. That’s the reason why it is a protected area. A protected area should not be abused, meaning there should be no cutting. If we have to add trees, then we have to add,” he said.

“The trees that we will plant should not be cut forever,” Cimatu stressed.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2021/06/30/denr-launches-watershed-protection-campaign-seven-months-after-cagayan-flooding-nightmare/>



DENR chief warns PHL critical watersheds need immediate protection, rehabilitation

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA JUNE 30, 2021



Ipo Watershed, together with the Angat and Umiray Watersheds, supplies 98 percent of the water requirements of Metro Manila, one of the world's most densely-populated cities with a daytime population of 20 million people.

More than 130 critical watersheds desperately need immediate protection and rehabilitation to minimize erosion and improve water yield that will ensure a sustainable supply of fresh water in the Philippines, Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu said on Wednesday.

Speaking during the launch of the Save Our Watersheds Campaign, Cimatu said without watersheds, there will be no supply of fresh water that will sustain the various economic activities in the Philippines.

It is in this premise, he said, that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), through the Forest Management Bureau (FMB), is launching Save Our Watersheds Campaign together with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica).

Save Our Watersheds Campaign is being implemented under the Forestland Management Program (FMP), a foreign assisted project under the DENR's Foreign Assisted and Special Projects Service (FASPS) and funded by the Government of Japan through Official Development Assistance (ODA).

According to the DENR chief, protecting and rehabilitating the country's watersheds will ensure that the country's primary sources of freshwater will continue to provide the benefits that will support the economic and political well-being of the people as a nation.

"Let us be constantly reminded that appropriate stewardship is needed for our watersheds for us to mitigate the impact of climate change," he said.

The Philippines is blessed with fresh water sources but the country's fresh water supply is threatened.

The Philippines has 412 principal river basins in 119 proclaimed watersheds. Of these, 19 are considered major river basins. The longest river is Cagayan River, which is currently the subject of massive rehabilitation by the Task Force Build Back Better. There are also over 100 lakes in the Philippines. Of the more than 142 critical watersheds, Cimatu said more than 130 desperately need protection and rehabilitation. In 2019, the DENR chief has ordered the FMB to focus reforestation activities under the National Greening Program (NGP) to improve the condition of the country's critical watersheds.

According to Cimatu, saving watersheds will require protection, which means implementing a policy totally banning all logging activities or tree-cutting of trees in watersheds.



“How will we save our watersheds? We have to protect it. We should not cut any trees in the watershed,” he said.

According to Cimatu, a protected area that overlaps with watersheds should not be abused. “Meaning, there should be no cutting [of trees]. If we have to add additional trees, we should plant [them]. And the trees that we plant should not be cut [down] forever,” he stressed.

According to Cimatu, for him, importing wood is better than cutting down trees. “I’d rather buy lumber from outside than cut our own trees, because to me, [our trees are] more important,” he said.

He said to sustain the program to be spearheaded by the Forest Management Bureau, the DENR will endeavor to put in place a national directive in the form of an executive order that the DENR will endorse to Malacañang for the President’s approval, putting in place institutional mechanism for “a whole-of-society and a collaborative effort in preserving the country’s watersheds.”

‘Plant for Life’

Maynilad Water Services Inc., meanwhile, announced it is holding its “Plant for Life” program, the country’s annual tree-planting initiative to help rehabilitate watersheds, as part of the country’s annual Arbor Day Celebration.

The private water concessionaire of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) for the West Zone is helping rehabilitate watersheds in Angat, Ipo, Umiray and La Mesa.

“Some 15 million people in Metro Manila and nearby provinces rely on raw water sourced from dams that are replenished by watersheds. Given this dependence on the health of our watersheds—particularly those in Angat, Ipo, Umiray, and La Mesa—intensified preservation initiatives are being implemented in these areas to ensure sufficient supply and good quality of raw water,” Maynilad said in a news statement.

In celebration of Philippine Arbor Day, Maynilad is again joining hands with various institutions to boost government effort in rehabilitating watersheds.

“To date, we have already planted more than 600,000 trees over 800 hectares of the Ipo Watershed, but there is still so much more to do. Our community volunteers planted 200 palosapis and ipil trees at La Mesa Watershed last June 23, 2021,” Maynilad said.



MM Residents to Engage in Vertical Gardening

by [Village Connect](#) about 13 hours ago



The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has called on the public, especially those in Metro Manila, to adopt vertical gardening techniques to increase green spaces in the metropolis.

Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu said that “we can derive so much benefit from these green spaces, which include green walls, green roofs, vertical gardens, urban forest parks, linear forest along walkways, transport routes and river systems.”

“These networks of green spaces improve air quality, reduce heat, increase energy efficiency, reduce noise pollution, and provide habitats for wildlife,” Cimatu said.



Having vertical gardens not only protects biodiversity and increases green spaces but also improves public health, he added.

“It will help relieve stress of average Filipinos by enhancing the aesthetics of their surroundings, especially during this time of health crisis,” Cimatu said.

DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns Benny D. Antiporda said there are still green spaces existing in Metro Manila, including the Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife Center (NAPWC) where the DENR’s Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) is located, University of the Philippines-Diliman, and Ateneo de Manila University all in Quezon City, the Arroceros Forest Park in Manila, and the Las Piñas–Parañaque Wetland Park.

To increase green spaces and enhance biodiversity in urban areas, the DENR-BMB has been promoting the Urban Biodiversity Program among local governments which includes Urban Forest Bathing and the promotion of green infrastructures.

Urban Forest Bathing helps promote the health benefits of forests and green spaces while green infrastructures are buildings or infrastructures that support green energy and provide environmental benefits.



By advocating Urban Biodiversity, nature becomes closer to urban dwellers.

"We can only do so much based on our existing laws in preserving the green spaces in Metro Manila, but even an ordinary citizen can help in this endeavor. Kahit maliit lupa niyo—backyard lang—eh malaki na rin pong tulong iyan," Antiporda said.

He pointed out that "the trend of Plantitos and Plantitas has helped a lot to reverse the impacts of the fast infrastructure development in the National Capital Region (NCR)."

However, Antiporda noted that while the trend is helpful, the demand for ornamental plants also "invited the unwanted proliferation of plant poachers."

"The DENR, through the BMB, is doing its best to catch these poachers because what they are doing is against Republic Act 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act of 2001," he said.

Plant hobbyists should not patronize illegally traded plants, especially non-native plants "because of their possible adverse impacts to the environment that may result in bringing pests and diseases that may infect other species of plants," he warned.

Antiporda said the department is "committed to augment the green spaces in the NCR in the best ways that it can and to promote the use of native species"

He pointed out that development plans in urban areas that would involve the cutting of trees should strictly comply with the DENR's tree-cutting policy.

"The DENR mandates that for every tree cut in urban areas, 50 to 100 replacement trees should be planted in areas outside NCR," he said.

"We encourage everyone to join us in our mission to protect the environment. Magtulong-tulong po tayo. Hindi lang po para sa henerasyon na ito kundi para sa mga susunod pang henerasyon," he added.



Mining sector contributes P22.5 billion to GDP in Q1

[Catherine Talavera](#) (The Philippine Star) - July 1, 2021 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The country's mining industry maintained its contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) of 0.5 percent in the first quarter despite a decline in value, data from the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) showed.

Based on the latest figures from the MGB, the gross value added in mining amounted to P22.5 billion during the period, down 5.6 percent from last year.

In contrast, the metallic mineral production value of gold, nickel ore, mixed nickel-cobalt sulfide, scandium oxalate, chromite, and iron was estimated at P28.9 billion, up 17 percent from the previous year.

The MGB data also showed that total exports of minerals and mineral products reached \$1.2 billion or 6.9 percent of the country's total exports.

The minerals industry contributed about P355 million in national and local taxes, fees and royalties.

In a statement, Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu emphasized the economic contribution of the mining industry.

"Amidst the pandemic that we are experiencing, the mining industry strived and did its part. We are happy to know that this has been the outcome of the mining operations in the country over the past year," Cimatu said, citing the mining industry's P102.3 billion GDP contribution in 2020.

The figure, however, is five percent lower than the P107.4 billion GDP contribution of the mining sector in 2019.

The DENR-MGB also reported that the mining sector has allocated P379 billion for the implementation of the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Program as of December 2020.

Meanwhile, the DENR reported mining and quarrying activities generated 184,000 jobs and around P25.71 billion was committed for the Social Development Management Program (SDMP) in 2020.

It said a total of 36.87 million seedlings have also been planted in 28,717.37 hectares of land for the Mining Forest Program as of December last year.

"Contrary to what others are saying, this is an indication of how massive the contribution of the mining industry is to our economy," Cimatu said.

At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, MGB director Wilfredo Moncano instructed regional offices to allow mining companies to realign their unit

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/business/2021/07/01/2109238/mining-sector-contributes-p225-billion-gdp-q1>



DENR, umaksyon na rin kaugnay ng umano'y bentahan ng mga ancestral domain ng mga katutubo

By [RadyoMaN Manila](#) -Jun. 30, 2021 at 1:37pm



Nakialam na rin ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sa napabalitang bentahan ng ancestral domain ng mga katutubo.

Sinabi ni DENR Undersecretary for Policy, Planning, and International Affairs Jonas Leones na ang Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title holders ay hindi maaaring magbenta ng ancestral land sa private entities at “non-tribe members” dahil mawawalan ng saysay ang layon na protektahan ang kanilang karapatan at kultura.

Nagkaroon na ng pag-uusap ang DENR at National Commission on Indigenous People para ayusin ang policy direction sa mga ancestral domain claims.

Partikular dito ang mga komplikasyon sa implementasyon ng mga probisyon sa Republic Act (RA) 7586 o ang National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) of 1992 at RA 8371 o ang Indigenous People’s Rights Act (IPRA) of 1997.

Kasunod naman ito ng gusot sa ancestral domain claims sa mga protected areas tulad ng Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape.

Sa ngayon ay nagsisikap ang gobyerno tungkol sa conservation at protection ng 244 protected areas ng bansa.

Sa kasalukuyan ay pinalalakas ng DENR ang “conservation efforts” sa protected area bilang bahagi ng mga isinasagawang rehabilitasyon ng Task Force Build Back Better.

Source: <https://rmn.ph/denr-umaksyon-na-rin-kaugnay-ng-umanoy-bentahan-ng-mga-ancestral-domain-ng-mga-katutubo/>

DENR at NBI nakakumpiska ng P2.9-million halaga ng agarwood

June 30, 2021



Nakumpiska ng bagong tatag na Environmental Law Enforcement and Protection Service (ELEPS) ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) katuwang ang National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) ang P2.9-million halaga ng agarwood mula sa dalawang illegal traders noong Hunyo 15.

Ayon kay ELEPS Director Reuel Sorilla, 18 kilograms ng agarwood na may halagang P2.9-million ang nakuha kina Mark Gil Espino at Nathaniel Avelino sa parking lot ng isang coffee shop na matatagpuan sa West Avenue, Quezon City.

“But the real worth of the contraband is placed at 29 million, or at least 10 times more than its market value, if we factor in the environmental services that were lost as a result of the illegal cutting of these threatened trees,” sabi ni Sorilla.

Kabilang sa mga nakuha sa mga suspek ang Asian utility vehicle, cellular phones at weighing scale.

Aniya, nagsimula ang pagtatrabaho ng mga operatiba ng DENR at NBI laban kina Espino at Avelino noong Nobyembre 2020 matapos makatanggap ng impormasyon mula sa concerned citizen si NBI Agent Habeas Corpus ng Environmental Crime Division.

Ipinaliwanag pa ni Sorilla na dapat isama sa pagsuma ng kabuuang halaga mula sa environmental crime ang lost environmental services “to drive home the point that a standing tree is way far better than an apprehended undocumented tree.”

“This is where Secretary Roy A. Cimatu’s marching order to ELEPS is anchored. Our paramount objective is one of preemptive defense to deter the commission of environmental crimes by strengthening DENR’s institutional capacity to prevent illegal logging. But if we have to run after the perpetrators, then we will do it,” saad ni Sorilla.

Ang illegal trade ng agarwood ay naging dahilan ng walang habas na pagputol ng lapnisan at lanete na kapwa nabibilang sa national list of threatened Philippine plants batay na rin sa DENR Administrative Order 2007-01, ayon kay Rogelio Demelletes, Jr., DENR senior ecosystems management specialist at ELEPS officer.



“It is very difficult to tell if a tree has produced agarwood, and so this results in the indiscriminate cutting of lapnisan and lanete,” paliwanag ni Demelletes.

Ang agarwood ay produkto ng pagtubo ng klase ng fungal infection na tinatawag na *Phialophora parasitic* sa loob ng lapnisan at lanete.

Kapag infected na, pinangangalagaan ng puno ang sarili nito sa pamamagitan ng paggawa ng aromatic resin na tinatawag na aloes, isang maitim at moist substance na dahan-dahang pumapasok sa heartwood hanggang ito ay maging “agarwood.”

Sina Espino at Avelino ay kasalukuyang nakapiit sa detention cell ng NBI sa Maynila habang hinihintay ang kasong paglabag sa Republic Act 9147 o ang Wildlife Resources and Protection Act at Presidential Decree 705 o ang Revised Forestry Code of the Philippines.

Ang mga lumabag sa batas na ito ay maaaring makulong ng anim hanggang 12 taon at pagmumultahin ng P100,000 hanggang P1 million. – *rir*



Plastic straw, coffee stirrer ibabawal

By Abante News Online — Last updated Jun 29, 2021

NEWS



Minamadali nang mapirmahan ang draft ng National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC) resolution para sa phaseout ng paggamit ng plastic coffee stirrer at soft drink straw sa buong bansa.

Ibinigay na ang draft ng inisyal na listahan ng mga non-environmentally acceptable product o NEAP kung saan kabilang ang plastic coffee stirrer at soft drink straw.

Sa kanyang virtual press conference nitong Lunes, sinabi ni Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu na umaasa silang mapipirmahan na ang dokumento bago matapos ang buwan ng Hulyo. (Issa Santiago)



DENR nilinaw ang isyu sa Pasig River hinggil sa plastic pollution



June 30, 2021 @ 6:43 PM 11 hours ago

MANILA, Philippines – Nilinaw ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) na nagkakamali ng impormasyon na ang Pasig River ang number one sa plastic polusyon ng nagmumula sa mga basura sa ilog.

Ginawa ang paglilinaw ni DENR Usec. Benny Antiporda Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units matapos lumabas sa media na ang Pasig River ay napapabilang sa number 1 plastic pollutants sa karagatan base sa isianagawang pag-aaral ng international group na Netherland-base Ocean Cleanup.

Ayon kay Antiporda maaaring ang ginamit na method para sabihin na number 1 plastic pollutants ang Pasig River sa mga plastic ay hindi umano nagpapakita ng isyu para mailathala ang naturang artikulo media.

Sa virtual press conference sinabi ni Antiporda na bago mailathala ang naturang artikulo sa media maraming ng isinasagawang hakbang ang DENR at ang pamahalaan para sa paglilinis ng mga estero sa buong bansa at maging sa Pasig River upang malinis ang mga ilog at estero.

Sinabi pa nito na kabilang dito ang pagpapasara sa mga illegal dump site sa buong bansa na lumalabag sa ating environmental laws.

Nabatid pa sa ulat na base sa research na inilabas ng grupong international group na Ocean Cleaniup na bukod sa Pasig River may mga ilog pa sa buong bansa ang tinukoy sa pag-aaral at research.

Idinagdag pa ni Antipoda na ang paglalathala ng naturang artikulo ay sumasalungat sa 2018 award na nagtanggap ng Pasig River matapos gawaran ito ng award bilang pagkilala ng International recognition award.

Bukod dito naunang ng naiulat na nasungkit ng Pilipinas ang “first Asia River Prize Awards” matapos kilalanin ang matagumpay nitong pagbuhay sa Ilog Pasig nitong nakalipas na taon

Ang pagkilala ay iginawad ng International River Foundation (IRF), isang lupon na nagbibigay ng rekognisyon sa mga organisasyong nakatutok sa pangangalaga at paglilinis ng mga ilog sa iba’t ibang bansa at epektibong river basin management. **Santi Celario**

Source: <https://www.remate.ph/denr-nilinaw-ang-isyu-sa-pasig-river-hinggil-sa-plastic-pollution/>



Undated file photo shows people cleaning up a waterway in the Philippines.
The STAR/Edd Gumban

Groups seek to sue solid waste management commission

[Gaea Katreena Cabico](#) (Philstar.com) - June 29, 2021 - 9:06am

MANILA, Philippines — Civil society groups sent notices to the National Solid Waste Management Commission and government agencies that they may face a suit for failing to address the country's plastic pollution problem.

The organizations led by marine conservation group Oceana said this was the first step in compelling the commission and representatives of its member-agencies to implement Republic Act 9003, or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act.

Under the two-decade-old law, the NSWMC is mandated to prepare a list of non-environmentally accepted products within a year after the law's effectivity and to update the list annually.

"We can no longer bear the inaction of the NSWMC which has failed to implement its mandated task to prepare a list of non-environmentally acceptable products and packaging (NEAPP)," Oceana Vice President Gloria Estenzo Ramos said.

"Their lack of concern for 20 long years is far too deplorable and inexcusable. The groups believe it is time to interpose and take the necessary action on this issue," Ramos, an environmental lawyer, added.

Commission welcomes pending suit

Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda, who serves as NSWMC's alternate chair, welcomed the move as "this will serve as a motivation to all government officers and people who are really serious on solving the solid waste problem in the country, especially when it deals with single use plastics."

Notices were sent to Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu, who chairs the commission, as well as to the heads of Department of Trade and Industry, Department of Science and Technology, Department of Health, Department of Public Works and Highways, Department of Agriculture and Metropolitan Manila Development Authority.

Ramos said if the responses of the members of the commission are not encouraging, "we will have to proceed and avail of legal remedies available under the Constitution and the various laws."



So far, straws and stirrers

In February, 20 years after the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act became law, the commission included the first items on the list: plastic soft drink straws and coffee stirrers. The resolution, however, has yet to be fully signed.

Antiporda said there was a letter from the DOST recommending “a more holistic approach in developing policies regarding NEAP.”

Groups said banning straws and stirrers was not enough and called for the inclusion plastic cutleries, labo bags, bottles, cups, plates, take-out containers, and styrofoam food containers on the list.

Antiporda said plastic cutleries and plastic 'labo' bags were among the items referred to the DOST for study “for us to come up with decision on said listing.”

Early this month, House Deputy Speaker Loren Legarda filed a resolution seeking to investigate and audit the NSWMC for the delay in the implementation of the NEAP list.

According to a 2015 study by non-profit Ocean Conservancy, the Philippines produced 2.7 million metric tons of plastic wastes.

A report by Global Alliance for Incinerators Alternatives released in 2019 showed the Filipinos throw around [164 million pieces of sachets](#), 57 million shopping bags, and 45.2 million pieces of labo bags every day.



Gov't agencies block new corporate body for Boracay

By: [Nestor P. Burgos Jr.](#) - Reporter / [@nestorburgosINO](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 04:35 AM June 30, 2021



DIFFERENT VIEW Boracay, seen in this photo with the mainland of Malay town and the mountains of Aklan province in the background, has several secluded beaches, wetlands and forests that locals and the task force overseeing the island's environmental rehabilitation want to protect. —JACK JARILLA

ILOILO CITY, Iloilo, Philippines — The creation of a government-owned and controlled corporation (GOCC) that would manage Boracay Island is contrary to the thrust of protecting the island's environment and may allow the putting up of casinos on the island, according to government agencies.

In position papers submitted to the House committees on enterprises and privatization, and on local government, the Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF) and agencies under it said a regulatory body, instead of a GOCC, is needed to ensure sustainable tourism.

"It is our considered opinion that GOCC's proprietary functions would distract from its regulatory function to safeguard the island's ecological integrity, which is the primary purpose for which the BIATF was created," according to the BIATF chaired by Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu.

"Boracay Island is already bursting at the seams, having exceeded its carrying capacity. Thus, there is no more space for further development into an ecotourism zone," the task force added.

Task force replacement

The position paper was submitted to the House committees in March and recently made public by the One Boracay Movement, a group of business owners, residents and officials of Boracay Island and Malay town in Aklan province.

The two House committees on June 15 approved a substitute and consolidated bill from nine bills providing for the creation of the Boracay Island Development Authority (Bida).

The Bida is intended to replace the BIATF which was created to oversee the rehabilitation of the island when it was closed to tourists from April 26, 2018 to Oct. 2, 2018. The term of the task force was extended twice until May this year and is awaiting President Duterte's approval of another extension.

Officials of Aklan and Malay as well as several business owners and residents are opposing the creation of Bida as a GOCC. They have displayed streamers all over the island and on the mainland of Malay to protest the approval of the committees' report.



‘Overtourism’

According to the agencies under the BIATF, the substitute bill also provides for the creation of a special economic and tourism zone, including Boracay, and empowers the Bida to undertake reclamation projects.

“The problem of Boracay is one of overdevelopment and overtourism. The carrying capacity study conducted in 2018 showed exceedance in the island’s physical carrying capacity in terms of the number of areas covered by the structures, including hotels and resorts, residential and other commercial establishments,” according to the Boracay Inter-Agency Rehabilitation Management Group which oversees the operation of the BIATF.

It also noted that under Section 8 of the substitute bill, the Bida allows gaming, amusement and recreational facilities to operate on the island subject to licensing rules of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. “[President Duterte] was clear in his pronouncement in 2018 that casinos will not be allowed in Boracay,” it said.

The planned establishment of a casino on the island earlier raised an outcry from residents and business owners who wanted to maintain Boracay as a family-oriented destination.

Regulatory body

In the position paper of the Department of the Interior and Local Government, Undersecretary for Operations Epimaco Densing III said the Bida “should only be a regulatory body instead of a GOCC to ensure long-term sustainability of tourism and environmental protection above all else, rather than become an income-generating entity that would put Boracay at risk of exploitation and profiteering.”

“Ultimately, the consolidated House bill opens up opportunities to economic development way beyond the capacity of Boracay Island,” Densing said.

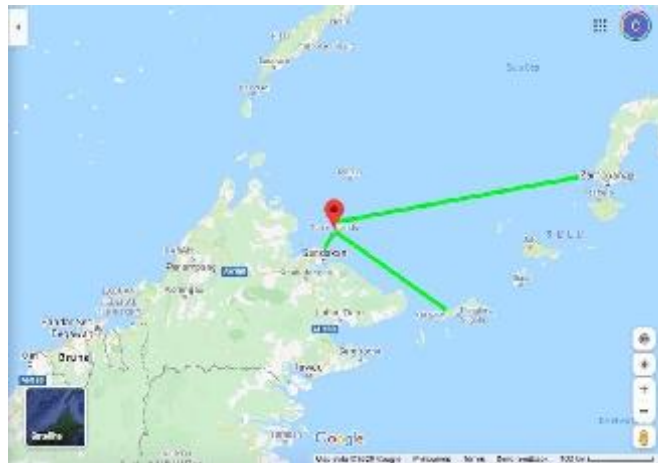
The National Economic and Development Authority noted that the Bida under the substitute bill has both regulatory and implementing functions in relation to the putting up and operation of utilities, services and infrastructure on the island.

“This may present a conflict of interest,” according to its position paper signed by Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Karl Kendrick Chua.



MENRE personnel in Tawi-Tawi trained on protected area management

By FRENCIE CARREON - JUNE 30, 2021 8:41 PM



Turtle Islands. Map courtesy of Google

ZAMBOANGA CITY (MindaNews / 30 June) — Technical experts from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) have trained personnel of the Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Energy (MENRE) to manage the Turtle Islands Wildlife Sanctuary (TIWS).

MENRE's takeover of the TIWS was pursuant to Republic Act 11054 or the Organic Law for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. The management and administration of TIWS was formally turned over last May 23 by DENR – Region 9, which had been overseeing the sanctuary since 1996.

MENRE will start managing the TIWS in July.

Crisanta Marlene Rodriguez, DENR-9 regional director, said they conducted a six-day training and orientation workshop on protected area management to MENRE personnel in Bongao, Tawi-Tawi on June 21 to 26.

“Our office is dedicated to extend technical assistance to the new managers and stakeholders of TIWS. We are sharing the knowledge and experiences that we have gained in the past three decades, which can serve as their foundation for a stronger and effective management of the protected area,” she said.

As part of capacitating them, the participants underwent basic scuba diving lessons, lectures on protected area management and environmental laws, and field practicum on biodiversity monitoring system for terrestrial, coastal and marine ecosystems.

President Joseph Estrada issued Presidential Proclamation No. 171 declaring TIWS as a protected area on August 26, 1999, pursuant to Republic Act 7586 or the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) Act of 1992. The TIWS became one of the 94 newly-legislated protected areas under RA 11038 or the E-NIPAS Act of 2018.

Saido Espilero, Community Environment, Natural Resources and Energy Officer, lauded the technical experts from DENR-9 for capacitating them.

“The knowledge and experiences shared by the different facilitators will be put into use, to continue the legacy of protecting and conserving the TIWS,” Espilero said.



Roservirico Tan, chief of DENR-9's Regional Strategic Communication and Initiatives Group, said that Turtle Islands is globally recognized as one of the most important nesting ground for the endangered green sea turtle and the critically endangered hawksbill turtle.

MENRE Minister Abdulraof Macacua earlier stressed the need to continue protecting and conserving the TIWS to keep the beauty of the islands.

The TIWS is composed of the six islands of Boan, Taganak, Baguan, Great Bakkungan, Lihiman and Langaan, all under the municipality of Turtle Islands in Tawi-Tawi. Three other islands belong to Malaysia: Selingaan, Little Bakkungan, and Gulisaan, and they comprise the Turtle Islands Park of Sabah, Malaysia.



ADOPT-A-FOREST PROJECT. The provincial government of Tarlac, in collaboration with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), launched on Wednesday (June 30, 2021) the 'Adopt-A-Forest' project along the five-kilometer stretch of the Tarlac-Zambales road in San Jose town. Different groups or 'adopters' including government agencies, police offices, religious organizations, civil society organizations, and private business entities participated in a planting activity. *(Photo courtesy of the provincial government of Tarlac)*

Reforestation project launched to boost Tarlac's greening program

By Zorayda Tecson [June 30, 2021, 5:18 pm](#)

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO, Pampanga – The provincial government of Tarlac, in collaboration with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), launched on Wednesday the "Adopt-A-Forest" project along the five-kilometer stretch of the Tarlac-Zambales road in San Jose town.

A planting activity was held, participated in by different groups called "adopters", including government agencies, police offices, religious organizations, civil society organizations, and private business entities.

Celia Esteban, Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer (PENRO), said in an official social media post the goal of the project is to rehabilitate, develop, and reforest the road easement through the reintroduction of native tree species specifically *agoho*, *toog*, *narra*, *malapapaya*, *kupang*, *molave*, and *banaba*.

Tarlac Governor Susan Yap said the project is in line with the protection of forests and the intensified greening program of the province.

She said it aims to open the possibility of non-government organizations and people's organizations taking care of patches of lands, particularly in the area along the Tarlac-Zambales road.

The governor said this is a good opportunity for the adopters to support the provincial government's "Kalikasan Muna" program.

The provincial government of Tarlac, through the PENRO, earlier partnered with the 2nd Provincial Mobile Force Company to further protect and develop the established forest plantations under the National Greening Program (NGP).

Under the agreement, the 10 municipal police stations in Tarlac will act as overall project managers and take charge of the mobilization of personnel, prioritizing members of the people's organizations within the area.



They will also be responsible for the funding of survey, mapping, and planning, produce seedlings for replanting, maintenance and protection of the adopted plantation.

The DENR, on the other hand, shall provide technical assistance in the survey, mapping and planning, plantation management, site evaluation, biodiversity conservation, and species selection, and assist the PNP in the documentation of planted trees, which includes, but shall not be limited to geo-tagging, plantation registry and regular monitoring.

Since 2011, DENR-Region 3 (Central Luzon) has established more than 122,000 hectares of forest plantations within degraded watersheds and forestlands. **(PNA)**



NBI arrests 6 for illegal quarrying in Batangas

[June 30, 2021](#) 2 min read

MANILA — The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) today announced the arrest of six (6) individuals by the NBI-Environmental Crime Division (EnCD) in Lian, Batangas for illegal quarrying.

NBI Officer-In-Charge (OIC) Director Eric B. Distor identified the subjects as RODEL MARINDUQUE y VERGARA, FRANCIS DACUYA y EBORDE, CLAUDIO TAMAYO y TUMBAGAHAN, ROGER BETONIA y SALAZAR, SONNY MARINDUQUE y BIATON, and JOVENCIO MALABANAN y TEPORA.



OIC Director Distor said that the operation stemmed from the letter sent by the DENR-Environmental Protection and Enforcement Task Force (EPETF) requesting full assistance to conduct investigation in the alleged illegal quarrying operations in Sitio Matuod, Brgy. Binubusan, Lian Batangas.

In response, joint teams of NBI-EnCD and DENR-EPETF, Mines and Geoscience Bureau-Region IV-A (MGB Region IV-A) conducted a surveillance operation in the target area which verified the existence of illegal quarrying activities within the area despite issuance of a Cease and Desist Order (CDO).

Further verification, the Provincial Government Environment and Natural Resources Office (PGENRO) of Batangas issued an updated list of existing holders of Special Permit to Transport and Dispose within the Province of Batangas.

The list revealed that there is no existing permit issued within the area of Lian, Batangas, thus, making the quarrying operation in the target area unlawful and illegal.



On June 24, 2021, joint operatives of NBI-ENCD, DENR-MGB Region IV-A, and DENR-Environmental Law Enforcement Protection Service (DENR-ELEPS) conducted a law enforcement operation against the operators of the illegal quarrying activity. The operation resulted in the arrest of the six (6) subjects.

The subjects were presented for Inquest proceedings before the Office of Prosecutor General, DOJ Manila for violation of Section 103 of RA 7942, otherwise known as the Philippine Mining Act of 1995. (Kiara Lauren Ibanez/BENJAMIN CUARESMA/AI/MTVN)



6 nasakote sa quarrying

By Abante Tonite — Last updated Jun 30, 2021

METRO



Dinakip ng National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) ang anim katao dahil sa illegal quarrying sa bayan ng Lian, Batangas.

Kinilala ni NBI CIO-Director Eric Distor ang mga suspek na sina Rodel Marinduque, Francis Dacuya, Claydio Tamayo, Roger Bctonio, Sinny Marinduque, at Jovencio Malabanan.

Nag-ugat ang pag-aresto dahil sa liham na ipinadala ng DENR-Environmental Protection and Enforcement Task Force na humihingi ng full assistance para magsagawa ng imbestigasyon kaugnay sa illegal quarrying operation sa Sitio Matuod, Barangay Binubusan, Lian.

Bilang tugon, nagsagawa ng surveillance ang pinagsabib na tauhan ng NBI-Environmental Crime Division, DENR-EPETF at Mines and Geoscience Bureau Region IV-A.

Nalaman na sa kabila ng may inisyu na sa kanilang cease and desist order ay patuloy pa rin ang illegal quarrying sa lugar.

Sa beripikasyon ng Provincial Government Environment and Natural Resources Office ng Batangas, ang mga suspek ay wala sa listahan ng mga inisyuhan ng special permit.

Kaya nitong Hunyo 24, sinalakay ng mga awtoridad ang quarrying site at pinosasan ang anim.

Isinalalim sa Inquest proceedings ang mga suspek dahil sa paglabag sa Philippine Mining Act. (Juliet de Loza-Cudia)



Villar seeks measures to provide stronger mechanism vs illegal wildlife trade

June 30, 2021 3 min read

By Ernie Reyes

MANILA — Senator Cynthia Villar on Wednesday presided over a virtual hearing by the Senate committee on environment, natural resources and climate change on measures seeking to provide stronger mechanisms against illegal wildlife trade in the country.

In a statement, Villar said that the committee which she chaired had started to deliberate Senate Bill No.2078 which she authored and Senate Bill No.2079, introduced by Senate Minority Leader June Miguel “Migz” Zubiri or the Revised Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act, the subject of Villar’s privilege speech delivered last March.

Villar said the measures seek to provide stronger mechanisms to combat illegal wildlife trade in the country which, she said, continues to persist even during the pandemic, and many illegal traders remain unapprehended.

“The incidence of illegal wildlife trade has evolved and grown with violators becoming more equipped, organized and syndicated,” she said.

The lady senator said the trade and transport of wildlife species had become wild-scaled and transnational in nature.

“Studies suggest that globally, wildlife is the 4th largest illegal trade after drugs, arms and human trafficking,” she added.

Villar said wildlife authority regulators observe that the penalties pertaining to the conservation and protection of wildlife resources and their habitats under Republic Act 9147 have become outdated and “mere slaps on the wrist” when compared to the severity of wildlife trafficking.

“We have to give more teeth to the law to have enforcement authorities to apprehend violators,” Villar stressed.

Meanwhile, Zubiri said that it’s high time to revised the Wildlife Act particularly ang proposed amendments on Republic Act (RA) No. 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act.



He urges his colleagues and other stakeholders to support the bills that will further strengthen and improve RA 9147 particularly on the imposition of stronger, more specific penalties to enhance its deterrent effect and remove legal loopholes exploited by illegal wildlife collectors and traders.

Zubiri, the principal author of RA 9147, noted that the wildlife act is ripe for revision based on the collective experience of government regulators, law enforcement agencies, volunteers, non-government organizations, scientists and researchers, conservationists, local government units, and legitimate wildlife breeders, traders and hobbyists.

“It’s high time that the wildlife act be updated to comply or be consistent with the Philippine treaty obligations concerning wildlife under multilateral agreements such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS),” Zubiri said. (ai/mtvn)

Source: <https://maharlika.tv/2021/06/30/villar-seeks-measures-to-provide-stronger-mechanism-vs-illegal-wildlife-trade/?fbclid=IwAR2dYBeKj83jFuNvQvCuGpemmpmKyquS8ucfaJDSiNNJT26TRufrOwyG2cM>



Asean biodiversity exec backs move to amend Wildlife Act

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA JUNE 30, 2021



Philippines offers rich aqua biodiversity for deep diving.

The Asean Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) has expressed support for a proposal to amend Republic Act 9147 or the Philippine Wildlife Act, a 20-year-old law that promotes the protection and conservation of plant and animal species, including their habitats in the country.

In a statement addressing the Senate on two bills (SB 2078 and 2079) amending RA 9147, Theresita S. Lim, executive director of ACB, also backed the move to consolidate the two measures to update the Philippine's Wildlife Act.

"We appreciate this timely effort to revise and enhance this 20-year-old Wildlife legislation, considering the opportunity afforded us by the Covid-19 pandemic to reexamine the way we deal with wildlife, our biodiversity, including the immensely rich and multiple benefits we can derive from the sustainable use of these biological resources, and the genetic materials they can provide," Lim said.

Lim agreed with Senator Juan Miguel Zubiri that the illegal collection of genetic resources is depriving Filipinos of monetary benefits from the development of these genetic resources.

She said under the ongoing global negotiations on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework at the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, discussion on ways and means to integrate the international concerns on digital sequence information may help ensure that countries like the Philippines get their fair and equitable share of the benefits from the utilization of data and information derived from wildlife resources, including genetic information, used for commercial purposes.

"These developments at the global level may further enrich the amendments to the Wildlife Act, specifically those that are aligned with the country's priorities and can be effectively implemented on the ground," she added.



Lim, a former director of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB), also favored amending the provisions on wildlife trafficking and wildlife laundering in the two bills.

During her stint as DENR-BMB chief, Lim had lamented the fact that with the current Philippine Wildlife Act, Philippine authorities are like a “toothless tiger” because violators of the law often get away almost unpunished.

Lim was then advocating for higher fines and penalty for violators of the law to deter crimes, particularly those that engage in wildlife trafficking, a major driver of biodiversity loss.



With growing pressures, can the Philippines sustain its marine reserves?

by [Leilani Chavez](#) on 30 June 2021



- The Philippines pioneered a community-based approach to marine protected area management in 1974, which balanced conservation and community livelihood. This became the blueprint of the more than 1,500 marine reserves in the country today.
- While the government depends on its MPA system in protecting its seascapes and meeting its international commitments, research suggest only a third of the country's MPAs are well-managed and only protect around 1% of the country's coral reefs.
- With management and resource challenges, these MPAs are threatened by overfishing and illegal fishing practices as well as the worsening impacts of climate change.
- Experts say strengthening the country's larger MPA systems, synchronizing conservation with fisheries management policies, adapting newer models, and creating a network of MPAs may help the country buffer the impacts of climate change on its rich marine resources.

MANILA — In the town of Pilar in the central Philippines, a community of 11,308 residents looks after one of the most successful marine protected areas in the country: the Pilar Municipal Marine Park (PMMP). Established in 2005, the 179-hectare (443-acre) park stands out among the thousands of MPAs in the Philippines, which experts say are only protected on paper.

At the heart of the PMMP is a 29-hectare (72-acre) no-take zone, an area where fishing and all other marine activities are banned. Like in all MPAs, these no-take zones are spawning grounds for fish. To balance the livelihood needs of the community, the remaining 150 hectares (371 acres) of the PMMP have been allotted as a marine reserve open to limited fishing activities using non-destructive, basic fishing gear.

Susan Catalyo, a resident of Pilar, says the MPA was a lifesaver when Typhoon Haiyan struck in 2013 and cut her island off from the rest of the province of Cebu. "Camotes is far from Cebu City, which was also devastated by Haiyan," she tells Mongabay. "If we waited for aid, we would have gone hungry. But the spillover fish from the MPA kept us alive."

Rene Abesamis, the country's foremost expert on MPAs, say marine reserves are known as such since they function as "piggy banks" — a stop-gap resource to alleviate community needs during drastic events.

Governments and communities have recognized the importance of MPAs in boosting fish stocks, generating local income through tourism, and cushioning climate change impacts, which in the Philippines manifest as a string of late-season super typhoons from the Pacific. The Philippines puts its MPA system at the forefront of its conservation strategy: In 2020, the country reported protecting 9.7% of its seascapes, narrowly missing its commitment under the Convention on Biological Diversity's Aichi Biodiversity Targets to protect 10% of coastal and marine areas by 2020.



Yet the country's accomplishments in sustaining its more than 1,500 MPAs have been beset with challenges. Experts say it's possible that only a third of the country's MPAs are well-managed, and the collective coverage of no-take zones barely protects the country's corals.



The underwater rainforest of Verde Island Passage is part of the coral triangle. The coral triangle is under combined threats of mean warming, ocean acidification, temperature and extreme weather events, coastal development and overfishing, leading to reduced ecosystem services and loss of biodiversity. Image by Jeff Britnell / Coral Reef Image Bank.

While some MPAs report high fish abundance, overfishing in the areas surrounding these MPAs and the intrusion by fishing vessels due to weak monitoring and enforcement structures have doomed these reserves to the extent that experts call them “dummy parks” — protected on paper but not on the ground.

Experts point to various “moving parts,” factors that contribute to the effectiveness of marine protected areas and their promised bounty. At the top, laws and policies collide and overlap. On the ground, changing political will and community engagement exacerbated by resource limitations weaken the effectiveness of MPAs both as a conservation and a fisheries management model.

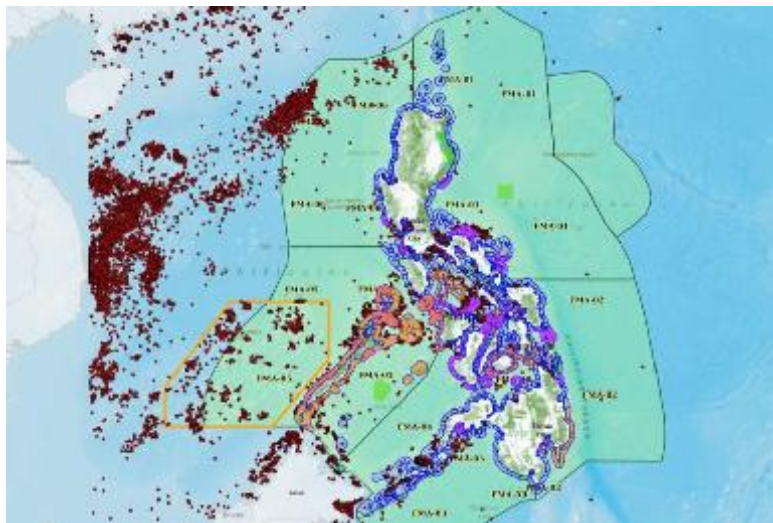
Varying levels of protection

Policies in the 1970s and 1980s focused on increasing fish yields, and the string of seas threading through the central Philippines became a playground for fishers using destructive gear. Fishing with cyanide-loaded explosives was the norm, so was the use of trawling techniques called *muro-ami*, *baling-baling* and *hulbot-hulbot* in the Visayan tongue. Despite the ban on these methods, recent studies show that some are still in use today.

The country is considered the “center of marine biodiversity in the world” by the Global Marine Species Assessment of the World Conservation Union, a designation that highlights its importance in the Pacific Coral Triangle. The country's waters contain the third most extensive reef system in the world, spanning about 22,000 square kilometers (8,500 square miles). Threatened by coastal development, pollution, overfishing and destructive fishing practices, how the Philippines manages its seascapes impacts global marine conservation, a study states.

In the last decade, the Philippines lost one-third of its coral cover, and nearly 75% of the country's fishing grounds are overfished — figures based on assessments done a decade ago, which means the situation may have worsened today, says Oceana Philippines, a marine NGO.

Coral protection was the focus of the MPA movement in the 1970s, and marine protected areas back then were adapted to allow corals to regenerate and to improve decreasing fish stocks. Initiatives started in two areas: off Sumilon Island, established in 1974, and Apo Island, in 1984. Both located in the central Philippines, these MPAs became the blueprint for the more than 1,500 MPAs that now dot the country's waters: small, averaging just 15 hectares (37 acres); close to shore; and, most importantly, co-managed by the local government and the coastal community.



Heat maps based on VIIRS technology show boat detections in the Philippine MPAs. Map accessed through Karagatan Patrol.

Studies by Angel Alcala and Gary Russ of Australia's James Cook University show that MPAs can contribute directly to fish biomass and diversity. An MPA with limited to no fishing activities can see a rebound in fish stocks, as was the case in Apo Island. By contrast, Sumilon, where fishing is allowed, failed to meet its purpose of replenishing fish stocks and coral rehabilitation. Experts call Sumilon "a failure" and Apo its successful counterpart. Both case studies highlight the importance of protecting the most ecologically important part of the seascape, the "core zone," which is usually the spawning ground for fish.



Apo Island of Apo Reef Natural Park. Image by macoy.mejia via [Wikimedia Commons](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Apo_Island.jpg) (CC BY-SA 4.0).

But to sustain a community-managed reserve requires social preparations, says Abesamis. "You can't just tell fisherfolk to stop fishing in an area that's important to their livelihood," he says. "There's a psychological impact in creating an MPA and there's a lot of social preparations necessary to establish one."

In Sumilon and Apo, locals' livelihoods were a major consideration, if not the main driving force. Alcala tells Mongabay that the coral reefs around the islands were zoned into two parts: 15-25% of the area of these reefs was within no-take zones, and the remainder was opened to "fishermen using only non-destructive fishing methods."

While the country's MPAs started small, Alcala pushed for a bigger system when he was appointed secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in 1992. He influenced the creation of expansive, government-managed MPAs through the National Integrated Protected Area Systems (NIPAS) Act, which provided legal protection to three marine seascapes in 1992.



It would take 26 years, however, before the Philippines issued a follow-up: In 2018, the government enacted the Expanded National Integrated Protected Area Systems (E-NIPAS), supporting 32 marine protected areas with legislation, and including Apo and Sumilon islands under this protection scheme. Currently, the Visayas region holds the greatest number of NIPAS sites with seven MPAs covering 548,157 hectares (1.35 million acres).

The slow road to legislating government-managed MPAs, prompted local governments and communities to establish smaller ones in the 1990s through the Local Government Code (LGU Code), which gave them power to enact ordinances. This saw the mushrooming of 564 MPAs in the thousands of scattered islands in the Visayas, making it the region that holds a third of the country's MPAs today.

While NIPAS and E-NIPAS sites receive steady funding from the national treasury, community-managed MPAs depend on a budget allocated by local officials, which are most often sourced from tourism receipts. As such, these sites have different levels of protection, their fates relying on political priorities.

More, but less

Pilar's waters used to teem with reef fish species like the Napoleon wrasse (*Cheilinus undulatus*) and the bumphead parrotfish (*Bolbometopon muricatum*), Catalyo says. But during the 1990s, the parrotfish speared by fisherfolks were getting smaller in size, and by the 2000s, the seas were "empty" — devoid of fish, large or small. This forced fishers to go farther out to sea, up to 20 km (12 mi), spend more hours fishing and more money on motorized boats and expensive gear.

After Pilar established its protected area, the community devised a rigorous enforcement scheme that saw volunteers working in shifts to keep illegal fishers and poachers at bay. The results were immediate: In four years, the fish returned. Biophysical assessments done there, however, show the corals remain in poor condition. Despite this, the PMMP received the DENR's "Para el MAR" award in 2009, a recognition given to well-managed MPAs in the country.

Pilar's mayor said in 2009 that it was political will that led to the success of the PMMP. For community members like Catalyo, it was the enforcement: "When Haiyan struck, our watch house was washed away, but even then, we have volunteers watching over the marine protected area," she says.

Other MPAs, however, are failing. In a study on community-managed marine protected areas in the Visayas in 2008, Alcala found that only about 34% of the 564 MPAs there were "working" in improving fish biomass. The lack of consistent monitoring and enforcement, compounded by meager community engagement, had created "dummy parks."



Marine heatwaves have already resulted in large-scale coral bleaching events at increasing frequency causing worldwide reef degradation since 1997. Recovery requires more than 15 years. Image by Howard Hall / Coral Reef Image Bank.

Under the country's Fisheries Code, municipalities are encouraged to establish fish reserves or sanctuaries to cover at 15-45% of their waters. Today, barely 1% of municipal waters fall under the MPA scheme. Alcala says only 0.5% of municipal waters are designated as no-take MPA zones, and these areas only protect 2.7-3.4% of the country's total coral reef area.

Abesamis takes it further. If he were to adapt Alcala's 2008 study to assess the status of the country's MPAs, it's possible that only about 1% of the country's corals are protected, he says, since two-thirds of the MPAs are not efficiently managed to begin with. "The current MPA count still fails to protect our country's marine and coastal biodiversity," he says. "The real counting should be closer to the ecological effect of these marine protected areas. Otherwise, it's meaningless — we'll continue to face effectiveness problems."

Beyond corals

Experts point to a series of possible solutions: strengthening the country's larger MPA systems, synchronizing conservation with fisheries management policies, adapting newer models, and creating a network of MPAs. "Larger MPAs, like Australia's Great Barrier Reef, cover bigger areas so it's protecting a larger ecosystem," Abesamis says. "But when it comes to MPAs, the Philippines never moved beyond the small, nearshore level."

Marine scientists are banking on marine protected networks — a series of interconnected MPAs, particularly no-take zones — to ease the protection gap. While efficient MPAs boost fish abundance, studies show that the waters surrounding isolated MPAs are burdened by heavy fishing activities and, in the worst cases, intrusion by commercial vessels capable of catching 800,000 kilograms of fish in a single trip.

Interconnected MPAs, though, require a shift from a coral-centric mindset to one that treats all coastal areas as important to marine species. "Mangroves, seagrass beds, coral reefs — even the soft sandy bottoms," Abesamis says. "These areas are part of a larger ecosystem that are well-connected physically and biochemically through the life cycle of certain fish and invertebrates. Ideally, a system of MPAs should be trying to protect all of these components, whether these are found in one MPA or in many different MPAs."

Community acceptance of creating an MPA varies. Basic problems persist on the ground, including a knowledge gap about the marine resources, among others, and an aversion to closing 15% of municipal waters due to the perceived livelihood impact, Abesamis says. As such, the government has instead implemented closed fishing seasons in major fishing grounds to allow the fish population to rebound, with varying results.

In the Visayas region, though, communities like Pilar are receptive to MPAs due to the anticipated spillover of larval and adult fish driven by ocean currents moving northwest from the Pacific Ocean. "In the case of Apo Island, for example, we have evidence that fish larvae have spilled over to several areas in southwestern Negros Oriental province due to the prevailing ocean currents," Alcala says.



Alessandro Ponzo, a scientist from Large Marine Vertebrate Organization documents the reef life in Tubbataha Reef in Cagayancillo, the largest marine protected area in the Philippines. Marine scientists are banking on marine protected networks to ease the protection gap. Image by Anna Varona via [Wikimedia Commons \(CC BY 4.0\)](#).

For most governments, MPAs are attractive for their potential as tourism sites, as has been shown by successful ecotourism cases in Palawan. On the island of Panglao, another protected area in the Visayas, the municipality earned at least 11 million pesos (\$230,000) from collecting environmental user fees from its more than five diving sites after the better-known Boracay Island closed down for rehabilitation in 2018 and divers looked for alternative sites.

Alcala says it's necessary to repeat the surveys to determine the current state of the country's MPAs and adopt newer methods. Current methods of administering these protected areas may be "too difficult" for MPA managers, resulting in irregular monitoring.

"One challenge in the management of MPAs is the adoption of newer methods and techniques in determining live coral cover and the fish biomass inside and outside of no-take zones," Alcala says. "Our present techniques should give way to the newer technologies to make it easier for people to monitor their MPAs for coral cover and fish biomass."

Establishing these networks, however, faces the same bottleneck in sustaining single MPAs: Politics.

'Area feud'

Marine protected areas in the Philippines are small for political reasons. Their borders end where the neighboring municipality's border begins. The seas flow unimpeded, but administratively they're delineated by invisible lines, cut apart as if each were a thriving ecosystem on its own.

On the ground, experts say the prevailing framework for managing these MPAs is beset by overlapping policies between local governments and national agencies, as well as party politics at the local level.

Jurisdiction over marine areas is governed by complex, and at times overlapping, policies. More than 90% of the Philippines' MPAs fall within municipal waters, which are under the jurisdiction of local governments. But once an MPA is included in the NIPAS or E-NIPAS system, its management becomes the responsibility of the DENR's Protected Area Management Board.

This raises questions among local mayors, says Dennis Calvan of Rare Philippines. "Overlapping policies is one of the primary challenges being faced by our partner communities," he says. "We are often asked: 'How do we define municipal waters that are within protected areas?'"



The seas under MPA flow unimpeded, but administratively they're delineated by invisible lines, cut apart as if each were a thriving ecosystem on its own. Image by Guy Goddard via [Pixabay](#).



The seas of the Philippines' MPAs flow unimpeded, but administratively they're delineated by invisible lines, cut apart as if each were a thriving ecosystem on its own. Image by Guy Goddard via Pixabay. Coastal management includes not just conservation but enforcement schemes. Crucially, it also encompasses streamlining conservation initiatives with fisheries plans, Calvin says. "In some MPA areas under NIPAS, there are no fisheries management plan, and yet, these areas are also among the country's prime fishing grounds," he says. "How to marry the conservation objectives of NIPAS and E-NIPAS with the production goals of the Fisheries Code is a persistent challenge — and it's a big issue that needs to be addressed."

While concessions have been made, in part due to local governments exerting their rights over MPAs, it's unclear whether community-managed MPAs under the NIPAS and E-NIPAS structures receive budget allocations from the DENR. In the same vein, smaller MPAs sourcing funds from local governments may need a steadier flow of financing, especially during the pandemic, Abesamis says.

There have been efforts to create a network, both of MPAs and their managers. In northern Palawan, 18 municipalities created a network to link the 15 MPAs spanning 1,378 hectares (3,405 acres) in Coron, Culion, Calauit and Linacapan. Under this network, communities share expenses to cover monitoring and enforcement. Jose Maza, chair of the network, tells Mongabay that joining forces has allowed them to cushion the impacts of the pandemic, which forced them to shut their marine parks and cut off their revenue streams.

Putting that system in place, however, took a decade, Maza says. "At the onset, mayors tend to be hot and cold on the MPA network — one mayor likes it but when that mayor gets defeated by his opponent in the elections, the next mayor is averse to the network," Maza says. "We need to persuade them to support the MPA system again ... It's an area feud, you see. Sometimes, mayors from different political parties don't want to talk to each other so the meetings stall."

Conservation-fishing nexus

Another major problem besetting the country's MPAs is the encroachment of commercial vessels into municipal waters. While considered illegal under the country's fisheries law, these intrusions persist and may have gotten worse during the pandemic.

Figures from Oceana Philippines culled from the VIIRS vessel-tracking technology show that 40,204 commercial vessels entered Philippine municipal waters in 2020. Around 1,412 were detected in 15 larger MPAs, mostly in the Ticao Burias Pass Protected Seascape, in the Turtle Islands Marine Sanctuary on the border with Malaysia, and in the Malampaya Sound Protected Seascape and Landscape in Palawan.

"These vessels say that they are harboring there from inclement weather but the occurrence is too frequent to be ignored," says Gloria Estenzo Ramos, vice president of Oceana Philippines. The presence of commercial vessels in municipal waters is particularly dangerous for communities and MPAs, Oceana says. An artisanal fisherman catches an average of 5 kilograms (11 pounds) of fish after a five-hour trip, but a commercial vessel could catch 800,000 kilograms — a disparity that impacts the sustainability of fish stocks within community waters and of MPAs.

While the government has invested in campaigning against illegal fishing, a recent report released by the USAID and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) calculates that 27-40% of fish caught in 2019 — valued at approximately 62 billion pesos (\$1.3 billion) — are caught illegally. At least 30,000 municipal fishing vessels are unregistered, and commercial fishers fail to report up to 422,000 metric tons of fish catch each year.



An artisanal fisherman catches an average of 5 kilograms (11 pounds) of fish after a five-hour trip, but a commercial vessel could catch 800,000 kilograms — a disparity that impacts the sustainability of fish stocks within community waters and of MPAs. Image by George Sales via [Pixabay](#).

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For local fishers, the presence of commercial vessels within their waters — and within MPAs they manage and protect — can be disheartening. “We take turns watching over our MPA because if you volunteer to watch over it, you can’t go fishing,” says Ernesto Gabrino, a fisherman in Leyte, a province in the country’s eastern border region. “But those commercial vessels sneak in, take all the fish and in just one trip for them, our effort and sacrifices are wasted.”

The declining status of the Philippines’ seascape and the gravity of illegal, underreported and unregistered fishing prompted the BFAR to craft a fisheries management areas (FMA) framework, which it implemented in 2019. Among its grander goals was to curb illegal fishing by streamlining public and private initiatives on the ground. Under the revised Fisheries Code, the government has implemented a vessel monitoring system (VMS) to keep tabs on boats encroaching within community waters. But this has been challenged by the commercial fisheries sector through a bill in Congress that would legalize their entry into municipal waters.

“We see this bill as a retaliation from the industry,” Oceana’s Ramos tells Mongabay. “If you look at the timeline, this bill was filed in the same month that the BFAR issued an order for the full implementation of the VMS.”

Bigger factors at play

Abesamis and Calvin have been working on the ground for decades: Abesamis as a marine scientist tasked by local governments and civil society groups to assess marine resources; and Calvin as a fisheries specialist focused on shifting illegal fishing behaviors. They work in different communities in the Philippines.

Mongabay interviewed them separately, yet they raised similar points: science- and evidence-based policies are important; establishing MPAs and changing fishing behavior need major social preparations; there’s a need to harmonize conservation and fisheries policies; and a need to stabilize funding for MPAs, which directly impacts enforcement. They also point to an important element: time.



Corals grow at decadal rates, Abesamis says, adding that natural populations take time to rebound. A decade is also the minimum period to change fishing behaviors, Calvin says, since implementing such programs require various consultations with communities. But time is a luxury: sea level rise, ocean acidification, warming waters, and other related impacts of climate change threaten to decimate shallow coral ecosystems here.

“Climate change is expected to impact negatively on our marine resources,” says Alcala, the former environment secretary. “High temperatures could wipe out our shallow coral ecosystems, and we may have to extend the concept of MPAs to deeper reef systems beyond 40-50 meters [130-165 feet] where marine water temperatures are expected to remain cool and thus could help save reefs and their fish populations.”

The Philippine model of MPA management is deeply rooted in communities. But with figures showing that this mechanism isn't providing the level of protection necessary to sustain the marine ecosystems, experts say working across local governments and establishing alliances to improve management may be the best way forward.

“In theory, a well-maintained MPA connected to a network should be able to buffer some of the impacts of climate change,” Abesamis says. “But looking at the figures now ... would it be enough? Right now, it's hard to be optimistic, but we do what we can.”

While possible solutions would take years, decades even, both Abesamis and Calvin agree on the need to engage with non-politicized players on the ground and secure the tenure of the Bantay Dagat, the sea wardens hired by mayors to enforce fisheries measures and, sometimes, to watch over MPAs.

“There's a lot of governance structures that need to be present for MPAs to be sustained, and at the same time, a lot of these actions are also trying to catch up,” Abesamis says. “But as long as there's support from the barangay or local community, that MPA will survive and can be sustained. You need good governance too — you can't get around that. The day-by-day management will be done by people living on the coasts and they must be supported by local governments, even national governments.”



A major problem besetting the country's MPAs is the encroachment of commercial vessels into municipal waters. Image via [PxHere](#) (CC0 1.0).

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Banner image of Apo Island by [macoy.mejia](#) via [Wikimedia Commons](#) (CC BY-SA 4.0).

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Source: <https://news.mongabay.com/2021/06/with-growing-pressures-can-the-philippines-sustain-its-marine-reserves/>



Philippines recognized for banning lead in paints

By: [Jigger Jerusalem](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Inquirer Mindanao](#) / 09:43 PM June 30, 2021



Lead-free kids kick off a countdown to the December 31, 2016, deadline for the phaseout of lead-tainted paint at the Quezon Memorial Circle on Sunday, October 23, 2016. —contributed photo

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY — With the help of environmental advocates who have been campaigning against the danger of deadly chemicals found in ordinary and industrial materials, the country was chosen as one of five recipients of this year's Future Policy Award, the EcoWaste Coalition said in a statement.

The award, handed out by the World Future Council (WFC) since 2010 to celebrate "impactful policies," is considered the "Oscars on best policies."

The award honored the country's ban of the use of lead in the manufacture of paints to prevent children and workers' exposure to this toxic chemical, said EcoWaste Coalition.

"For the sake of current and future generations, it is absolutely critical that stakeholders make the protection from hazardous chemicals a priority. The Philippines and the other winning policies show the way forward and are an inspiration for policymakers worldwide," WFC executive director Alexandra Wandel said.

"Every day, our rights are violated by the exposure to toxic chemicals and pollution. Especially children are disproportionately affected," Wandel added.

Other recipients of the award were Colombia, Kyrgyzstan, Sri Lanka, and Sweden.

"This global recognition affirms the importance of adopting a lead paint law with the most protective lead content limit and crafted through an open and participatory process," said Manny Calonzo, EcoWaste Coalition adviser.

The group said it did not work alone in ensuring that environmental and health regulations are being complied with by paint makers as it honored colleagues at the International Pollutants Elimination Network (IPEN) for their invaluable campaign guidance, support, and solidarity for the last 10 years.

Calonzo said the Philippine Association of Paint Manufacturers (PAPM) also played a major role in eliminating lead in paints.



“Stakeholders’ participation is key to catalyzing an industry-wide switch to the production of all paint types without added lead and to the eventual elimination of lead paint, a major source of lead exposure in children,” Calonzo added.

Derrick Tan, PAPM president, said the country’s paint makers have ably demonstrated their capacity to replace lead additives from all brands and products in compliance with the chemical control order (CCO) and in pursuit of their corporate social responsibility.

“It only shows that eliminating lead paint in all categories is an attainable goal. Some manufacturers have even voluntarily secured third-party ‘Lead Safe Paint’ certification to prove conformance with the strictest 90 [parts per million] limit for lead content in paint,” Tan explained.

In a statement, Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu thanked the WFC for the recognition.

“This will inspire us to further strengthen the implementation of our chemical control policy and to develop other policies to protect human health and the environment,” Cimatu said.

“We appreciate the vigilance of non-government organizations like the EcoWaste Coalition in the lead phase-out campaign. We also commend the academe and the PAPM for their support in making our CCO implementable,” he added.

A high-level online award ceremony will be held on July 6.

Climate crisis to turn Manila, other Asian cities into bodies of water

By: [Cristina Eloisa Baclig](#) - Data Journalist / [@CeBacligINO](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 06:44 PM June 30, 2021



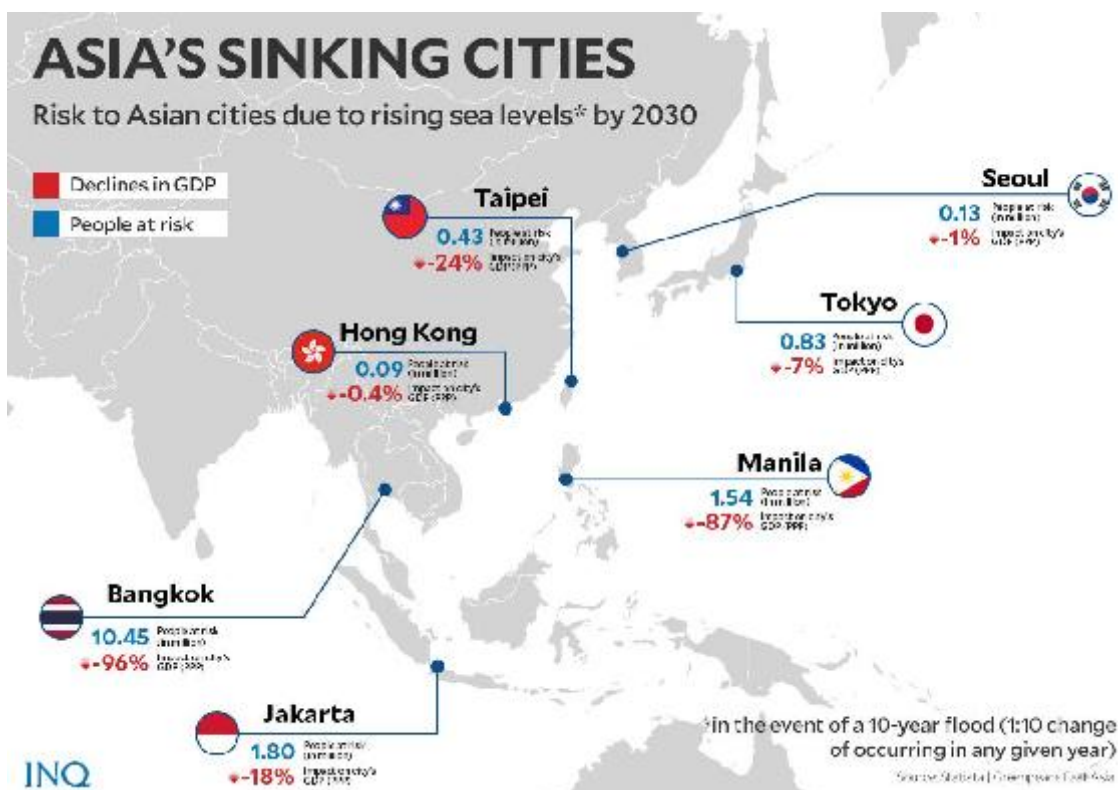
FILE PHOTO: Grig C. Montegrando/INQUIRER

It's 2030 and Manila, densely populated and packed with residences and structures, has become a lake.

This, according to a study of environmental group Greenpeace East Asia, was highly likely to happen in 2030 as sea levels rise at unprecedented rates.

Continuing and extreme sea level rise in the past decades, due to climate change, is fueling stronger tropical cyclones that could soon sink major Asian cities, including Manila, and displace millions of people and destroy economies worth billions of dollars.

Greenpeace East Asia, in a report released this month, said studies found that seven coastal cities across Asia are at heightened flood risks due to sea-level rise and intense tropical storms which could bring more damaging wind speeds, higher storm surges, and increased extreme rainfall in the following years.





According to the report, among Asian cities at risk of turning into water worlds because of extreme weather changes in 2030 were:

- Bangkok, Thailand
- Jakarta, Indonesia
- Manila, Philippines
- Tokyo, Japan
- Taipei, Taiwan
- Seoul, South Korea
- Hong Kong

Ruin

Greenpeace analyzed how the climate crisis can affect the economies of the seven cities based on three datasets:

Climate Central’s projection of estimated sea-level rise and coastal flooding data caused by storm surges and high tides.

The estimated population density of the seven cities.

The estimated GDP of the identified cities.

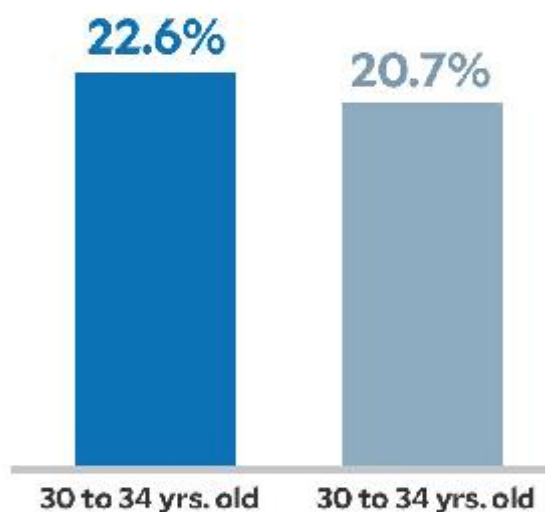
Results showed that the overall monetary damages and GDP impact of extreme sea-level rise and coastal flooding by 2030 would amount to \$724 billion. The estimated GDP impact ranged from 0.4 percent to 96 percent of each city’s economy.

At least 15 million individuals and 1,829 square kilometers of land would bear the severe impact of the climate crisis.

Manila Lake

Manila, the capital city of the Philippines and home to over a million Filipinos, was flagged as the third most exposed economically among the seven cities.

WORKING AGE OF OFWs



Data show that most OFWs are younger than 40 years old. | INQ

Graphic by Ed Lustan

According to the study, at least 87 percent or 37.29 square kilometers of the city’s land would feel the impact of the 10-year flood in 2030. More than 1.54 million Manila residents could be displaced and lead to a \$39.24 billion decline in the city’s GDP.



The 10-year flood, also dubbed as the “one percent flood,” according to Katharina Buchholz of data consumer company Statista, pertains to “a flood which has a 1:10 chance of occurring in any given year in the respective location.”

Asia’s Sinking Cities

A separate study found that the sea level in Manila Bay rises by 13.24 mm per year. Data from another report said Metro Manila sinks by a rate of 10 cm annually due to the over-extraction of groundwater within the region.

The disastrous 10-year flood could inundate and damage the historical landmarks and popular tourist destinations in the city, including the Jose Rizal National Monument, Luneta Park, Binondo and the “walled city” of Intramuros.



Graphic by Ed Lustan

Bangkok

Experts from Greenpeace East Asia said the city of Bangkok could suffer the greatest damage and losses among the seven cities.

Over 96 percent, or 1,512.94 square kilometers, of Bangkok’s land area could be overcome by seawater following the 10-year flood.

The study added that Sappaya-Sapasathan, the third and current parliament house of Thailand, could be among the major infrastructures swallowed by floodwater.

A total of 10.45 million individuals in Bangkok could suffer from the projected sea-level rise and coastal flooding.

The city might also lose around \$512.28 billion, or 96 percent of its total GDP.

Greenpeace East Asia also explained that the city’s vulnerability to flooding, which is “exacerbated by the fact that the city is sinking due to soft soils, heavy urbanization, and land subsidence”, is also a factor that could worsen the impact of the climate crisis.

Jakarta

Jakarta in Indonesia ranked as second most affected city. Around 109.38 km² or 17 percent of its total land area might be under water.

Some areas in the city identified by Greenpeace East Asia which could potentially be hit by the flooding were residential and commercial buildings, several shopping malls along the coast, and the National Monument and Jakarta City Hall.

At least 1.80 million people could be affected and the city could lose 18 percent of its total GDP equivalent to \$68.20 billion.



Citing separate studies, the organization said that the city experiences regular flooding disasters following heavy rains, high river discharges, and high tides every year.

“In addition, excessive groundwater drainage is contributing to Jakarta’s subsidence, which is on average 1 to 15 centimeters each year,” said Greenpeace East Asia, adding that a number of areas in Jakarta “have sunk between 3 to 4.1 meters, especially in coastal areas.”

Tokyo and Taiwan

Of the four East Asian cities, Tokyo and Taipei faced the greatest impact, with 830,000 and 430,000 lives in danger.

Tokyo, according to the report, experiences at least 11 typhoons and an increasing frequency and intensity of storms and torrential rain every year.

Experts have also noted that storm surge flooding may become even more severe in the coming years due to rising sea levels.

The geographical structure of the city also plays a huge role in the severity of the impact of the projected 10-year flood in 2030.

While the city has an average elevation of 40 meters above sea level, it has a number of low-lying areas with a high population density that is still at risk of flooding.

“About 4 percent of Tokyo’s land area is below the level to which seawater could rise should a 10-year flood occur in 2030, according to our analysis using projections,” the report read.

Included in these areas at risk of flooding are the “Koto 5 Wards” in the Eastern part of Tokyo which is comprised of Sumida, Koto, Adachi, Katsushika, and Edogawa.

“Other areas that are at risk of flooding include Kasai Rinkai Park, which is built on reclaimed land on the shoreline of Tokyo Bay, and river parks along the Arakawa River, which are popular destinations to watch the cherry trees bloom in spring,” the organization said.

At least seven percent or \$68.19 billion of Tokyo’s GDP could be wiped out.

On the other hand, Taipei—which experiences four typhoon landfall each year according to data from the Central Weather Bureau (CWB) in Taiwan—could lose 17 percent, or 46.93 km², of its total land area.

The 10-year flood could also wipe out \$39.24 billion of the city’s GDP.

“The western part of Taipei, particularly areas along the Tamsui River, would be affected more than other regions of the city if sea levels were to rise,” the report noted.

The historic Datong District and Taipei Main Station could potentially be flooded.

Seoul and Hong Kong

South Korea, which has been hit by three strong typhoons in 2020, could also incur damages from the 10-year flood.

An estimated 3 percent of Seoul’s land area could go below sea level.

The capital city could suffer damages worth \$4.69 billion, or one percent of its total GDP. At least 130,000 million people are in danger.

The western part of Seoul, particularly Gangseo-gu on the Southern bank of the Han River, as well as both banks of the Anyangcheon River, could be at high risk as the sea level rise.

The Gimpo International Airport and the Gangseo Marsh Ecological Park could be under water.



The least affected city on the list will be Hong Kong. Results showed that around 27.36 km², two percent of its total land area, could be under water.

A total of \$2.24 billion in losses was estimated and up to 90,000 people in Hong Kong could potentially be affected.

“Northwest Hong Kong, including Mai Po Nature Reserve, where a large portion of land is mangrove and wetland, is at very low elevation and is vulnerable to sea-level rise,” said experts from Green Peace East Asia.

Climate change and rising sea levels: Double global threat

Based on a 2015 study, over the twentieth century, the global mean sea level (GMSL) rose by an estimated rate of 1.6 to 1.9 millimeters per year.

A huge factor was anthropogenic, or human-induced, climate change.

Probabilistic reanalysis of twentieth-century sea-level rise

Climate change intensifies tropical storms, which increases the risk of stronger storm surges, more extreme rainfall, and high tides or sea-level.

Statista analyzed last year a research by Scott Kup and Benjamin Strauss on global vulnerability to sea-level rise and coastal flooding published by scientific magazine Nature Communications.

Rising Sea Levels Will Threaten 200 Million People by 2100

According to the report, at least 200 million people globally will live below sea level by 2100. Around 160 million more will suffer from higher annual flooding due to rising ocean levels.

“These numbers are much higher than those published in previous studies, which used different coastal elevation models and assumed that only 250 million people in total would be affected by these adverse events,” said Buchholz.

Majority of the total affected population will be coming from eight countries in Asia including China, Bangladesh, India, Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Japan.

What should be done?

Green Peace East Asia, in its study, urged faster and more efficient climate action. The organization specifically called for governments’ commitment to achieving “net zero” greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2050.

The net-zero emissions in 2050 project by the International Energy Agency (IAE) aims to lower energy-related carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions to net-zero by 2050 and “give the world an even chance of limiting the global temperature rise to 1.5 °C,” according to the Greenpeace East Asia.

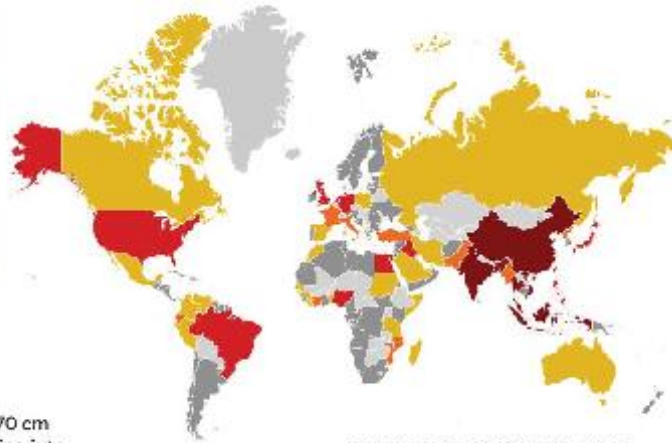
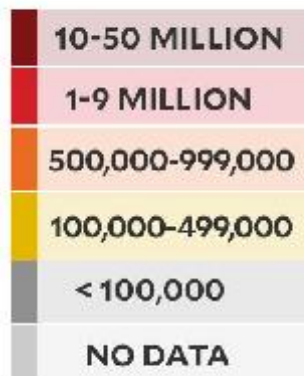
“Our roadmap shows the priority actions that are needed today to ensure the opportunity of net-zero emissions by 2050—narrow but still achievable—is not lost,” said the organization.

“The scale and speed of the efforts demanded by this critical and formidable goal—our best chance of tackling climate change and limiting global warming to 1.5 °C—make this perhaps the greatest challenge humankind has ever faced,” said IEA Executive Director Fatih Birol in a statement.



WHERE MOST PEOPLE ARE AFFECTED BY RISING SEA LEVEL

Number of people per country living on land expected
to be under sea level 2100*



*Assuming a rise in sea levels of 50-70 cm
(2° C temperature increase/not taking into
account ice sheet instability)

Source: Stockholm Resilience Centre, 2016. **INQ**

Green Peace East Asia also asked government leaders of Asian countries to take responsibility and cooperate with the IAE’s initiative to protect the economy, conserve biodiversity and ensure the safety of lives and livelihood of their populations.

“We ask governments to deliver implementation plans with firm and achievable solutions, such as phasing out domestic use and financing of the fossil fuel industry and switching to an economy that is based on renewable energy,” the organization said.

TSB

Philippines among Southeast Asian nations missing from push to protect 30% of planet

Michael Taylor, Thomson Reuters Foundation

Posted at Jun 30 2021 10:51 PM



Plastic bottles float on the heavily polluted San Juan River, a tributary of Pasig River in Mandaluyong City, June 21, 2021. *Eloisa Lopez, Reuters*

SE Asia rich in biodiversity but only Cambodia joins pledge

KUALA LUMPUR — A growing global push to safeguard nature by pledging to protect about a third of the planet's land and oceans by 2030 will fall short unless biodiversity-rich Southeast Asian nations get behind the ambitious proposal, environmentalists have warned.

Leaders of the G7 wealthy nations this month backed a coalition of about 60 countries that have already promised to conserve at least 30% of their land and oceans by 2030 (30x30) to curb climate change and the loss of plant and animal species.

Cambodia is the only Southeast Asian nation to have signed up to the goal so far, although it has been endorsed by countries in other parts of Asia-Pacific, including Japan, Pakistan and the Maldives.

Brian O'Donnell, director of the U.S.-based Campaign for Nature, which is calling on world leaders to back the pledge, said it was "very important" to get governments in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on board.

"Given the incredible biodiversity in the region, much of which is facing pressure, ASEAN countries are a key voice to support 30x30," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Southeast Asian countries cover just 3% of the Earth's surface but are home to three of the world's 17 "megadiverse" countries - Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines, according to the Campaign for Nature.

These "megadiverse" nations have been identified by conservationists as being the richest in species, in a bid to raise awareness and spur protection efforts.

Southeast Asia's land and ocean contain 35% of mangrove forests and 30% of coral reefs, while more than 2,000 animal and plant species have been discovered there over the past two decades.

The region is also home to about 18% of the world's endangered species, according to the Campaign for Nature.

In Indonesia, for example, the Rawa Singkil Wildlife Reserve is a high-priority conservation area and critical wildlife habitat, dubbed the "orangutan capital of the world", while the endangered pygmy elephants live in the rainforests of Borneo.



But several ASEAN countries are experiencing high deforestation rates, with Indonesia, Malaysia, Laos and Cambodia among the top countries for primary forest loss, according to monitoring service Global Forest Watch.

NEW GLOBAL ACCORD

The 30x30 goal is included in the draft text of a new global treaty to protect the planet's plants, animals and ecosystems, due to be agreed at an Oct. 11-24 summit in China, according to officials at the U.N. Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

But much of Southeast Asia is currently battling to contain a sharp rise in coronavirus cases, with new restrictions, business closures and attempts to rapidly scale up vaccinations.

The crisis has rightly become a higher priority for policymakers than nature conservation, said Ravi Sharma, a former CBD director, adding regional talks had also been disrupted.

But research shows that maintaining intact ecosystems can help avert future infectious disease outbreaks, he added.

Investing in nature and adopting policies for a green COVID-19 recovery could generate 395 million jobs and about \$10 trillion in business opportunities by 2030, according to the World Economic Forum.

But the economic benefits of biodiversity conservation are not yet clear to all of Southeast Asia's political leaders, many of whom are relying on natural resources to lift their people out of poverty, green groups say.

Malaysia and Indonesia are the top two producers of palm oil, the world's most widely used edible oil, which environmentalists blame for forest destruction.

"ASEAN countries are conscious that the actions needed for 30x30 would have economic implications as well as costs for implementation," said Tony La Viña, a prominent Philippine environmental lawyer and activist.

"These fears have a basis but can be overcome once they realize the long-term economic and development benefits of the goal, as well as identify the opportunities (it) would open up in terms of conservation and sustainable livelihoods," he said.

A delay in Southeast Asian nations backing the 30x30 target could be a tactic to secure more funding from richer countries to invest in nature, conservationists said.

A key part of the pledge will be to respect the rights of indigenous groups and communities living in protected areas, many of whom play a vital role in conservation, said O'Donnell.

Southeast Asian countries have developed innovative nature projects involving local communities and by joining the 30x30 group, they could lead that work, he added.

The best incentive for them would be if the proposal included payments to local communities and indigenous peoples for looking after their natural environment, La Viña said.

GREEN GRABBING

Biodiversity loss is directly linked to how rich nations have benefited economically from exploiting nature – and so they bear a greater responsibility for fixing the problem, said Arie Rompas, a forest campaigner at Greenpeace Indonesia.

But even ASEAN governments have often overlooked indigenous communities when pursuing economic growth, and have not done enough to guarantee their land tenure and other rights, he said.



The 30x30 goal appears to have been developed without adequate consultation of indigenous and other local communities, he noted.

International conservation efforts have a history of failing to recognize or address problems such as "green grabbing", where land used by local people is set aside and may become off-limits to them, said Amber Huff, a research fellow at the UK-based Institute of Development Studies.

The global biodiversity and climate crises require action, but proposed solutions must tackle the root causes and accept that people can and do live sustainably alongside nature while making use of it for their livelihoods and wellbeing, she said.

"Plans like the blanket 30x30 initiative will rob indigenous peoples and rural farmers, foragers and fishing communities around the world of their lands and livelihoods in the name of environmental 'restoration'," she warned.



Greenpeace calls for improved air pollution monitoring systems

By [Gaea Katreena Cabico](#) (Philstar.com) - June 30, 2021 - 12:13pm



Photo shows an air quality monitoring device set up by Greenpeace Philippines during the installation of the pop-up bike lanes at the Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City. Greenpeace/Jilson Tiu

MANILA, Philippines — The unusual haze over Metro Manila bolstered the urgent need to improve the country’s air quality monitoring systems and update air quality standards, an environmental group said Wednesday.

In a statement, Greenpeace called on the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to improve its capacity to monitor particulate matter (PM) 2.5—a smaller and deadlier pollutant. It said none of the agency’s 14 PM2.5 sensors across the capital region are working.

“Air pollution is a growing health crisis and government decision makers must have robust data, right standards and people-centered solutions in place,” Greenpeace campaigner Khevin Yu said.

The group issued the statement after the Philippines Institute of Volcanology and Seismology clarified there is evidence that sulfur dioxide from Taal Volcano in Batangas reached Metro Manila and nearby provinces. An [earlier assessment](#) said the haze was due to pollution caused by human activities, and not from Taal’s emissions.

Greenpeace said the government will be “stuck in an air pollution guessing game” without adequate and working air quality monitoring systems.

“Bad air quality has negative impacts on the health of people and the economy. As early as last year, Greenpeace has already sounded the alarm that air pollution will rebound to pre-pandemic levels as the economy opens up,” Yu said.

The group earlier rolled out efforts to install up to 28 air quality monitoring devices in Metro Manila cities and communities impacted by local coal plants outside the capital region. The devices aim to monitor toxic pollutants such as nitrous oxide, particulate matter 10 and PM2.5.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2021/06/30/2109190/greenpeace-calls-improved-air-pollution-monitoring-systems/amp/>



Amid smog in capital region, gov't urged to improve 'outdated' air quality monitoring

Job Manahan, ABS-CBN News

Posted at Jun 30 2021 07:14 PM | Updated as of Jun 30 2021 10:25 PM



Smog continues to cover the Metro Manila skyline seen from Pasig City on June 29, 2021. *Mark Demayo, ABS-CBN News*

MANILA (UPDATED)— Environment group Greenpeace on Wednesday urged the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to upgrade its “outdated” air quality monitoring system, as volcanic smog from Taal reached the Metro Manila and other provinces.

In a statement, the group said the volcanic smog, or vog, was compounded by human-made pollution in Metro Manila, as more vehicles hit the road due to looser lockdown levels in the middle of the pandemic.

State seismologists earlier in the day said sulfur dioxide plumes emitted by the Taal Volcano earlier this week reached the planetary boundary layer or 20 kilometers above sea level, and has already “spread” throughout Batangas, Laguna, Cavite, Rizal, Bulacan, Pampanga, Bataan, Zambales, and Metro Manila.

The vog, or air pollution due to volcanic gas, was due to Taal's continued emission of high sulfur dioxide levels over the weekend, Phivolcs said.

This is why Greenpeace said better air quality monitoring is important to gauge the toxic air pollutants present in such areas, which have health impacts.

“While Phivolcs has clarified their earlier assessment of the air quality situation, without adequate and working air quality monitoring systems, the government will be stuck in an air pollution guessing game. Improved air quality monitoring, on the other hand, will yield valuable data that government agencies can act on,” Greenpeace campaigner Khevin Yu was quoted as saying.

HOW TAAL'S VOG REACHED NCR, HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

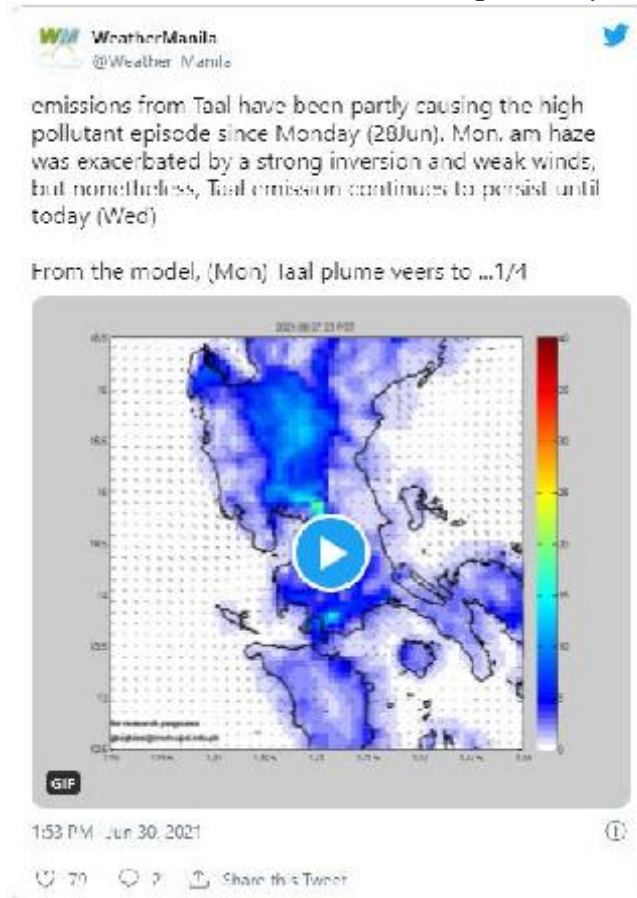
A 1-kilometer warm layer of air is preventing cooler air near the ground to rise, trapping pollutants and driving the accumulation of sulfur dioxide plumes over the region, according to Phivolcs.

The temperature inversion might dissipate within 24 to 48 hours, Phivolcs officer-in-charge Renato Solidum added.

He advised affected residents to stay in their homes and wear N95 masks to block hazardous air particles.

In a Twitter thread, Institute of Environmental Science and Meteorology (IESM) professor Dr. Gerry Bagtasa said the observed haze in various Metro Manila areas on Monday “was exacerbated by a strong inversion and weak winds.”

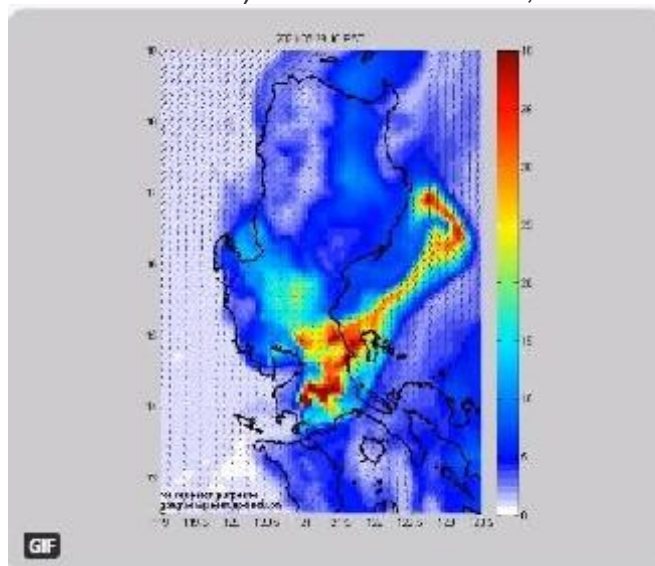
Based on the model he showed, Bagtasa noted that Taal's sulfur dioxide plumes were carried west, and moved northeast due to the monsoon, reaching the capital region.



“Taal plume had northward movement traversing NCR, but with a more unstable atmosphere, it was not as bad as the [Monday] haze,” he wrote.

Bagtasa said the sulfur dioxide (SO₂) turned into sulfate aerosols in the air, thus making the haze whitish.

“[These] are sulfate particulates already (not SO₂) which differs from the typical dark skyline color due to soot. PM (particulate matter) is a health hazard,” he added.



Dr. Bagtasa's model showing the direction of Taal's sulfur dioxide plumes, which already reached Metro Manila and other provinces north.

Mariton Bornas, who heads Phivolcs' Volcano Monitoring and Eruption Prediction Division, explained to ABS-CBN News that aside from the high sulfur dioxide levels, their satellite data also detected environmental pollution.



“Wala rin po kasing hangin so mabilis mag-accumulate ang pollutants then we also have the vog. ' Yung vog, hindi lang sulfur dioxide ang kailangan niyan. Kailangan po niyan ng moisture, may ibang kasamang aerosol or dust particles, and kailangan din po niyan ng solar radiation to form. Lahat ng ‘yan ay nasa bulkan,” Bornas told ABS-CBN News.

(There is no air moving so the pollutants have accumulated, compounded with the vog. The vog does not only contain sulfur dioxide, it has moisture, aerosol or dust particles, it also needs solar radiation to form and they are all present at Taal)

The vog hovering around Taal’s nearby areas was also enhanced by these pollutants, as well as its position in the atmosphere, she noted.

“Mas malayo po ang naaabot ng [smog sa] mataas (na part)” according to the official. (The smog could reach wider areas if it is higher.)

AIR QUALITY SENSORS ‘NOT WORKING’

Greenpeace, on the other hand, said DENR’s PM2.5 air quality index sensors were “not working” as of Tuesday, despite detecting “hazardous PM2.5 levels” in the capital region since early Sunday.

PM2.5 is a particulate matter that has a diameter of less than 2.5 micrometers. It is dangerous when inhaled because it could worsen health conditions such as asthma and cancer, Greenpeace’s Khevin Yu told ABS-CBN News.

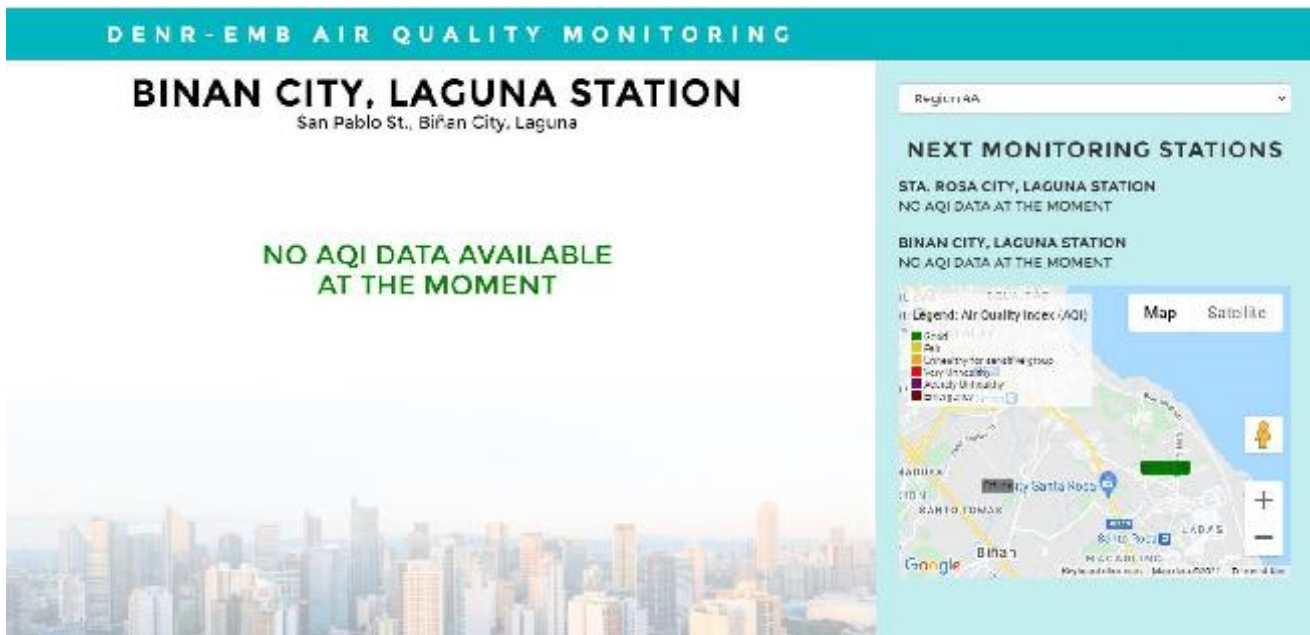
The pollutant is also usually emitted by cars and plantations.

As of early Wednesday, the air stations of Metro Manila cities Parañaque, Taguig, and Las Piñas, which are nearest to Taal Volcano, posted a -9999.0 micrograms per normal cubic meter (ug/Ncm) of PM 2.5.



Muntinlupa’s air station, on the other hand, recorded 15.38 ug/Ncm of PM2.5.

Calabarzon’s air stations in Laguna were also offline as of this story’s posting, with the Environmental Management Bureau’s (EMB) dashboard indicating that there was “no air quality index data available at the moment.”



The EMB dashboard said some of its air stations in Calabarzon were offline

As the presence of vog hounded various areas, Greenpeace reminded the public that the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) last year “gave Filipinos a glimpse” of what Philippine cities could look like with improved air quality.

ABS-CBN News made a phone call to the office of engineer Jun Dy, the point person of EMB’s air quality division, but no one answered.

The bureau has also yet to respond to queries on the matter sent via email.



Usok ng Bulkang Taal umabot na sa Metro Manila, mga kalapit na lugar



June 30, 2021 @ 6:07 PM 12 hours ago

MANILA, Philippines – Umabot na sa Metro Manila at mga kalapit na lugar ang sulfur dioxide (SO₂) gas na inilalabas ng Bulkang Taal, ayon sa Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS).

“Sa ating mga datos na kalalabas lang at nakita po namin kagabi ay nakita natin na ang sulfur dioxide gas ay na-disperse,” sinabi ni PHIVOLCS Officer-in-Charge at Science and Technology Undersecretary Renato Solidum Jr. sa isang panayam ng GMA News.

“Maliban doon sa vog sa Taal area ay na-disperse po sa iba’t ibang dako kasama ang ilang bahagi ng Luzon kasama ang NCR, mga karatig na probinsiya,” aniya pa.

Ngunit paliwanag ng opisyal na ang smog na nakita sa Metro Manila ay polusyon na pinalala ng temperature inversion.

“Ang temperature ng hangin mula sa ground o ibabaw paakyat ay bumababa. Nagsimula ng June 26 ayon sa PAGASA,” paliwanag ni Solidum.

“Nagkaroon ng isang layer ng mainit na hangin o warm air na imbes na umangat ang mga pollutants at pumunta sa itaas ay dahil malamig ito, mas malamig ito kaysa doon sa mainit na hangin, ay ito ay hindi napapaangat. Kaya lalong dumami din ang pollutants dito sa Metro Manila na nagsimula noong June 26, Sabado,” saad pa nito.

Aniya na pinalala rin ng sulfur dioxide ang polusyon sa hangin.

“Pero dahil nagkaroon ng mas mataas na emission sa Taal Volcano noong Lunes ng umaga, [mahigit] 14,000 tonnes per day, at ayon nga sa bagong satellite data ay napadpad sa hangin papunta dito, kaya ang usok na nakita natin at nakikita pa rin hanggang ngayon, kahit umaga, ay talagang maraming pollutants ang nagho-hover dito sa Metro Manila dahil mas malamig ang hangin ngayon,” paliwanag ni Solidum.

“Pero dahil nga sa pagpadpad ng sulfur dioxide gas over Metro Manila ay mas naging hazy ang pananaw ng ating mga kababayan sa paligid ng Metro Manila,” dagdag nito.

Ayon pa sa PAGASA, namataan nitong Martes ang “haze” sa Metro Manila na dulot ng thermal inversion.

Ito ay nabubuo kapag nakulong ang hangin kasama ang “moisture, smoke, and other particles” ayon kay PAGASA weather specialist Joey Figuracion.



Maliban sa Metro Manila, narating ang usok mula sa bulkan sa Batangas, Laguna, Cavite, Rizal, Bulacan, Pampanga, Bataan at Zambales.

Nananatili sa Alert Level 2 ang Bulkang Taal kaya't bawal pa ring pumasok sa isla.

Paaalala pa ng ahensya sa mga residenteng apektado ng usok na magsuot ng face mask, uminom ng maraming tubig, at manatili sa bahay. **RNT/ELM**



Phivolcs kumambiyong sa usok sa Metro Manila, galing nga raw sa bulkang Taal

By [Angie dela Cruz](#) (Pilipino Star Ngayon) - July 1, 2021 - 12:00am



Ito kahapon ang ginawang paglilinaw ng Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) nang magsagawa ng pag-aaral gamit ang Ozone Mapping Instrument ng NASA at dito natukoy na nagbuga ng sulfur dioxide ang Taal Volcano sa loob ng nakalipas na dalawang araw.

Michael Varcas

MANILA, Philippines — Bukod sa Metro Manila ay nakarating hanggang Central Luzon partikular na sa mga lalawigan ng Bataan, Zambales, Bulacan, Pampanga, Batangas, Laguna, Cavite hanggang Rizal ang ibinugang asupre o gas air pollutant mula sa bunganga ng Bulkang Taal sa Batangas.

Ito kahapon ang ginawang paglilinaw ng Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) nang magsagawa ng pag-aaral gamit ang Ozone Mapping Instrument ng NASA at dito natukoy na nagbuga ng sulfur dioxide ang Taal Volcano sa loob ng nakalipas na dalawang araw.

Unang sinabi ng Phivolcs kamakalawa na hindi galing sa Bulkang Taal ang naranasang pagdilim ng kalangitan sa Metro Manila kundi mula sa polusyon mula sa usok ng sasakyan at pabrika ang smog o maruming hangin na napadpad sa Metro Manila hanggang noong Martes dahil sa kakulangan pa nila ng magagamit na ebidensya.

Pero nang gumamit na ng instrumento ang Phivolcs ay natukoy na asupre nga ang napadpad sa malaking bahagi ng Luzon kasama ang Metro Manila dala ng hangin mula sa Taal volcano nang magdilim ang naturang lugar.

Sa pagtaya ng Phivolcs, aabot sa 14,326 tonelada kada araw ang inilabas na asupre ng Taal Volcano. Sa nakalipas na magdamag ay nakapagtala ang Phivolcs ng anim na volcanic earthquake o pagyanig ng lupa sa palibot ng nasabing bulkan.



Cebu City council flags trash contract

There is no proper monitoring as to how much garbage is being disposed in the landfill

Published 5 hours ago on July 1, 2021 02:30 AM

By [Rico Osmeña](#)



The Cebu City Council on Wednesday questioned the garbage hauling deal between the city government and Docast Construction which was valued at P404 million as it noted the non-compliance of the contractor on several provisions in the contract.

North district City Councilor Alvin Dizon inquired Docast proprietor John Javier on the alleged non-compliance on provisions set in the contract, particularly the presence of transfer stations north and south district of the city. Acting Mayor Michael Rama, on the other hand, issued a memorandum to Docast and reiterated that the contractor should possess a property not one hectare in land area that is suitable to serve as a motor pool.

The acting mayor disclosed that after thorough inspection on the Inayawan Transfer station, they discovered that Docast have not complied with the requirements, saying that the contractor only had one waste transfer station existing at the South.

It was also discovered that the South transfer station was not owned by Docast, while there was no existing transfer station on the North area considering the fact that this must exist prior to entering the contract. Rama added that there is no proper monitoring as to how much garbage being disposed in the landfill due to the absence of a proper person to monitor the weighing process from ARN landfill located at Binaliw in Cebu City as well as in the transfer station.

“According to the report, you are only providing 13 trucks, which is far less than the minimum requirement of at least 50 units your company needs to provide, which fact runs contrary to the agreed terms in the said contract,” Rama said.

The acting Cebu City local chief executive gave Docast 48 hours to explain its side on the matter.

Source: https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2021/07/01/cebu-city-council-flags-trash-contract/?_cf_chl_jschl_tk_=1ecc165c131948c1d9f3400926b3baf870ccc64-1625097140-0-AZy_N-fIBUA8RJ48HOpvRwrUBVaAPmYgsYf7hNsBT9znbOvHHbBJqqckGwITOGlQjXgHIFKh1ZljlNa3sYaJoYOSv64zNCbzKqN82cJLN4oYJKQ7IVr3Jb26bltEtcYl-m0vr7956A36BMdyrn-PFPzL47ja6uqufB19dyw5WpTDWtV1keKFEgmnzIrXi6F4cJdcKgeAjqWFDeFmpswrjaemyiKpjc6DEhaiN_0zsgYQJx6R8mlyEWbrun8VsxKIUVExzOItofVU7lqxfrBVMpJaKqn9c09KTsu-57Odp8cxo-2_iil7UYMBIKAX8JgT4puxg1JEeMfsMahDVbWBupe6BVWR74rnQHK6DCjDyrgI7eG0H8kMATbaY4AxXyjkH-9BYT0K_D9ks-nPN-OmFKwwp_j3BH04vK8qr2CB2hmzOoNwM5qa-8idGSDxOdPFpIL9qGMW9V0f-fLSWZqj13ZOc2Fxl3NTgw8hYgXr

In the Philippines' war on waste, a startup deploys black soldier flies

In Davao City, in the southern Philippines, a startup has introduced the use of black soldier flies (*Hermetia illucens*) to address kitchen waste.



During the larval stage, black soldier flies consume and convert large quantities of food waste into compost, while the larvae grow rich in protein and can be used as alternative feed for chicken or pigs. Image: Judy Gallagher via [Flickr](#). [CC BY NC-ND 2.0](#)

[Bong S. Sarmiento, Mongabay.com](#)

June 30, 2021

Maggots are considered gross since they thrive best in stinky, decaying organic matter such as animal waste and plants. The mere sight of them in a household often prompts a frantic search for a can of insecticide.

But in Davao City, the hometown of Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte, the black soldier fly or BSF (*Hermetia illucens*), an insect that many confuse with a wasp, is making a buzz as an innovative solution to address the problem of kitchen waste — benefiting both the environment and agriculture.

Located 960 kilometres (600 miles) south of the capital Manila, Davao is the largest city in the Philippines in terms of land area, and has grown as the major metropolis in the southern Mindanao region with its catchy “Life Is Here” slogan. Its population has grown from 1.1 million people in 2000 to an estimated 1.8 million in 2020.

More people means more garbage.

Data from the City Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) show that Davao has generated at least 600 tonnes of garbage daily since the Covid-19 pandemic started last year, with about half considered biodegradable that could have been composted at home to make fertiliser.

Eighty per cent of the trash is from households, while the rest comes from commercial establishments.

Aiming to turn that trash into treasure, an eco-agricultural startup is piloting a program to produce compost and animal feed using black soldier flies.

FiveDOL Upcycling Corp. started commercial operations in March 2021, and is the first such outfit of its kind in Mindanao (a few similar initiatives are launching in the northern Luzon region of the Philippines). It uses techniques developed with the help of the Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology (Eawag).



“Food waste is a good resource that we can create value from while at the same time helping to conserve the environment and address the problem on biodegradable kitchen waste using the black soldier fly,” Peter Damary, FiveDOL’s chief executive officer, told Mongabay in a video interview.

By harnessing the rapid growth of the flies and their capacity to break down kitchen waste, scientists and engineers have, over the last few years, been able to develop an efficient technology to transform large quantities of kitchen waste into insect protein and compost beneficial to agriculture and the environment, Damary said.

Despite its wasp-like appearance, black soldier flies don’t sting. A female can produce between 500 and 900 eggs during its two-week lifetime. The larvae, once mixed with kitchen waste, grow very quickly: From 1 millimetre in length, the black soldier fly larvae can reach 27 mm (1 inch) long and 6 mm (0.25 in) wide, and can weigh up to 0.22 grams, nearly as much as an aspirin tablet, after just 18 days.

Damary said the black soldier flies, which originated in the Americas, have long been present in the wild in the Philippines and do not pose risks to the local ecosystem, or worse, become invasive. The adult flies naturally die after two weeks and they thrive only on decaying wastes. Black soldier flies have significantly reduced mouth parts compared to houseflies; they don’t bite and are not known to transmit any diseases.

During the larval stage, they consume and convert large quantities of food waste into compost, while the larvae grow rich in protein and can be used as alternative feed for chicken or pigs.

Commercial feeds are usually produced using fishmeal, which has been partly blamed for depleting fish populations from the seas; or soybeans from Latin America, where industrial-scale farming drives deforestation and consumes high volumes of pesticides and fertilisers.

Black soldier fly larvae can be a substitute to these commercial feeds — and making that switch will help save precious ocean resources and prevent further deforestation for soy cultivation, Damary said.

“The compost produced by black soldier flies can give back life to the soil for organic farming,” he added. Damary, a Swiss national married to a Filipina and long based in Davao, founded FiveDOL in 2019, inspired by the success of black soldier fly larvae ventures in Europe, South Africa, China, Malaysia and Indonesia.

FiveDOL is locally promoted as LimaDOL. “Lima” means “five” in Filipino, while DOL stands for “day-old larvae” — hence, five-day-old larvae, which is the crucial period for black soldier fly larvae.

FiveDOL formally launched a facility on May 27 in Barangay Tacunan, a village of nearly 13,000 people some 15 km (9 mi) from the heart of Davao City. Barangay Tacunan has already proven receptive to environmental initiatives and collaborations: it holds regular radio programs promoting environmental protection, requires residents to plant at least five types of vegetables on their properties, and received a local award for “outstanding initiatives in environmental protection and management” in 2018.

FiveDOL’s project has drawn the support of the Tacunan village government as well as the Sustainable Davao Movement (SDM), a coalition of environmental multisectoral organisations in the city.

So far, at least 50 households have voluntarily joined the zero-kitchen-waste initiative, and several small-scale farmers have started using the compost it produces. The participating

households in Tacunan have been trained to properly segregate their kitchen waste, which the company regularly collects without a fee.

Damary says his company aims to be profitable, while also promoting organic agriculture and helping the city solve a mounting waste-management problem.

Organic solutions and composting technology like [black soldier flies] will help our homes become waste-proof, our communities prepare to be pandemic-proof, and our world become climate-proof.

Carmela Santos, director, Ecoteneo

Davao City has mandated the segregation of solid waste and banned the use of single-use plastics to help reduce its mounting garbage problem of the locality. Under a local ordinance, failure to separate waste is punishable with a fine of up to 5,000 pesos (\$100) or a jail term of up to six months.

CENRO chief Marivic Reyes says that despite continuous awareness campaigns, many households still don't practice proper waste separation, which is part of the reason why the city's waste landfill is quickly exceeding capacity.

The landfill, in the outlying village of Tugbok some 15 km from the city proper, was opened 10 years ago with a capacity of 800,000 tonnes. As of 2016, the landfill had accumulated 900,000 tonnes of waste.

The local government carried out rehabilitation that allowed the city to continue using it until now, while looking for an expansion area. It is also eyeing the establishment of a 2.5 billion peso (\$51.3 million) facility to burn the solid waste to generate electricity, using a grant from the Japanese government.

The city's solid waste problem is also compounded by the lack of material recovery facilities at the grassroots level, where garbage can be sorted either for composting or recycling. Of the city's 182 villages, fewer than a dozen have such functional facilities.

Damary noted that if FiveDOL can get hold of 200 tonnes of kitchen waste daily and compost it using black soldier flies, that would help tremendously in conserving the environment and reducing the pressure on the city's exhausted landfill.

Aside from leaching that causes health hazards, kitchen waste in landfills contributes to greenhouse gas emissions, with each ton of kitchen waste producing the same amount of carbon dioxide equivalent in the form of methane, he said.

Carmela Santos, director of Ecoteneo, the environmental advocacy arm of the Jesuit-run Ateneo de Davao University and one of the members of the Sustainable Davao Movement, described the black soldier flies as "friends of the earth and a community's treasure."

"It is an amazing demonstration of science at work and technology that works for a carbon-neutral world," she said. An opponent of the city government's waste-to-energy project, Santos says the black soldier fly technology shows that waste can be managed without subjecting the public to health risks like air pollution and food contamination associated with incineration.

"Organic solutions and composting technology like BSF will help our homes become waste-proof, our communities prepare to be pandemic-proof, and our world become climate-proof," she said.



With FiveDOL's venture gaining the support of local environmentalists, Damary says he's upbeat that BSF can invade other parts of Mindanao and become the army that will address the problem of household kitchen waste.

This story was published with permission from Mongabay.com.



Stop those sachets!

[BIZLINKS](#) - [Rey Gamboa](#) (The Philippine Star) - July 1, 2021 - 12:00am

Stopping the production and use of plastic sachets almost all of which are unrecyclable will be a herculean task, but something that needs to be put high up on the agenda of environmental activists to prod the government, businesses, and consumers to act fast and quickly.

The sachet problem has grown to humongous proportions in the Philippines as Filipinos have taken to its use like ducks to water. More than 150 million sachets are used daily, and new estimates place these to be at 52 percent of the three millions tons of plastics produced and used yearly in the country.

Almost every consumer item that can be packaged tingi-style comes in sachets ready for daily use: shampoo and conditioners, toothpaste, coffee mixes, food and condiments, liquid laundry products, even skin care products like lotions and sunscreens.

The problem is that these pesky sachets have slipped through the wordings of numerous laws passed during the last two decades to address environmental degradation, hence the now unabated growth of products in sachet packaging by consumer companies.

Sachets, because of their handy sizes and low value, evade ending up in junk shops or recycling centers, and even incinerators. Instead, they are buried forever in landfills eluding decomposition. Worse, they end up in oceans menacing sea life and threatening ecological balance.

Grassroots initiatives

In the absence of clear and effective laws, many environmentalists have been focusing on stopping or reducing sachet use at the grassroots level through partnership with small businesses or encouraging local government initiatives to improve collection and disposal of single-use plastics.

Some movements encourage consumers to patronize stores that refill products in reusable containers, much like what was done decades ago before plastic packaging became popular. This has gained some support, but not enough to make any meaningful impact.

Local governments are once again looking at a total ban of single-plastic use, but this pretty much legally covers only plastic “sando” and the flimsy “labo” shopping bags used to wrap or carry goods bought from supermarkets, groceries, and wet markets – and even these bans rely on unrelenting vigilance by regulators.

The amount of plastic waste, meanwhile, continues to grow. Sachet use, in particular, has become so pervasive that going after the millions disposed by Filipinos daily will likely wear out the resolve of even the staunchest environmental activist.

Focus on producer responsibility

With this realization, environmentalists are shifting their sights from “downstream” to “upstream.” The call to make plastic producers and companies that use plastics for their products under an extended producer responsibility (EPR) law accountable has never been so loudly and urgently blared.

This, however, shall not be a walk in the park. Several business alliances are already bolstering their positions on the proposed single-use plastics regulation law, one that consolidated 38 existing bills, which ultimately will decide whether single-use plastics will be at best phased out or regulated.



The bill has passed the Lower House, and is due for deliberation on the Senate floor. Despite the President's expressed wish for a total ban on single-use plastics, and which the Climate Change Commission headed by Finance Secretary Sonny Dominguez recently supported, a number of significant changes could still set back environmentalists' calls.

The lobby on EPR does not just hope to "reasonably" calibrate how much responsibility could and should be pinned on the "upstream" sector, but even proposes to just insert revisions to the ineffective Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 which could render introduced changes pretty much inutile.

'Greenwashing'

The biggest fear of environment activists is what it refers to as "greenwashing," a band-aid solution espoused by industry groups and companies for "green," but ineffective recommendations like plastic sachet trading, recovery, and recycling, even building sachet incineration plants.

As gleaned from an initiative started by Unilever in 2012, its proposed sachet recovery program encouraging customers to return used sachets by rewarding them with free sachets managed to recover a measly four to 10 million packs of the 60 billion produced.

Faced with such dismaying results, Unilever instead offered to reduce its virgin plastic production by half, increase post-consumer product collection, and roll out more reusable containers. It failed to mention any initiatives on sachet use, though.

The sachet business has grown robustly over the last decade that consumer-led companies are reluctant to look at the real damage and cost to the environment of this convenient and throwaway lifestyle. Nor are they willing to be held accountable.

More needs to be done

New studies citing the continued rising use of oil for plastics manufacture and its adverse effect on climate change, the generation of harmful emission of heavy metals, and the incursion of microplastics into the cells of plants, animals, and even humans are still generally ignored by lawmakers and environmental regulators.

Thus, a truly total ban on single-plastic use in the Philippines – and this should include sachets – would be a landmark event by international standards. Even in developed economies, government legislation dealing with sachets is virtually non-existent.

Adding straws and stirrers in the list of non-environmentally acceptable products (NEAP) by the National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC) last February in time for the International Straw Free Day is outright laughable.

A few days ago, several environment groups led by Oceana served notices to sue officers of the NSWMC for failing to act on the provisions laid out by the 2000 Ecological Solid Waste Management Act. This could be a sensible act, but we all know that much more needs to be done.

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Source: <https://www.philstar.com/business/2021/07/01/2109243/stop-those-sachets>



Solving Cebu City's waste problem

By [Cherry Piquero Balleascas](#)(The Freeman) - July 1, 2021 - 12:00am

It was while Vice Mayor Mike Rama was acting mayor of Cebu city when the mess and stench of Cebu City wastes in Inayawan became public.

VM Rama issued a June 28 memorandum to DOCAST Construction asking for an explanation "why some portions of the P400 million worth contract awarded to them were not complied with?"

Rama asked DOCAST within 48 hours of their receipt of his memorandum to explain the non-compliance of certain important contract provisions, namely: 1) not having a North District transfer station as stipulated in the contract; 2) not providing a weight determination facility or weighing bridge that is certified by the Department of Science and Technology and calibrated by the manufacturer. The weighing facility must be manned by Department of Public Services (DPS) personnel as well; 3) having only 13 trucks for hauling instead of the required minimum 50 trucks, and, 4) allegedly failing "to pay its financial obligations to ARN Central Waste Management of the Binaliw Landfill, causing them to refuse entry to DOCAST trucks."

Will DOCAST reply to Rama's memo and will their reply be made public by Mayor Labella?

By today, July 1, Mayor Labella is back as Mayor as Vice Mayor Rama ended his term as acting mayor yesterday June 30.

Rama assured the public that this matter with DOCAST will be discussed in a special session yesterday, June 30.

Certainly, the public is eager to know soonest how the Cebu City council and officials will resolve this issue with the contractor, not only because of the health and environmental risks posed by unattended, increasing piles of trash.

The public will want to know how the P400+ million paid to the contractor has been disbursed. The public also wants to know why such a huge budget was paid for hauling and how the city decides on who to award the contract to and what the City Council will do if contract violations are confirmed.

Beyond these contractor-contract issues, the public is eager to know how Cebu City will effectively solve and manage the continuing waste problem.

Everyone knows that the past and present system of collecting, hauling and disposing of wastes in dumpsites or landfills has not at all been effective. Not only has waste volume continued, improperly managed within their collect-haul-dispose system. This continuing ineffective truck-based system is extremely expensive- with millions of public funds used for basura rather than for people and their basic needs!

Also, so much present and potentially productive lands have been unnecessarily wasted because basura has been prioritized over the welfare of people and the environment!

Shouldn't the City Council start to genuinely shift to a more effective, comprehensive, sustainable approach to waste management, rather than simply assigning the waste to contractors and continuing a truck-based collect-hauling-dispose system that time and again has been proven to be wasteful, ineffective, harmful to people, communities and the environment?



The public would like to know why the City Council continues a very expensive but ineffective, costly, people and environmentally unfriendly waste management!

Shouldn't waste management solutions benefit the public and the environment and involve multi-sectoral participation, not just a few?

Should not the City Council by now realize that the solution to the waste problem does not only involve the collection and disposal of waste but the production and generation of waste as well? Specifically, single use of plastics should be banned and alternatives to plastic prioritized soonest.

Should not all be involved in solving the waste problem and the public/communities allowed to participate actively, not just the City Council, especially for the most sensitive matter of waste budget allocation, disbursement and accountability?



Time to revisit the garbage ordinance

By [Aven Piramide](#)(The Freeman) - July 1, 2021 - 12:00am

There are few things belonging to the past that I still am proud of. First, the vinyl long-playing records which decades ago we called “plaka.” Every time friends visit me, especially now that the pandemic has tied me home, I play on my 1981 (and therefore old) Pioneer components the LP’s of lesser-known artists, John Gary, Ed Ames, Vic Damone and Eddie Fisher, alongside more popular vocalists Frank Sinatra, Engelbert Humperdinck, Andy Williams, and Matt Monro. The delight more than the amazement that registers on my visitors’ faces each time they hear the songs of these great crooners cultivates my pride.

Two of my Volkswagen Beetles (a 1300S limited edition and a 1303s Super VW) have been car show winners. But, the third, a 1200 cc 1970 model Bao which I drive to the farm often gets the gawking attention of people I pass by. I am happy with these vintage vehicles which are the second source of my pride.

The Cebu City ordinance establishing the system of garbage collection and disposal serves as the third object of my pride. When it was approved by the city council on July 11, 1988, as Ordinance No. 1295, it was as if i won a grueling debate that lasted many weeks. The fact that the city still uses it until today is likened to my kind of a precious gem that I have kept reverently in my family closet.

The mechanics of garbage collection, then written as Title IV in the ordinance as a novel concept, has withstood the proverbial test of time. This very chapter which concretizes the policy that waste disposal is a shared responsibility of the government and its citizenry is the backbone of our garbage collection. The system it then introduced establishes the nitty-gritty of how to collect the city’s trash. I recall the verbal challenge i faced when I sponsored this ordinance in the city council session. Of course the debate served to take out the perceived flaws. There were critical inputs given by colleague Vicente “Jun” Kintanar Jr., (he must be smiling now in heaven) as there were incisive thoughts provided by Dr. Pureza Onate. Admittedly, without their opinions, the ordinance would not have been better crafted.

Whether we like it or not, this piece of local legislation is now 33 years old. It may still be quite functional as it seems to continue serving the city well, but like my vinyls, components and Beetles, the ordinance is vintage. Two weeks ago, Arnold Opone changed the brake master of my 1300s and yesterday Gibson Redelosa fixed the speedometer and fuel gauge of my farm Beetle. On Saturday, technician Elizar Morcada will replace the cartridge of my Pioneer turntable because its diamond needle is already worn.

My point is that time has come to revisit this ordinance. I am certain that there were concerns on waste collection and disposal that were unknown to us three decades ago when i authored it. For one, the need for the city to establish its own modern landfill has been highlighted in the past few days. We overlooked it then. Really, if the honorable members of the present city council deem it needful to repeal this local statute entirely and consign it to the relics of the past together with my name, I will be elated that better concepts have finally shaped. Whatever direction the city leadership takes is most crucial and it has to be done, now!

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/the-freeman/opinion/2021/07/01/2109374/time-revisit-garbage-ordinance/amp/>



Half of Central Africa's protected area under threat

By [Agence France-Presse](#)

July 1, 2021

N'DJAMENA: Nearly half of the 206 protected areas in [Central Africa](#) are under threat from the oil and gas industries, a report published on Tuesday by the [Central African Forest Observatory](#) said.

If mining is included, it swells to 60 percent - or some 800,000 square kilometers - said [Georges Belmond Tchoumba](#), regional coordinator of the [World Wide Fund](#) for Nature's forestry program in Central Africa.

The protected areas of Central Africa cover 15 percent of the land area and 5 percent of the marine area of the region.

"Permits have already been allocated for 27 percent of protected areas" in 10 African countries, including [Cameroon](#), [Chad](#), the Democratic Republic of [Congo](#) and [Gabon](#), Tchoumba told an online conference.

Experts are urging governments in the region to explore using their natural resources more responsibly, striking a compromise between conservation and economic development.

"We are aware of the significant pressure of the extractive industries on protected areas in particular but also on conservation areas broadly speaking," Tchoumba said.

01 JULY 2021, THURSDAY



NEWS ALERTS

COVID-19 NEWS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Security personnel remind people to observe health protocols as they queue for their COVID-19 vaccine at the SM City San Lazaro in Manila on June 22, 2021. After a low turnout of COVID-19 vaccine recipients from various vaccination sites on Monday, Manila City Mayor Francisco Isko Moreno Domagoso scraps the no walk-in policy to accommodate more people wanting to be inoculated.
The STAR/Miguel de Guzman

Philippines ends June with 4,509 new COVID-19 infections

(Philstar.com) - June 30, 2021 - 4:00pm

MANILA, Philippines — Local health authorities on Wednesday reported 4,509 more COVID-19 infections, bringing the national caseload to 1,412,599.

- **Active cases:** 48,469 or 3.4% of the total
- **Recoveries:** 5,839, pushing total to 1,339,248
- **Deaths:** 105, bringing total to 24,662

Alleged corruption at DOH revisited

- Sen. Manny Pacquiao on Tuesday **revived** allegations of corruption against Health Secretary Francisco Duque III, the official leading the country's medical response to COVID-19.
- Pacquiao cited the long-scrutinized procurement of rapid test kits, masks and personal protective equipment which were previously flagged by Sen. Panfilo Lacson as "**overpriced**."
- Duque in response said he was "**disheartened**" by Pacquiao's comments but insisted that he has "always been a champion of good governance" and that the health department has been transparent on the utilization of its funds.
- Following its probe on allegations of corruption on the Philippine Health Insurance Corp., the Senate in a committee report **recommended** that charges of malversation, illegal use of public funds, and graft be filed against Duque, who sits as the agency's chairman of the board.
- Duque at the time said the findings of the report were **baseless** and President Rodrigo Duterte, who has consistently defended his beleaguered health secretary, did not act on the upper chamber's recommendations.

— **Bella Perez-Rubio**

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2021/06/30/2109204/philippines-ends-june-4509-new-covid-19-infections>



This June 22, 2021 photo shows individuals lining up at a mall in Manila to receive their COVID-19 vaccine.

The STAR/Miguel de Guzman

'NCR Plus' under GCQ with restrictions in July; 20 areas under MECQ

(Philstar.com) - June 30, 2021 - 7:20pm

MANILA, Philippines — The pandemic task force on the last day of June approved the quarantine classification of areas throughout the country for the next month.

Announced Wednesday night, the order puts 20 cities and provinces under the strictest quarantine status, or Modified Enhanced Community Quarantine.

Health authorities and experts have noted that while the COVID-19 situation in Metro Manila has improved, it is now regions dealing with an uptick in infections.

The capital region along with Rizal and Bulacan would be under General Community Quarantine with some restrictions, while Laguna and Cavite would be under the same but with heightened restrictions, all from July 1 to 15.

Apayao will also shift to GCQ until mid-July after the IATF approved local officials' appeal to downgrade it from MECQ.

These areas are also under **GCQ** from July 1 to 31:

- CAR: Baguio City
- Region 2: Santiago City, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino
- Region 4-A: Batangas, Quezon
- Region 6: Guimaras, Aklan, Bacolod City, Negros Occidental, Antique, Capiz
- Region 9: Zamboanga Sibugay, Zamboanga City
- Region 10: Iligan City
- Region 12: General Santos City, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani, Cotabato, South Cotabato
- BARMM: Agusan del Norte, Surigao del Norte, Agusan del Sur

The following, meanwhile, are under **MECQ** from July 1 to 15:

- Region 2: Cagayan
- Region 3: Bataan
- Region 4-A: Lucena City
- Region 4-B: Puerto Princesa



- Region 5: Naga City
- Region 6: Iloilo City, Iloilo province
- Region 7: Negros Oriental
- Region 9: Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga del Norte
- Region 10: Cagayan de Oro City
- Region 11: Davao City, Davao Oriental, Davao Occidental, Davao de Oro, Davao del Sur, Davao del Norte
- CARAGA: Butuan City, Dinagat Islands, Surigao del Sur

Areas not mentioned, or the rest of the country, will be under Modified General Community Quarantine or MGCQ for the entire month. It is the loosest quarantine status.

The Philippines ended June with 4,509 new coronavirus infections, bringing the total to 1,412,559.

Deaths by half of 2021 reached 24,662, while recoveries have stood at 1,339,248. — **Christian Deiparine**



#OneDENR

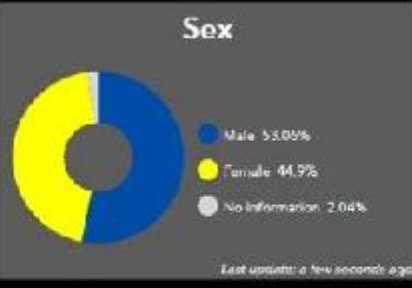
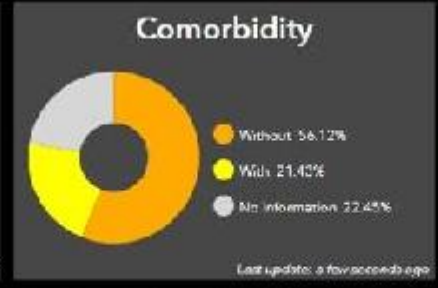
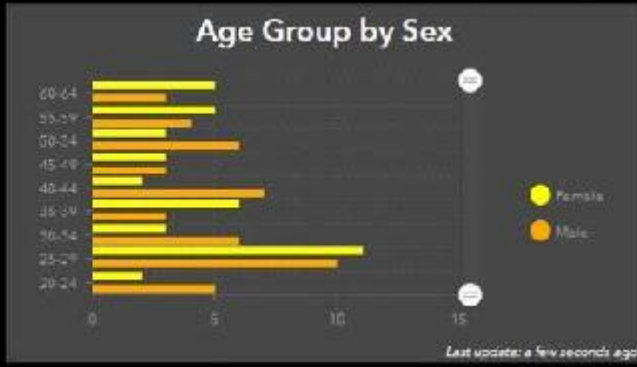
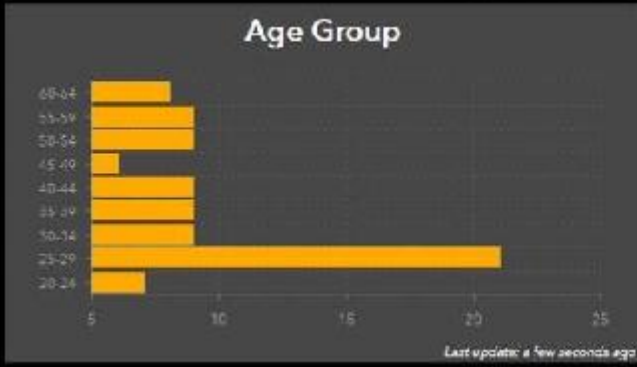
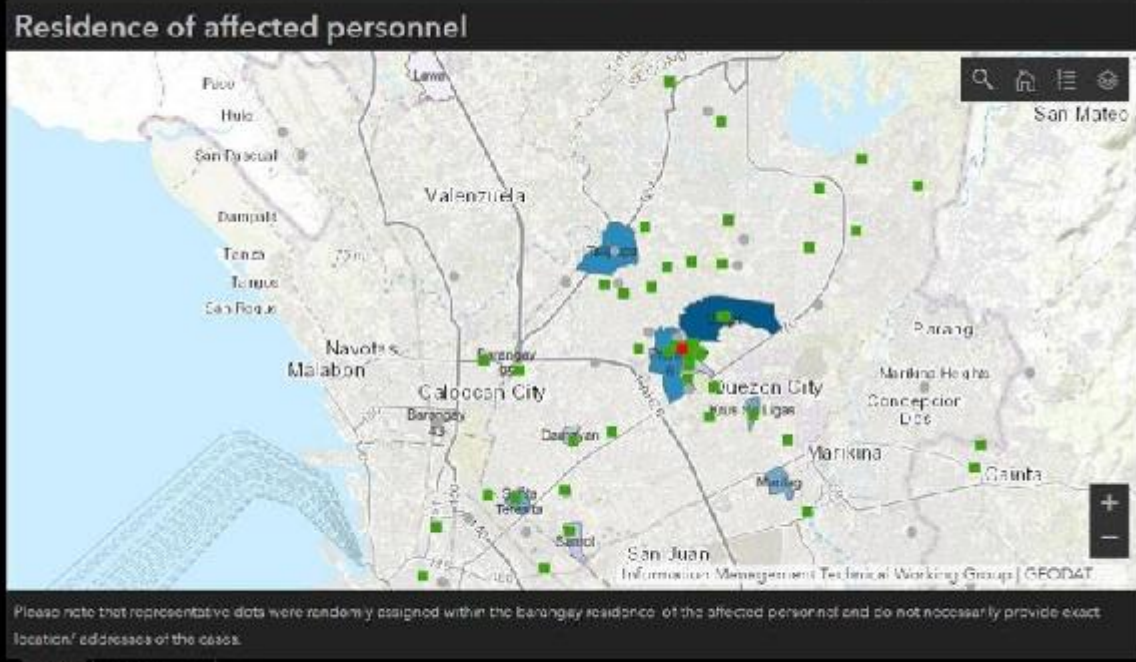
**Covid-19
Situation and Response**

DENR-CO COVID-19 Monitoring



Data on COVID-19 include reported cases of DENR employees (Permanent, Contract of Service/Job Order, Support Staff (Triumph/Security)) as collected by the Contact Tracing Team of DENR Central Office.

Total 98 <small>Last update: a few seconds ago</small>	Active 3 <small>Last update: a few seconds ago</small>	Recovered 95 <small>Last update: a few seconds ago</small>	Deaths 0 <small>Last update: a few seconds ago</small>
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