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Cimatu defends dolomite project at DENR budget hearing

Published September 8, 2020, 7:08 PM

by [Ellson Quismorio](#)

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu insisted before congressmen Tuesday that the [dolomite sand](#) being used on the Baywalk area of Manila Bay wasn't a health hazard.



Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu, chief coronavirus disease (COVID-19) response implementor in the Viayas (NTF AGAINST COVID-19 / MANILA BULLETIN)

“Dolomite in its natural state is not a known health hazard,” Cimata said during the House Committee on Appropriations briefing on the DENR’s proposed budget under the P4.506-trillion National Expenditure Program (NEP).

“What is hazardous is the fine silica quartz in some dolomite in the form of dust that is generated during crushing and screening, not the calcium or magnesium (components),” he said.

But he underscored that the dolomite sand involved in the beach nourishment project of Manila Bay was “100 times bigger than dust and therefore not suspended in air and cannot be inhaled.”

Cimatu said the decision to use dolomite—which has a striking white color—went through a technical study by the agency. He said it’s part of the broader Manila Bay rehabilitation project that was begun with the extensive cleanup of the area last year.

“Yung nakikita po ninyo na tinatambak na dolomite dyan ay kasama sa proseso. Lagyan po kasi namin konti ng beach dyan. Pagdaong mo kasi dyan noon tuloy tubig na kaya andaming nadidisgrasya (The dumping of dolomite there is part of the process. We’ll make a beach there. Back then, docking was dangerous because there was no beach to contain the water),” he noted.

He also highlighted the nourishing properties of dolomite, saying it can turn acidity in water to alkalinity.

The DENR chief said they previously considered using volcanic lahar on Baywalk, but ultimately went against it because the grain it produced was too fine and it could turn to mud. Afterward, they learned about dolomite which since the mid-90s has been used by popular beaches in Mactan, Cebu.

“We are very sure on the safety of dolomite,” stressed Cimatu.

DENR Undersecretary Jonas Leones told the Appropriations panel that the agency spent P28 million for the acquisition and transport of dolomite from a municipality in Cebu. He said this is just 6 percent of the entire budget of the Manila Bay rehabilitation effort, which is P389 million.

Once finished, the dolomite beach will be 100 meters wide and 60 meters deep, Cimatu said.

Attending House members Cavite 4th district Rep. Elpidio Barzaga Jr., AnaKalusugan Rep. Mike Defensor, and Camarines Sur 2nd district Rep. LRay Villafuerte all seem satisfied with the DENR chief’s defense on the choice of dolomite.



“I’m fully convinced that there is no valid objection as far as this project is concerned,” said Bargaza, the Committee on Natural Resources chairman.

“Hindi ko alam kung saan nanggagaling kung may oposisyon man. Pero dito sa Kongreso, may suporta ka, umasa ka sa suporta namin. (If there is indeed opposition to it, I don’t know where it’s coming from. But here in Congress, you have support, you can expect support from us),” Defensor said.

For his part, Villafuerte said of dolomite: “Nakakalinis po siya ng tubig, ginagamit sa aquarium yan. Ginagamit po ito sa sand area sa golf. Safe po iyan. Excited na ko pumunta sa Manila Bay. Ang huling punta ko was 40 years ago. (It has water-cleaning properties, it is used in aquariums. It is used in the sand area of golf courses. That is safe. I’m excited to go to Manila Bay. My last visit there was 40 years ago).”

“I think we should give the secretary a chance,” he said.



Cimatu insists dolomite safe, defends Manila Bay white sand project

By: [Neil Arwin Mercado](#) - Reporter / [@NAMercadoINO](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 06:38 PM September 08, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu insisted on Tuesday the safety of dolomite in its controversial artificial rehabilitation of Manila Bay despite previous warnings from the Department of Health (DOH) regarding its possible health hazards.

During the budget deliberation of the DENR before the House committee on appropriations, Cimatu was asked if he can categorically state that dolomites, which comes from crushed rocks from Cebu and dumped in Manila Bay to transform it into a white-sand beach, are safe.

Cimatu responded in the affirmative.

“It is not listed by the Mines Safety and Health Association, Occupational Safety and Health Association or even in the International Agency for Research Of Cancer as a carcinogen,” Cimatu said.

“What is hazardous is the fine silica quads in some dolomite in the form of dust that is generated during crushing and screening,” he added.

According to Cimatu, the dust particles are only 10 to 15 microns and are hazardous if inhaled for long periods of exposure without personal protective equipment.

However, the size of the dolomite being used in Manila Bay is two to five millimeters or equivalent to 2,000 to 5,000 microns or 100 times bigger than dust, said Cimatu.

“Therefore, [they are] not suspended in air and it cannot be inhaled,” he added.

Cimatu then cited a couple of private establishments and resorts which use dolomite, which he said, never received any complaints for over 20 years of its use.

“Public beach using dolomite is in Dalaguete, Cebu, that for the last six years, no issues or complaints were raised also,” he added.

“So I stand by this research coming from our Bureau of Mines and Geosciences,” Cimatu said. Several lawmakers, meanwhile, expressed support towards DENR’s project in Manila Bay.

Deputy Speaker Luis Raymund Villafuerte hopes that the environment department be given a chance, saying that the sand particles are also being used in golf courses.

“Hindi first time na gagawin yun ng DENR. Ako I support this, excited na ako ng Manila Bay,” Villafuerte said.

In an online press briefing on Monday, DOH said the dolomite dust, which came from crushed rocks from Cebu province and dumped in the Manila Bay shore, can cause respiratory illness when inhaled.



“Yung dolomite dust, it can cause respiratory issues or effects to a person. Kapag napunta sa mata, nagkakaroon ng irritation so you just have to wash it off with water,” Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said.

(If it comes in contact with the eyes, it can cause irritation so you just have to wash it off with water.)

“Kapag na-ingest ito, it can have discomfort sa gastrointestinal system natin and magkakaroon lang ng kaunting sakit ng tiyan at pagtatae,” Vergeire added.

(If this is ingested, it can have discomfort in a person’s gastrointestinal system it will cause pain and diarrhea.)

[ac]



Manila Bay white sand, 'di masama sa kalusugan – Cimatú



September 8, 2020 @ 7:20 PM 12 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Itinanggi ni Environment Secretary Roy Cimatú na hindi masama sa kalusugan at sa kapaligiran ang ibinuho na dolomite sand sa Manila Bay.

Sa pagdinig ng P25.5 Billion na 2021 budget ng DENR sa Kamara, ipinaliwanag ni Cimatú na hindi 'harmful' o hindi delikado sa kalusugan ng publiko ang dolomite sand dahil mas malaki at mas mabigat kumpara sa ordinaryong buhangin ang kanilang binili na crushed dolomite boulders.

Paliwanag pa ni Cimatú, tatlong beses na mas malaki ang dolomite sand kumpara sa ordinary sand kaya hindi na ito delikado sa kalusugan.

Paglililaw pa ng Secretary, nagiging delikado lamang ang dolomite kung ito ay minimina at mala-pulbos ang itsura pero ang ilalagay na dolomite sa baywalk ay wala nang dust particles kaya't walang dapat ikabahala ang publiko.

Bukod dito, nagsagawa din sila ng technical study bago ang ginawang paglalagay ng dolomite sand upang magkaroon ng beach ang Manila Bay kung saan tiniyak ni Cimatú na hindi ito basta-basta matatangay ng mga 'waves' o aanurin ng tubig.

Mayroon aniyang 100 meter geotube na inilagay sa Manila Bay na parallel sa shoreline na magho-hold sa buhangin sa tuwing may wave o malakas na alon.

Makakatulong din aniya ang dolomite para linisin ang tubig sa Manila Bay at hindi lamang ito ang unang beses na may gumamit ng dolomite sand sa mga beaches sa bansa.

Pagdating naman sa pondo, nilinaw ni Usec. Jonas Leones na ang P389 Million na budget sa beach nourishment ng Manila Bay ay galing sa ibinigay na special fund ng Department of Budget and Management (DBM) noong 2019 pa na nakalaan talaga para sa rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay.

Sa pondong ito ay P28 Million lamang ang inilaan para sa pagbili ng dolomite sand at ang natitira ay para sa iba pang proyekto para sa paglilinis at pagpapaganda ng Manila Bay.

Nauna rito ay binatikos ni BUHAY Partylist Rep. Lito Atienza ang DENR dahil sa pagtatambak ng dolomite sa Manila Bay na hindi naman aniya solusyon sa problemang marumi pa rin ang Manila Bay. **Meliza Maluntag**

Source: <https://www.remate.ph/manila-bay-white-sand-di-masama-sa-kalusugan-cimatu/>



Dolomite sa Manila Bay 'di delikado sa kalusugan – DENR

By [Joy Cantos](#)(Pilipino Star Ngayon)

- September 9, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Tiniyak kahapon ni Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu na hindi delikado sa kalusugan ang dolomite 'artificial white sand' project na inilalagay para sa rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay.

Sa pagharap ni Cimatu sa pagdinig ng House Committee on Appropriations sa P25.5 bilyong panukalang badyet ng DENR sa ilalim ng P4.506 trilyong 2021 national budget, sinabi nito na bago isinagawa ang dolomite sand ay pinag-aralan munang mabuti ang benepisyu at posibleng banta nito sa kalusugan.

Ipinaliwanag ni Cimatu na hindi pulbos bagkus ay granules lamang ang dolomite na kanilang ilalagay sa Manila Bay kaya't hindi ito matatangay ng hangin na posibleng malanghap ng publiko o kaya'y maka-irita sa mata.

Sa katunayan, mismong ang Department of Health (DOH) na nagbigay ng klaripikasyon na ang mga pinulbos sa proseso ng pagdudurog ng dolomite kung walang protective equipment ang nakakaapekto sa kalusugan.

Nakalilinis din aniya ng tubig ang dolomite at naibababa ang acidity level nito.



Cimatu defends use of crushed dolomite rocks along Manila Bay shoreline

Published September 8, 2020 6:33pm

By ERWIN COLCOL, GMA News

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu on Tuesday defended the initiative of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to decorate the Manila Bay shoreline with white sand using crushed dolomite rocks from Cebu province.

During the House panel deliberations on the proposed 2021 budget of the DENR, Cimatu addressed the issues surrounding the use of dolomite rocks to beautify the Manila Bay shoreline, which drew ire from members of the public.

According to Cimatu, the effort to rehabilitate Manila Bay was in response to the mandamus issued by the Supreme Court to the government to clean up the body of water.

"So ito ang ginagawa natin ngayon, nilinisan, binawasan natin yung water quality na masama diyan dahil sa paglagay natin ng treatment plant diyan sa baywalk," he said.

Cimatu said it was not the first time that crushed dolomite rocks will be used for decorative purposes, as it was also the same material found in many resorts like in Mactan, Cebu.

He added that dolomite rocks can also treat the pH level of water, from acidic to alkaline.

At the same time, Cimatu also disputed claims that crushed dolomite rocks are harmful when inhaled.

"What is hazardous is the fine silica quartz in some dolomite in the form of dust that is generated during crushing and screening, not the calcium or magnesium. Note that it is dust-size which is about 10 to 15 microns that is hazardous if inhaled for long periods of exposure without personal protective equipment," he said.

"However, the size of the dolomite in Baywalk is 2 to 5 millimeters or equivalent to 2,000 to 5,000 microns or 100 times bigger than dust and therefore not suspended in air and cannot be inhaled," he added.

With regards to the expenses, Environment Undersecretary Jonas Leones pointed out that only P28 million of the P389 million allocation for the beach nourishment project was used for the dolomite rocks.

"That covers the price of dolomite sand, transportation cost, taxes, and other fees. Kasi package na delivery nun from Cebu to Manila Bay," he said.



Cimatu said their source of funding was a special purpose fund under the 2019 General Appropriations Act intended for the rehabilitation of Manila Bay.

"Meron ding component sa 2020 pero iba na yung paggagamitan nun sa 2020. Continuous ito dahil ito multi-year ito. Sa akin nga, baka hindi pa natin matapos in two years ito dahil maraming component diyan," he said.

Cimatu assured lawmakers of the safety of the use of crushed dolomite rocks along the Manila Bay shoreline.

"We are really very sure of the safety of the use of dolomite in that area," he said. — **DVM, GMA News**



MANILA BAY | Environment secretary defends dolomite use in Manila Bay project

September 8, 2020 , 08:05 PM

(September 08, 2020) – The environment department on Tuesday defended the rehabilitation project in Manila Bay, assuring lawmakers the material use in filling in the half kilometer stretch is safe for the public.

Retired general Roy Cimatu told a congressional budget hearing that dolomite might be harmful only during the crushing process as dust particles could be inhaled by people but the pulverized product is safe for use.

He also assured lawmakers there would be no health and environmental problems when the seven tons of crushed dolomite were shipped to Manila Bay and submerged in the water.

“Nakakatakot lang ang dust particles, pero ngayon wala nang dust particles dyan,” Cimatu told congressmen in the budget hearing for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).



Cimatu said the environment department has selected the crushed dolomite to be thrice the size of a sand granule.

“Bigger than sand, mas mabigat sa sand, at mas malaki,” Cimatu said.

Several sectors had questioned the use of dolomite as artificial sand in a partial stretch of the Manila Bay, as it was primarily used for construction and glassmaking. They also cited studies which showed harmful effects to the lungs with prolonged exposure.

But Cimatu said crushed dolomite was already used as artificial sand in some resorts in Mactan, Cebu.

He explained they had several choices for the beautification project.

The first was lahar, or the slurry produced from volcano ashes, pyroclastic material, and water. The environment secretary though said it was too fine and looked like mud.

The second option was clean sand. However, Cimatu said they could not find enough quantity from rivers as getting sand from shorelines was banned.

This was when they considered dolomite, or calcium magnesium carbonate, which was also used as nourishment and cleansing in aquariums.

“Malnourished na po yung ilalim ng tubig na yan,” Cimatu said, sharing that they already cleaned up the tonnes of garbage that ended up underwater.



They would also place geotubes to ensure that the dolomite artificial sand would not be completely washed away.

Cimatu said this was the culmination of an effort to clean Manila Bay, after building a treatment plan to rid the three esteros around the area of its garbage and dirty water.

He also clarified that the project cost 28 million pesos, and not 389 million pesos as some groups claimed.

They plan to open it up to the public in time for the International Coastal Clean-up Day on September 19.

(Reports from Ria Fernandez | Katrina Elaine Alba/MM)

Source: <https://news.tv5.com.ph/breaking/read/manila-bay-environment-secretary-defends-dolomite-use-in-manila-bay-project?fbclid=IwAR18W0BFFXiym3NsaIokRLq-9gyz0V1OeD7-aosIAeEYPo9UTEPu3kVZ6sM>



DENR says crushed dolomite used for Manila Bay 'not hazardous', won't be eroded

April Raffles, BS-CBN News

Posted at Sep 09 2020 01:54 AM

MANILA - Officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), headed by Secretary Roy Cimatu, were not able to dodge questions surrounding the controversial dumping of crushed dolomite to serve as white sand for the Manila Bay.

The move to cover the bay walk with crushed dolomite, which is part of the beach enhancement project of the agency amounting to P389 million, earned the ire of various environmental groups.

HEALTH HAZARD

Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire earlier said in a virtual press briefing that inhaling or ingesting dolomite sand can cause eye irritation, respiratory problems or gastrointestinal discomfort.

However, she later clarified that the crushing of dolomite causes health problems, and not the sand per se.

During the Committee of Appropriations deliberations Tuesday, Cimatu reiterated the study they conducted prior to the procurement of the sand from Alcoy town, Cebu, saying they chose bigger particles that could not possibly be inhaled or cause harm to human health.

"This is our answer to the statement of the Usec. of DOH (Department of Health), that dolomite in its natural state is not a health hazard. It is not listed by the mines safety and health association, occupational safety and health association and even in the international agency as cancer or as a carcinogen," he told House members.

"What is hazardous is some silica in the quads in some dolomite in the form of dust that is generated during the crushing or screening... not the calcium or magnesium. The size of dolomite in the bay walk is 1-5 millimeters or equivalent to 2-5,000 microns or 5 times bigger than dust and therefore not suspended in air and cannot be inhaled," he added.

BEAUTIFICATION, NOT REHABILITATION?

Contrary to public opinion that the white sand will not contribute to the agency's goal to clean up Manila Bay, both Cimatu and Environment USec. Jonas Leones explained how the dolomite sand cleans the water in Manila Bay, which still has high fecal coliform level as of date.

Cimatu said that dolomite has components that can make acidic water alkaline, which Leones supported by saying dolomite is typically being used in marine aquariums.

"Napapababa niya yung Ph content ng tubig. Ito rin po yung ginagamit natin sa mga marine salt aquarium na nakakatulong sa paglilinis ng tubig," Leones said.

PRONE TO EROSION OR OFFSHORE DRIFT

The DENR recognized the challenges of putting white sand, which could also eroded by water through time especially during the rainy season.

"Ayaw naman namin maglagay tapos isang taon mauubos agad yung tinambak mo, so we really looked for somebody na nakakaintindi. Nagbigay siya ng proposal, nakita namin yung plano na talagang maiiwanan yan," Cimatu said.

Leones explained the interventions they have laid to ensure the sand will stay in place under different weather conditions, such as putting geo tubes and geotextiles.

"Yung geo tubes ito po yung plastic bags na nilalagyan natin ng sand at nilalagyan natin sa perimeter ng beach area natin. Ang ine-expect natin dito, itong geo tubes na nilalagyan natin ng sand will absorb the shock or the strong current produced by the strong wave to ensure retention ng sand," he said.



BUDGET

The environment officials explained that while they were given P389 million for the beach nourishment project, only P28 million was used for the dolomite sand.

“Per DPWH (Department of Public Works and Highways) report ang naibayad sa contract ay P28 million. Cost of dolomite, transport, taxes and other fees kasi package na po yung delivery from Cebu to Manila bay,” Leones said.

He added that not the entire stretch of the bay walk, which starts from the US Embassy and ends at the Manila Yacht Club in Roxas Blvd., will be dumped with white sand, as only 2 portions will be covered with it.

“Ang portion na malapit sa US Embassy at itong konting strip of land dito sa yacht club. Ang dolomite mag-aappear lang yan sa portion ng US embassy dahil doon lang ho talaga pwedeng maglagay ng beach nourishment at doon lang makikita yung dolomite,” he said.

The DENR said they will push through with the project, despite many groups calling for its halt and investigation.



COURTESY CALL.

House Majority Leader and Leyte Rep Martin Romualdez (left) welcomes to his office Secretary Roy Cimatu of the Department of Natural Resources during a courtesies call and short meeting before the Budget Briefing for 2021 Budget of the Department of Natural Resources at the House of Representatives.

Ver Noveno

In a related photo (right) Cimatu was welcomed by Manila Yacht Club Commodore Robert Lim Joseph. Cimatu inspected a newly inaugurated solar-powered sewerage treatment plant located in front of the MYC building which connects three major drainage outflows between the US Embassy and the MYC. This was a major milestone to lessen the flow of pollution into Manila Bay. Cimatu has designated the MYC as the ground zero of the "Save Manila Bay" project, an enormous undertaking to save Manila Bay and restore its lost glory. The project was executed by DENR in collaboration with Rotary Club of Manila where Joseph serves as president.





Batikos tanggap ng DENR pero Manila Bay white sand may ligal na basehan, pinag-aralan



September 8, 2020 @ 7:56 PM 10 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Tinatanggap ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang lahat ng kritisismo at aksyon ng ilan laban sa proyekto ng ahensya sa pagpapaganda ng Manila Bay sa pamamagitan ng paglalagay ng “white sand” o dolomite.

Ayon kay DENR on Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concern Usec. Benny Antiporda, may legal na basehan at maingat na pinag-aralan bago ito ipatupad.

“Lahat naman po ay pinag-aralang mabuti kaya wala po kaming kinakatakutan kung anuman ‘yung aksyon na gagawin nila” ayon kay Usec. Antiporda.

Ginawa ni Usec. Antiporda ang pahayag kasunod ng kaliwat-kanang batikos hinggil sa proyektong paglalagay ng “white sand” o dolomite sa Manila Bay kung saan hiniling pa ng ilang personalidad at grupo na ipahinto ang aktibidad dahil sa ilang legal na isyu at kalusogan.

Ayon pa sa opisyal, ang paglalagay ng white sand ay malapit nang matapos ngunit hindi pa maaring paliguan dahil nakadepende pa rin sa kalidad ng tubig.

Sinabi pa ni Usec. Antiporda na tuloy-tuloy ang kanilang trabaho sa paglilinis at pagpapaganda sa Manila Bay base na rin sa Supreme Court mandamus.

Sinagot din ng opisyal ang naging pahayag ni Health Usec Maria Rosario Vergeire na maaring makapagdulot ng masama sa kalusogan ang dolomite kapag ito ay nalanghap, napunta sa mata o kaya na-ingest.

Paglililaw ni Usec Antiporda, na dumaan sa proseso sa crashing plant ang dolomite kung saan pagdating nito sa Manila Bay ay finished product na kaya hindi ito malalanghap ng mga tao.

Sinabi pa nito na ligtas ang dolomite dahil ginagamit na rin ito sa Plantation Bay sa Cebu gayundin sa iba pang bahagi ng mundo.

Nililaw din nito na hindi ito reclaimed area kundi beach nourishment kung saan muling binubuhay ang dating buhangin sa Manila Bay. **Jocelyn Tabangcura-Domenden**

Source: <https://www.remate.ph/batikos-tanggap-ng-denr-pero-manila-bay-white-sand-may-ligal-na-basehan-pinag-aralan/>



Bahagi ng baywalk na tinambakan ng artificial white sand, bubuksan sa publiko sa Sept. 19 – Cimatu

By **Bombo Dave Vincent Pasit**

-September 8, 2020 | 6:00 PM

Balak buksan ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sa publiko ang bahagi ng Baywalk sa Manila Bay na tinambakan ng artificial white sand sa darating na Setyembre 19, 2020.

Inanunsyo ito ni DENR Sec. Roy Cimatu sa pagdinig ng House committee on appropriations sa 2021 budget ng kagawaran matapos na umani ng batikos sa mga nakalipas na araw ang pagtatambak nila ng crushed dolomite boulders sa Baywalk.

Kaugnay nito ay nilinaw ni Cimatu na dumaan sa pag-aaral ang proyekto nilang ito para matiyak na walang epekto sa kalusugan ng publiko ang paggamit ng crushed dolomite boulders, na inangkat pa mula Cebu.

Ayon kay Cimatu, una nilang kinonsidera ang paggamit ng lahar subalit hindi aniya ito pino at maputik kung ikukumpara sa artificial white sand na kanilang ginamit.

Nagkakahalaga ng P28 million ang gastos sa pagbili ng crushed dolomite boulders, kasama na ang buwis na kailangan bayaran at ang bayarin sa pag-angkat nito mula sa Cebu patungong Manila.

Pinawi naman din ng kalihim ang pangamba ng publiko na masayang lamang ang gastos sa naturang proyekto sa oras na tangayin lamang ng malalaking alon ang itinambak na artificial white sand.

Iginiit ni Cimatu na mayroon silang geo-tube intervention na ginamit upang sa gayon ay hindi maanod ang itinambak nilang buhangin.



Baywalk white-sand project almost complete — DENR

Published September 8, 2020, 5:21 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said it is almost done filling a stretch of the Manila Bay baywalk with “white sand,” amid calls to stop the activity due to health and environmental issues.



Workers pile the “white sand” to be laid on Manila bay.
(Jansen Romero / MANILA BULLETIN)

“Malapit na matapos ang paglalagay ng white sand sa Manila Bay pero nakadepende sa water quality kung papayagan na ang pagligo sa Manila Bay. (The white sand project in Manila Bay is almost over. But allowing bathing again in Manila Bay will depend on its water quality),” Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said in a DZBB interview.

“Tuloy tuloy ang trabaho namin base na rin sa kautusan ng Korte Suprema na ipagpatuloy ‘yung mandamus na linisin ang Manila Bay. At the same time tuloy pa rin ang pagpapaganda natin diyan. (We will continue our work based on the Supreme Court mandamus to clean up Manila Bay and at the same time we will continue the beautification of the area),” he said.

Oceana Philippines earlier said several laws have not been followed by the DENR when it dumped synthetic white sand on the coast of the Manila Bay.

Under the Fisheries Code, Local Government Code, and the Environmental Impact Assessment System Act, government agencies are required to undergo Environmental Impact Study process and Environmental Compliance Certificate for this kind of project, Oceana Philippines vice president Gloria Estenzo Ramos said.

Antiporda said the department welcomes all criticisms and actions of those against the project, as DENR has legal basis and proper research before it was implemented.

“Lahat naman po ay pinag-aralang mabuti kaya wala po kaming kinakatakutan kung anuman ‘yung aksyon na gagawin nila. (Everything has been studied carefully so whatever action they will take, we have nothing to fear),” he added.

Antiporda also clarified a statement made by the Department of Health that “dolomite dust” poses health risk.

He said Health Undersecretary Ma. Rosario Vergeire referred to dolomite dust or “alikalabok,” which is in fact a health risk.

“Itong dolomite dust ay nakukuha sa proseso ng pagmimina ng dolomite, kapag nasa crushing plant. Itong nasa amin na dolomite ay finished product na po. Hindi na po ito malalanghap ng tao. (This dolomite dust is obtained during the dolomite mining process, while in the crushing plant. This dolomite we have is a finished product. People can no longer inhale it),” he explained.



Antiporda further pointed out that the size of the dolomite stone that was transported from Cebu was 5 millimeters big, or “100 times bigger than the dolomite dust,” which makes it impossible for a person to inhale it.

“Ang dolomite ay isang agent para ma-control ang polusyon. ‘Yung white sand na nakikita natin sa aquarium na parang durog na shell ‘yan ay dolomite din po. Nakikita natin na ang mga isda sa aquarium ay masisigla. (Dolomite is an agent for pollution control. The white sand we see in the aquarium like a crushed shell is also dolomite and we can tell that the fish in the aquarium are healthy),” he added.

The DENR official reiterated the safety of dolomite as it also used at the Plantation Bay in Cebu, and is still being used in other parts of the world.

“Ang ginagawa natin ay beach nourishment. Dati pa pong may buhangin ito, muli lang natin binubuhay. Hindi po ito reclaimed. (What we are doing is beach nourishment because we are just trying to revive the sand there. This is not a reclaimed area),” Antiporda said.



DENR: Legal action won't stop us from pursuing Manila Bay beautification

Published 15 hours ago on September 8, 2020 05:07 PM

By [Francis Wakefield](#)



Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda on Tuesday said no amount of threats of legal action could stop the department from pursuing the Manila Bay “White Sand” Beach Beautification Project.

Antiporda made the remark after various groups such as Ecowaste Coalition and the Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (PAMALAKAYA) have threatened to file a petition for a writ of kalikasan to stop the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) from covering a portion of Manila Bay with white sand.

“Well, first of all that is their prerogative. We welcome the criticism and all the actions they will do. But again one thing we can tell them is tuloy-tuloy po ang trabaho namin base na rin sa kautusan ng ating Korte Suprema na ipagpatuloy po ang inuutos na mandamus na linisin po ‘yang Manila Bay.

“And at the same time, tuloy rin po ‘yung pagpapaganda namin dyan dahil nakikita naman po natin iilan lang po ang nagsasalita na karamihan po ay hindi po alam ang buong buod nung kanilang sinasabi, especially ‘yung usapin sa health hazard, ecosystem, sa historical heritage,” Antiporda said during an interview over radio station DZBB.

Antiporda said the DENR is ready to face any legal action to be taken by various groups as he insisted that the project was made with legal basis.

“Well, ‘yan (project) po ay meron kami legal basis, research base po ang ginawa namin. Lahat po ay pinag-aralan mabuti ‘yan kaya’t wala po kaming kinakatakutan. Kung ano man pong aksyon ang gagawin nila ay wini-welcome naman po ng ating kagawaran. Ito po ay base sa kautusan ng ating Kalihim na Roy A Cimatú,” Antiporda said.

The official also assured the public that the crushed dolomite boulders would not put to risk the public’s health, particularly those who will visit the area once the rehabilitation project is completed.

The health department has earlier said that dolomite dust could be harmful to respiratory.

“Ang paliwanag natin kaya sinabi ni Usec Vergeire na dolomite dust, itong dolomite dust nakukuha ho ito kapag nasa process ng minimina ang dolomite and at the same time kapag crushing (plant). Ito pong nasa aming dolomite eh finish product po ito,” Antiporda said.



EcoWaste Coalition on Monday said that instead of cosmetic beautification, the government should stop all reclamation projects in Manila Bay that wreak havoc on the fragile marine ecosystems, including the mangroves, seagrass beds, and wetlands.

Fishers' group Pamalakaya, for its part, also urged for the suspension of the Manila Bay "nourishment" project until its suitability and sustainability to the rehabilitation program are established.

According to the group, the environmental and health issues being raised by experts, environmental and fisherfolk groups are "more than enough basis" for the DENR to suspend the project.



DENR: Manila Bay white sand project to continue even amid possible legal challenge

Published September 8, 2020 4:42pm

By LLANESCA T. PANTI, GMA News

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) will continue its effort of adorning the Manila Bay shoreline with white sand made out of crushed dolomite even amid a potential legal challenge before the Supreme Court, Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said Tuesday.

Antiporda was referring to the P389-million beach nourishment project for the bay—an initiative that UP law professor Jay Batongbacal [said could be a ground for filing for a writ of kalikasan](#) or petition to halt projects damaging to the environment before the Supreme Court based on adverse findings of at least two US companies on dolomite.

“Tuloy-tuloy po ang trabaho natin, base na rin po sa kautusan ng Korte Suprema na ipagpatuloy ang paglilinis ng Manila Bay. Iyong sinasabi nilang health hazard, ecosystem [issues], ‘yung history, heritage at legal basis, research-based po ang ginawa namin rito [for beach nourishment],” Antiporda said in a Dobol B sa News TV interview.

Antiporda was referring to the High Court’s 2008 decision tasking all relevant government agencies to clean up and preserve Manila Bay.

“Pinag-aralan po namin mabuti iyan kaya wala po kaming kinatatakutan. Kung anuman pong desisyon ang gusto nilang gawin, winewelcome po ng ating kagawaran,” Antiporda added.

The DENR official also said that marshals will be deployed, while a police outpost will be in place for maintenance of the project.

Antiporda also addressed the Department of Health's [warning that crushed dolomite could cause respiratory issues](#), saying that the health hazard that Health Undersecretary Rosario Vergeire was referring to was the process of crushing dolomite rocks, which emits dust, not the crushed dolomite rocks being used to cover up the Manila Bay coastline.

“Finished product na po ito, at five millimeter po ito, 100 times na mas malaki sa dolomite dust kaya hindi po ma-i-inhale ito,” Antiporda said.

Antiporda then took offense to Vice President Leni Robredo's criticism that [the white sand project is an insensitive move amid the COVID-19 pandemic](#), arguing that the project had been planned two years ago.

“We turned over P1.6 billion of our budget for pandemic response, and our budget for this year was reduced by P66 million. We did our part. Is that insensitivity? I do not think so,” he said.



Antiporda, however, conceded that the sand can be washed away by storms, but not to the point when everything will be ruined.

“May possibility po, pero hindi naman po guguhong kasi may engineering intervention naman po iyan kaya hindi po mawawasak,” Antiporda said.

“Pero kung storm surge, kahit naman po sa kabilang kalsada, matatamaan iyon. We cannot compete and we cannot overpower nature, pero may plano po tayo kaya sana huwag po ilagay ang programa in a bad light,” he added.

Think tank Infracore PH led by lawyer Terry Ridon earlier urged the Supreme Court’s Manila Bay Advisory Committee (MBAC) to stop the white sand initiative, citing that the DENR violated its own rules and Environmental Impact Statement System Law by seeking exemption from its own environment compliance regulations for the said white sand project.

“The MBAC should not wait for a fresh case to be filed before intervening on the white sand controversy, as this affords the public immediate relief from the potential environmental impact of the project. Clearly, the SC should be informed that the DENR has not only violated its own rules, but also overstepped its mandate in Manila Bay, either based on SC’s continuing mandamus or President Rodrigo Duterte’s Manila Bay Task Force,” Ridon said.

“Both bodies call for the cleanup, rehabilitation, restoration maintenance of the waters of Manila Bay to a level fit for swimming; and also to improve water quality through the reduction of coliform levels in all river systems and tributaries within Manila Bay. Both make no mention of a mandate to beautify a thin stretch of Manila Bay’s 190-kilometer coastline,” Ridon added. — **BM, GMA News**



Dolomite shipment legal

Published 6 hours ago on September 9, 2020 02:30 AM

By [Rico Osmeña](#)



CEBU dolomite found in the coastal areas of Alcoy town. PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF JFE MINERAL

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) in Central Visayas said the dolomite shipment from Alcoy municipality in Cebu to Manila Bay followed “proper regulatory laws and procedures.”

MGB-7 regional director Loreto Alburo said the dolomite materials sourced from Cebu were extracted, produced and shipped out after the 26 August ore transport permit issued to Philippine Mining Services Corporation (PMSC) to transport 3,500 wet metric tons of processed dolomite (5 millimeters) with cargo destination at Manila Integrated Cargo Terminal.

However, Cebu Governor Gwendolyn Garcia on Tuesday issued a cease and desist order on PMSC and Dolomite Mining Corporation (DMC) to stop “further extracting, processing, selling and transporting” dolomite/white sand to prevent “damage to the terrestrial environment in the Municipality of Alcoy.”

Garcia’s order stated the province and Alcoy were not informed of the Manila Bay beautification project nor was any consultation held.

PMSC, according to the website of Japan-based JFE Mineral, “mines and processes dolomite at the Alcoy mine” in Cebu. It said dolomite is an auxiliary material for iron and steel, plate glass for construction materials, automotive glass, fertilizer and soil conditioner.

PMSC is a subsidiary of JFE Mineral.

Alburo assured that MGB-7 will continue to monitor all mining activities in Central Visayas, particularly the transport and shipment of minerals and ores outside the region to ensure strict adherence to existing laws, rules and regulations.

The Cebu Provincial Board has scrapped plans to investigate the alleged illegal transport of dolomite.

Third District board member Jimbo Borghonia, chair of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, sponsored a resolution for Cebu Province to investigate the matter. But he later said they trust the MGB’s statement that the entire process was done legally.

Department of Environment and Natural Resources Undersecretary Benny Antiporda also said the “beach nourishment” project, reportedly worth P398 million, is part of the government’s program to rehabilitate Manila Bay.

Cebu is among the few provinces in the country where economically mineable deposit of dolomite can be found. Dolomite rocks are common in several municipalities but the main deposit is in Alcoy and Dalaguete towns.



Currently, DMC is mining and quarrying dolomite in Alcoy, particularly in Barangay Pugalo.

The raw dolomite quarried by DMC is delivered to PMSC, its sole buyer, for processing to various desired sizes and marketable products.

The company has a Mineral Production Sharing Agreement with the government to mine for 25 years or until 2030.

It also has a Mineral Processing Permit from the MGB, now on its second year of a five-year deal. The permit has a maximum term of 25 years.

Dolomite products, made up of a sedimentary carbonate rock, are marketed to local and foreign buyers, like Taiwan and Japan.



Palace defends Manila Bay project

Published 1 day ago on September 8, 2020 03:40 AM

By [MJ Blancaflor](#)



Malacañang on Monday defended the government's move to pour artificial "white sand" on the shores of Manila Bay, saying Metro Manila residents also need to have "access" to beautiful beaches amid the ongoing pandemic.

In his televised briefing, presidential spokesman Harry Roque came into the defense of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) following criticisms that the P389-million project is focused on aesthetics but has little to offer on rehabilitation and restoration.

"I am happy that we have a beautiful attraction here in Manila... As a Manila resident, I'm happy that we also had the beautification of Manila Bay. We, from Manila, also need to have access to beautiful beaches at these times since we are not allowed to go outside Metro Manila," Roque told reporters.

He previously said that the white sand beach in Manila Bay can help improve the public's mental health as it will distract them from the global health crisis.

The multi-million peso rehabilitation project that includes covering the 500-meter stretch of the baywalk on Roxas Boulevard with artificial white sand would grant a "Boracay feel" to visitors, according to the DENR.

The project is part of the Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program launched by Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu last year to save the bay from decades of pollution.

Roque also said the millions-worth of funds allocated by the DENR for this program was set aside in the 2020 budget that was approved by the Congress last year.

This was in response to Vice President Leni Robredo who tagged the program as "insensitive" since it was pushed through despite the ongoing health crisis.

Robredo, in her radio program over the weekend, said the P389 million budget for Manila bay could have gone instead to over 80,000 poor families who were left hungry due to the pandemic.

She has been pushing to give each of the 10 million poorest Filipinos families a monthly cash aid worth P5,000 to help them cope with the crisis, but the Palace rejected her suggestion by citing budget constraints.

"The plan to put white sand in Manila Bay was in the 2020 budget – which was approved in 2019. We did not expect that we would have COVID-19," Roque said.



“We know the rules in the budget. If it’s in the line item, we can only use the funds for that. So, it’s not as if we planned this project at the time of COVID-19,” he added.

Roque also claimed that the “white sand” makeover of the harbor was not just a “beautification” project, but an anti-soil erosion and flooding control program.

“It is part of an overall adaptation policy of the DENR. Do not assume that DENR does not know what to do,” he said.

The Palace official also said that the move to crush dolomite rocks from Cebu to produce synthetic white sand for the Manila Bay has undergone an environmental impact assessment.

However, DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda has repeatedly said in his previous interviews that the program does not need an environmental impact study and a compliance certificate since it was “a rehabilitation project, not a construction project.”

DENR’s Memorandum Circular 2014-005 states that projects, including rehabilitation programs, need to go through the Environmental Impact Statement process.

Environmental groups criticized the project and claimed that the DENR’s move to pour artificial sand on Manila Bay’s shores would hurt the natural ecosystem in the area and in Cebu, where the pulverized dolomites came from.

The Department of Health on Monday also raised alarm that the crushed rocks might cause respiratory illness to those who would inhale it.

“These dolomites, based on studies, might lead to adverse reactions from the respiratory system if inhaled,” Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire told reporters in a media forum.

“If it goes to eyes, it might lead to irritation. If ingested, the person might have gastro-intestinal discomfort, stomach pains and diarrhea...These are some minor effects,” she added.



Sec. Roque calls for cooperation on Manila Bay rehabilitation

September 8, 2020

Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque is prepared to be the first to swim in Manila Bay once its rehabilitation is completed.

In an interview, Secretary Roque shared that many residents want to enjoy the area. He wished that everyone will continue to cooperate for the rehabilitation of Manila Bay.

The issue on the “crushed dolomite boulders” placed on the stretch of the bay has yet to be settled. However, the Spokesperson admitted that he and President Rodrigo R. Duterte have not yet discussed the matter. Sec. Roque reiterated that it is only part of the project of Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) even before the Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

Report from Mela Lesmoras



DOH clarifies: Process of crushing of dolomite hazardous to health

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Sep 08 2020 01:09 PM



Workers spread white sand along a portion of the Baywalk in Manila Bay on September 3, 2020 as part of the Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program by the DENR. The white sand, which comes from Cebu, will be spread from the banks of the bay near the US Embassy to the Yacht Club. *Jonathan Cellona, ABS-CBN News*

MANILA - The Department of Health clarified Tuesday that the process of crushing dolomite was harmful and not the product itself.

The agency had earlier warned that crushed dolomite may cause respiratory issues as the environment department began dumping artificial white sand in Manila Bay.

"Ito pong proseso ng pagka-crush ng dolomite, dun po tayo nagkakaroon ng hazardous event or effects sa katawan. As long as it is processed already, hindi na po ganun ang kaniyang epekto sa mga population o sa mga tao," DOH Undersecretary and spokesperson Maria Rosario Vergeire told ABS-CBN's Teleradyo.

(The process of crushing dolomite produces hazardous effects to a body. As long as it is processed already, it will not have the same effect to people.)

"Sinisiguro naman po ng DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources) na ito po ay will not harm the environment nor the population. Hindi naman po yan bibigyan ng clearance ng DENR kung ito ay makakasama sa kalusugan ng ating mga kababayan."

(The DENR assured the public that it will not harm the environment nor the population. It will not give its clearance to a project that will harm the health of the people.)

Wearing of face masks will also prevent possible harmful effects to a person's respiratory system, Vergeire added.

"Tayo po ay nagpapatupad ng minimum health standard. Tayo po ay nakamask kung sakali there would be this kind of effect to our respiratory system, by using the mask we can be able to prevent that," she said.

(We are implementing minimum health standard. We are wearing a mask in the event there would be this kind of effect to our respiratory system, by using the mask we can be able to prevent that.)

The DENR's move to dump synthetic white sand nearby Manila Bay has received criticism, with environmental groups saying it violated several laws.

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/09/08/20/doh-clarifies-process-of-crushing-of-dolomite-hazardous-to-health?fbclid=IwAR3rIyeUN2aACgR59EnAr20skXhTdyIAKdthOwYkzT31borUXofi2snuqly>



Crushed dolomite used in Manila Bay rehab no longer harmful: Año

By Christopher Lloyd Caliwan [September 8, 2020, 6:00 pm](#)



(File photo)

MANILA – Interior Secretary Eduardo Año on Tuesday allayed fears on the supposed health risks caused by the crushed dolomite that is being poured on the shores of Manila Bay as part of its rehabilitation.

"We have a discussion last night at the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases about it and (Environment) Secretary (Roy) Cimatu presented the side of the DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources). He emphasized that these are actually a finished product. The dolomites that are harmful are those dolomites during the crushing," Año said in a TV interview.

Citing the presentation of Cimatu, Año said the dolomite sand being laid at the Manila Bay is no longer harmful because they are "three or four times" the size of the sand and cannot be blown by the wind.

This came after various sectors raised concerns over the environmental and health risks of the project.

Año said if the Department of Health (DOH) could prove the health risk of the dolomite to the health of the people, the government would stop the project.

"Kung mapo-prove nila na harmful ito at kung talagang maging harmful pa talaga yan [If they can prove that this is harmful], we can put a stop," Año stressed. "The harmful dolomite are those particles during the crushing of the boulders. Nandoon 'yung danger (The danger is there)."

Año said there will be "more discussions" on the matter.

"But based on what we have learned, it is not really harmful. But I leave it to the experts and we'll have more discussions on this," he added.

Earlier, DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said the crushed dolomite boulders came from Cebu and were already crushed before bringing them to Manila.

Antiporda said the sand would be overlaid on the beach area of Manila Bay, which is famed worldwide for its beautiful sunset.

Antiporda said the department and the Manila Bay Task Force are on Phase 1 of the Manila Bay beach nourishment project.

The overlaying of sand, he said, would be completed before September 19 when heads of various government agencies, led by Año, Cimatu and Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat would visit and inspect the area.



Some groups are questioning the overlaying of sand on Manila Bay's shores, saying the project is focusing on aesthetics and little contribution to rehabilitation and restoration.

On Monday, Malacañang defended the project claiming it will prevent soil erosion and flooding.

Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque said aside from being a beautification project, it would also help address risk and disaster problems.

He added that this could boost the public's mental health in the middle of the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic. (PNA)



GMA News

September 7 at 11:55 AM

LOOK: "Soon, we will develop the new Baseco Esplanade," ayon sa post ni Manila City Mayor Isko Moreno sa Facebook. Nagkaroon ng clean-up operations ang Department of Public Services o DPS sa Baseco Beach.

Photo: Isko Moreno Domagoso on FB



18K

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DILG: Manila Bay 'white sand' project pwede ihinto kung mapanganib talaga

By [James Relativo](#) (Philstar.com)

- September 8, 2020 - 4:47pm



Nagmamasid at nakikiusyoso ang mga residenteng ito habang tinatambakan ng durog na "dolomite" rocks ang pampang na ito ng Manila Bay, ika-6 ng Setyembre, 2020

The STAR/Miguel de Guzman

MANILA, Philippines — Kahit suportado niya ang P389 milyong proyekto, sinabi ng kalihim ng Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) na posible pang maitigil ang pagtatambak ng durog na "dolomite" sa Manila Bay — basta't mapatunayang nakasasama talaga ito sa kalikasan o kalusugan.

Ayon kay Interior Secretary Eduardo Año — na kagagaling pa lang sa coronavirus disease (COVID-19) — [gusto nila ngayong kausapin ang Department of Health \(DOH\)](#) kaugnay ng nasabing materyales, na ginagamit bilang sintetikong alternatibo sa "white sand."

Ang "beach nourishment" ng look ay sinasabing bahagi ng rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay, na layong itransporma ang maruming anyong tubig sa isang mala-Boracay na lugar na malalanguyan.

"We'd like also to get the side of the DOH kung mapo-prove talaga nila na harmful ito. Kung talagang maging harmful pa rin talaga 'yan, then we can put a stop," saad ni Año sa panayam ng CNN Philippines, Martes.

"But for now, I'm inclined to support really the DENR."

Kahapon lang nang sabihin ni Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire na may negatibong epekto sa kalusugan ang dolomite, kung pagbabasehan ang mga pag-aaral at medical literature.

Maliban sa delikado raw na malanghap ang alikabok nito, maaari rin daw magdulot ng pagtatae ang aksidenteng pagkalunok sa maliliit na piraso ng winasak na bato.

"[K]apag naging dust na siya at nag-aerosolize sa air, it can cause respiratory issues or effects to a person," wika ng DOH official sa reporters, Lunes nang umaga.



Pero depensa ni Año, "finished product" na raw ito at wala nang peligro sa kalusugan ng tao. "The dolomites na harmful are those dolomites during the crushing — doon pa sa source na kina-crush 'yung mga boulders, nandoon 'yung danger. Pero ito, hindi mo na ito mahihinga," patuloy niya.

'Paglabag sa 5 batas'

Sa gitna nito, sabay-sabay pinalagan ng ilang environmental groups ang naturang "beautification" program lalo na't lumalabag ito aniya sa hindi bababa sa limang environmental at cultural laws.

Ilan dito National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009, kawalan ng konsultasyon sa Lungsod ng Maynila na paglabag diumano sa Local Government Code of 1991, at iba pang mga batas ayon sa Oceana, Living Laudato Si Philippines at Archdiocese of Manila-Ministry of Ecology.

Hindi rin daw ito dumaan sa Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) system gaya ng iba pang mga proyekto, lalo na't maaaring may masama itong epekto sa kalikasan.

"No person may undertake environmentally critical projects or any project in environmentally critical areas without an environmental compliance certificate," sabi ng mga grupo.

Una nang dinepensahan ni Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda na hindi sakop ng EIS system ang beach nourishment at kinakailangan lamang ng certificate of non-coverage.

Ipinagbabawal din ng Fisheries Code ang pagdudumi sa mga anyong tubig, na kinikilala bilang anumang makapamiminsala sa mga buhay at hindi buhay na likas-yaman at tao. Hindi rin pinahihintulutan sa ilalim ng Clean Water Act ang pagdedeposito ng anumang materyales sa mga anyong tubig at kanilang mga pampamng sa dahilang makapagdudulot din ito ng water pollution. — **may mga ulat mula kay Gaea Katreena Cabico**



DILG: Manila Bay 'white sand' ipatitigil 'pag delikado


By Abante Tonite — Last updated Sep 8, 2020

NEWS



20 0

Tigil-operasyon ang paglalagay ng synthetic white sand sa baywalk ng Manila Bay kung mapapatunayan na delikado sa kalusugan ng publiko ang dolomite rock na ginamit dito.

 Ad Asia Banner – below 1st paragraph

Ayon kay Interior Secretary Eduardo Año, nagkakaroon na ng pag-uusap ukol sa mga isyu sa paggamit ng naturang bato, na ayon sa Department of Health ay pwedeng magdulot ng respiratory illness.

“Based on the presentation of [Department of Environment and Natural Resources] Secretary [Roy] Cimatu and of course there will be more discussion on this. But based on what we have learned, talagang hindi na ‘to siya harmful ano, but I leave it to the experts,” saad ni Año sa CNN Philippines.

“We’ll have more discussion on this and we’d like also to get the side of the DOH kung ma-prove talaga nila na harmful and kung talagang maging harmful pa rin talaga ‘yan, then we can put a stop but for now I’m inclined to support really the DENR,” aniya pa.

Sinagot na ni Cimatu ang mga paratang at giniit na ginagamit din sa ibang establisimiyento ang dolomite rock at wala umanong nagiging reklamo ukol dito. (RP)



"We'll have more discussion on this and we'd like also to get the side of the [Department of Health] kung ma-prove talaga nila na harmful and kung talagang maging harmful pa rin talaga 'yan, then we can put a stop but for now I'm inclined to support really the [Department of Environment and Natural Resources]," Año said.

Manila Bay white sand project may be stopped if proven harmful, says Año

Published September 8, 2020 5:24pm

By ANNA FELICIA BAJO, GMA News

Interior Secretary Eduardo Año on Tuesday said the plan to cover the Baywalk on Roxas Boulevard with white sand could be stopped if proven that it is harmful for the public.

Año told CNN Philippines that government officials had an initial discussion on the supposed threat of dolomite rock, the material which will be used to adorn the Manila Bay coastline, to a person's health.

"Based on the presentation of Secretary Cimatú and of course there will be more discussion on this. But based on what we have learned, talagang hindi na 'to siya harmful ano, but I leave it to the experts," he said.

"We'll have more discussion on this and we'd like also to get the side of the [Department of Health] kung ma-prove talaga nila na harmful and kung talagang maging harmful pa rin talaga 'yan, then we can put a stop but for now I'm inclined to support really the [Department of Environment and Natural Resources]," he added.

The DENR is planning to fill 500 meters of the Baywalk on Roxas Boulevard with white sand under the Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program.

"Gagawin white sand itong, dito sa may bay walk area para makita ng tao na kapag puti ang kulay ng isang bagay, kailangan pangalagaan mo ito at 'wag mo dumihan," DENR undersecretary Benny Antiporda had said.

This plan was criticized by environmentalists and fisherfolk groups, saying that pouring white sand does not resolve the pollution in the bay.

Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire earlier warned that the inhalation of crushed dolomite rock could result in respiratory problems.

Vergeire still said it is for the DENR to say if such an initiative is a sound move amid the COVID-19 pandemic. **-NB, GMA News**

Source: https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/754722/manila-bay-white-sand-project-may-be-stopped-if-proven-harmful-says-ano/story/?utm_source=GMAnews&utm_medium=Facebook&fbclid=IwAR29HJXmdmEbcP16rKrf8sP-LB_QwSGQE3TfGqaHAGB-7hswvKbomwyimPs



Provincial gov't to no longer investigate 'white sand' transfer from Cebu quarry

Published September 8, 2020, 12:58 PM

by [Calvin Cordova](#)

CEBU CITY—The provincial board will no longer investigate the sourcing of crushed dolomite from a Cebu quarry, and its transfer from Cebu to Manila.

Board Member John Ismael Borgonia, chairman of the provincial board's Committee on Environmental Conservation and Natural Resources, said the investigation will no longer push through after the Mines and Geosciences Bureau Central Visayas (MGB 7) confirmed that the hauling of the dolomite rocks to fill a stretch of the Manila Bay baywalk was legal.

“We have full faith and confidence in them as implementer of our environmental laws. We called for investigation before because we have lots of questions regarding the legality of such extraction and transportation to Manilay Bay. But now it is already answered,” Borgonia said.

In a statement, the MGB 7 said that a quarrying firm in Alcoy town, southern Cebu had a permit to process dolomites into “white sand”.

The firm, Dolomite Mining Corporation, was also authorized to transport the minerals to Manila Bay.

“On August 26, 2020, MGB-7 Regional Office issued an Ore Transport Permit (OTP) to PMSC (Philippine Mining Service Corporation) to transport 3,500 WMT of processed dolomite (size -5mm) with cargo destination at Manila Integrated Cargo Terminal, Manila City,” read the MGB-7 statement.

“This dolomite shipment is the reported white sand, which is being spread along the shoreline of Manila Bay to enhance the aesthetic beauty of the bay front,” it added.

MGB-7 regional director Loreto Alburo likewise assured that the shipment of the crushed dolomite rocks went through the legal process.

“The dolomite materials sourced from Cebu have been extracted, produced, and shipped out to various buyers following proper regulatory laws and procedures,” said Alburo.



Cebu Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia yesterday issued Executive Order (EO) 25 ordering the Philippine Mining Service Corp. (PMSC) and Dolomite Mining Corp. to "immediately stop" further extraction, processing, sale and transport of dolomite, associated mineral deposits and other quarry resources.

The STAR/KJ Rosales

Cebu gov stops dolomite extraction for Manila Bay rehab

[Edu Punay](#), [Emmanuel Tupas](#) (The Philippine Star) - September 9, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Extraction and transport of dolomite for Manila Bay's rehabilitation project has been stopped.

Cebu Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia yesterday issued Executive Order (EO) 25 ordering the Philippine Mining Service Corp. (PMSC) and Dolomite Mining Corp. (DMC) to "immediately stop" further extraction, processing, sale and transport of dolomite, associated mineral deposits and other quarry resources.

Garcia also ordered the local government of Alcoy, the Philippine National Police and Armed Forces of the Philippines to assist the provincial government in implementing the EO.

DMC, through a mineral production sharing agreement with the national government, extracted dolomite in Alcoy town. PMSC took charge of transporting the synthetic white sand to Manila.

Garcia said the provincial government of Cebu and municipal government of Alcoy were not informed of Manila Bay's rehabilitation project.

She said there was no public consultation before permits were issued to PSMC for the transport of dolomite rocks from Cebu to Manila.

"There is no showing that the dolomite extraction, processing, transport, sale and use in the Manila Bay shoreline has an environmental impact study," the EO added.

It also noted that the extraction was done at an "environmentally critical area" and a critical slope.

Alcoy has been declared habitat of Black Shama, an endangered bird species, which is endemic in Cebu.

"Extraction of dolomite minerals from Alcoy and the consequential damage it will cause the terrestrial environment of the Cebu island violate Cebuanos' constitutional right to a balanced and healthful ecology," the EO read.



Former environment secretary Lito Atienza said the beautification project is futile and a waste of resources.

However, Interior Secretary Eduardo Año said he sees nothing wrong with the project.

"This would not only give a nicer view but it could provide a safety buffer," Año said in an interview over CNN. **—The Freeman**



Cebu stops 'white sand' mining for Manila Bay

posted September 09, 2020 at 01:40 am

by [Maricel Cruz and Willie Casas](#)

Cebu Governor Gwendolyn Garcia on Tuesday ordered a stop to mining operations in Alcoy town for the dolomite or powder-white sand used for the P389-million beautification project of the Manila Bay beach, which has drawn criticism from environmentalists and lawmakers alike.



TWO 'HAZARDOUS' FACES. The laying of crushed dolomite continues on the Manila Bay beachfront beside the United States Embassy in Manila, a move the government said would contribute to Filipinos' mental health amid the coronavirus pandemic. Tina Panganiban Perez via GMA News Twitter

This developed as Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu defended to Congress the use of crushed dolomite rocks to whiten the Manila Bay shoreline—even as Interior Secretary Eduardo Año said the project could be stopped if proven that dolomite dust is harmful to the public.

Manila Mayor Francisco "Isko" Domagoso on Tuesday also sought clarification from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on the possible health risks of crushed dolomite rocks, following a statement from Health Undersecretary Rosario Vergeire that inhalation of dolomite particles could cause respiratory problems.

But Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda, in an interview with radio dzBB, said the DENR will continue its effort of adorning the Manila Bay shoreline with white sand, even amid a potential legal challenge before the Supreme Court.

Through Executive Order No. 25, Garcia ordered the Philippine Mining Service Corp. (PMSC) and the Dolomite Mining Corp. (DMC) to "immediately cease and desist from further extracting, processing, selling and transporting of dolomite, associated mineral deposits, and other quarry resources."

The executive order also said both the provincial government of Cebu and the municipality of Alcoy were not informed of the beautification project in Manila.

There was also no public consultation prior to the issuance of ore transport permits by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau, an agency under the DENR, in Central Visayas.

"The issuance of the OTPs to PMSC without the proper notice to the local government unit and the absence of public consultation and participation clearly lacks transparency on the part of MGB, PMSC and DMC," the order read.

Garcia's order added that such is a violation of DENR Administrative Order No. 2010-21, which states that the local government should ensure compliance with relevant laws on public notice, public consultation and public participation.

The order likewise said there was no Environmental Impact Study performed on the use of dolomite in the Manila Bay shoreline project.

"The absence of said Environmental Impact Study is a clear and blatant violation of DENR Administrative Order No. 2003-30, the Implementing Rules and Regulations of Presidential Decree No. 1586, Establishing the Philippine Environmental Impact Statement System," the order read.



The extraction of dolomite from Alcoy town and the "consequential damage it will cause the terrestrial environment of Cebu Island" is also a violation of the constitutional right of Cebu residents to "a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature."



On the southern end of the shoreline, personnel from the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) clean debris and garbage, obvious physical health hazards, washed up from the bay owing to recent monsoon rains. Norman Cruz

But in Congress, Cimatu said the effort to rehabilitate Manila Bay was in response to the mandamus issued by the Supreme Court to the government to clean up the body of water.

"So this is what we're doing now, cleaning and improving the bad water quality there along with the water treatment plant we installed at the baywalk," he said.

Cimatu said it was not the first time that crushed dolomite rocks would be used for decorative purposes, as it was also the same material found in many resorts in Mactan, Cebu.

He added that dolomite rocks can also treat the pH level of water, from acidic to alkaline, and disputed claims that crushed dolomite is harmful when inhaled.

"What is hazardous is the fine silica quartz in some dolomite in the form of dust that is generated during crushing and screening, not the calcium or magnesium. Note that it is dust-size which is about 10 to 15 microns that is hazardous if inhaled for long periods of exposure without personal protective equipment," he said.

"However, the size of the dolomite in Baywalk is 2 to 5 millimeters or equivalent to 2,000 to 5,000 microns or 100 times bigger than dust and therefore not suspended in air and cannot be inhaled," he added.

Meanwhile, Año told CNN Philippines that government officials had discussed the supposed threat of dolomite to a person's health.

"Based on the presentation of Secretary Cimatu and of course there will be more discussion on this. But based on what we have learned, it really isn't harmful anymore, but I leave it to the experts," he said.

"We'll have more discussion on this and we'd like also to get the side of the [Department of Health] if they can really prove that it is harmful, and if so, then we can put a stop but for now I'm inclined to support really the [DENR]," he added.

The DENR is planning to fill 500 meters of the Baywalk on Roxas Boulevard with white sand under the Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program.

In a letter addressed to Cimatu, Domagoso said: "Pursuant to the faithful discharge of my duty to promote health and safety, enhance the right of the people to a balanced ecology and preserve the comfort and convenience of the city inhabitants, may we seek your clarification on this declaration of Usec. Vergeire to make sure that the health, comfort and convenience of the city inhabitants and other neighboring local government units are properly taken care of."

Meanwhile, Antiporda assured that marshals will be deployed by the DENR, while a police outpost will be in place for maintenance of the project.

Cebu provincial gov't issues cease-and-desist order to two mining firms over Manila Bay 'white sand' project

By [CNN Philippines Staff](#)

Published Sep 8, 2020 4:39:03 PM

Updated Sep 8, 2020 10:27:00 PM



The Cebu provincial government has issued a cease-and-desist order on Tuesday against two mining firms for unauthorized mineral extraction related to the controversial Manila Bay 'white sand' project.

(FILE PHOTO)

Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, September 8) — The Cebu provincial government has issued a cease-and-desist order on Tuesday against two mining firms for unauthorized mineral extraction related to the controversial Manila Bay 'white sand' project.

Governor Gwendolyn Garcia issued the order against Dolomite Mining Corporation and the Philippine Mining Service Corporation in Alcoy town preventing them from further "extracting, processing, selling and transporting dolomite, associated mineral deposits, and other quarry resources."

"The extraction of dolomite minerals from Alcoy and the consequential damage it will cause the terrestrial environment of Cebu Island violate the Cebuano's constitutional right to a balanced and healthful ecology," the order stated.

CNN Philippines @cnnphilippines · Sep 8, 2020
 Replying to @cnnphilippines
 Cebu Provincial Legal Consultant Martinquilla says local officials are now drafting the executive order and cease-and-desist order upon the instruction of Governor Gwen Garcia | @YsabelwithaWhy

CNN Philippines @cnnphilippines
 LOOK: Cebu Governor Gwen Garcia orders Dolomite Mining Corporation and Philippine Mining Service Corporation to cease and desist further extracting, processing, selling and transporting of dolomite, associated mineral deposits and other quarry resources.

Office of the Governor
 EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 25
 Series of 2020

ENFORCED THE PHILIPPINE MINING SERVICE CORPORATION AND THE DOLomite MINING CORPORATION TO IMMEDIATELY CEASE AND DESIST FROM EXTRACTING, PROCESSING, SELLING, AND TRANSPORTING DOLomite, ASSOCIATED MINERAL DEPOSITS, AND OTHER QUARRY RESOURCES.

WHEREAS, Dolomite Mining Corporation (DMC) entered into a Mineral Production Sharing Agreement with the Republic of the Philippines to undertake mineral resource extraction operations, particularly the extraction of DOLomite, within a certain area located in the Municipality of Alcoy;

WHEREAS, DMC sets the mineral deposits in Philippine Mining Service Corporation (PMSC), a Mineral Processing Plant (MPP), for processing and sale;

WHEREAS, on September 8, 2020, regional and local government agencies reported that certain dolomite trucks, owned by the Municipality of Alcoy, Cebu, were used in the mineral extraction project to unlawfully transport the dolomite from the site to a white sand area;

WHEREAS, the House and Governance Review Council (HRC) confirmed that the trucks used in the Mineral Production Sharing Agreement (MPPSA) in the Philippine Mining Service Corporation (PMSC), allowing the latter to transport a load of sand off the white sand area in the Municipality of Alcoy to be used in the maritime reconstruction of Manila Bay;

WHEREAS, Section 9 of the 1987 Administrative Order No. 2010-21 dated April 26, 2010, on the role of the local government, states:

"Section 9. Role of Local Government. Subject to Section 8 of the Act (The Philippine Mining Act of 1995, Republic Act 7942) and pursuant to the Local Government Code and other pertinent laws, the LGU shall have the following duties in mining projects within their respective jurisdictions:

a. To ensure that mineral extraction and processing activities comply with the provisions of the Local Government Code and other pertinent laws;

WHEREAS, the Provincial Government of Cebu, said unto the Municipality

AND WHEREAS, the extraction of Dolomite entails three steps and the environmental damage it will cause the terrestrial environment of Cebu Island would be in violation of the Constitution of the Philippines, particularly Article II, Section 16, which states that the State shall protect and enhance the right to a balanced and healthful ecology, the right to a balanced and healthful ecology shall be given the benefit of the doubt. The parties herein and the Manila Bay white sand project has in the usage of trucks violates the opportunity of the principle to protect environmental integrity in the present and future generations of Cebuanos;

WHEREAS, the Provincial Government of Cebu in possession with the power to regulate and control the extraction in the province and control of the mining project under the environmental director on land and sea resources with its general order number 16 of the local government code early local government said shall exercise powers which are essential to the protection of the general welfare;

WHEREAS, to further prevent some damage to the terrestrial environment in the Municipality of Alcoy there is need to immediately stop mining and MPP operations further extracting, processing, selling, and transporting of dolomite, associated mineral deposits, and other quarry resources;

DOE, TERRESTRIAL, I. GWENDOLYN F. GARCIA, Governor of Cebu, by virtue of the power vested in her by law, and in conformity with the foregoing, do hereby order DOLomite Mining Corporation and Philippine Mining Service Corporation to IMMEDIATELY CEASE AND DESIST FROM EXTRACTING, PROCESSING, SELLING, AND TRANSPORTING OF DOLomite, ASSOCIATED MINERAL DEPOSITS, AND OTHER QUARRY RESOURCES.

The Municipality of Alcoy, the Philippine National Police, and the Armed Forces of the Philippines shall assist the Provincial Government of Cebu in the implementation of this Executive Order.

This Executive Order shall take effect immediately upon its issuance.

SO ORDERED.

The Provincial Capital, Cebu City, Philippines, September 8, 2020.

By

 GWENDOLYN F. GARCIA

3:50 PM · Sep 8, 2020

21 See CNN Philippines's other Tweets



The order mentioned that although the Mines and Geosciences Bureau of Central Visayas granted a transport permit to the Philippine Mining Service Corporation to bring the minerals to Manila, it did not inform the Cebu provincial government nor Alcoy town officials about the project.

There was also no environmental impact study on the effects of dolomite extraction and its use on the Manila Bay shoreline, it added. This came after the governor met with representatives from the bureau and other officials, provincial legal consultant Marino Martinquilla said.

Ironically, Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu on the same day defended the dumping of the sand, citing that the same practice was done in Cebu resorts.

"Nakikita na ngayon na ginagamit ito since 1996 para sa beach nourishment nila sa kanilang mga resorts dito sa Mactan, Cebu," Cimatu said during a House panel hearing on the 2021 budget. "Since 1996 pa ito, wala naman kaming narinig o nabasa na may mga nagreklamo... so ito ang ating argument sa 'yung question nila that it is harmful."

[Translation: This has been used since 1996 by resorts in Mactan, Cebu for their beach nourishment. Since it has been practiced in 1996 we have not heard of any complaints...so this is our argument against those saying that it is harmful.]

The overlaying of the crushed dolomite on a segment of the Manila Bay shoreline itself drew flak from environmental groups for prioritizing aesthetics over environmental concerns. The Department of Health also warned of the health risks from being exposed to the sand. Manila Mayor Francisco "Isko Moreno" Domagoso also sought clarification from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources on the project's health implications.

The secretary addressed these, saying dolomites are used to filter water and are often used in aquariums. He said the only harm it poses is during the mining process when the dust particles are inhaled, but he assured that the finished product deposited on the shoreline is much larger than dust.

"The size of the dolomite in the baywalk is 2 to 5 millimeters... or 100 times bigger than dust and therefore, cannot be suspended in the air or inhaled," Cimatu said.

Other environment officials also clarified that the budget for the dolomite extraction and transportation was only P28 million compared to the earlier reported P389 million. The larger amount covers the entire Manila Bay "beach nourishment" which includes desilting, or removing filth from the water, Undersecretary Jonas Leones said. He added that the project will span 120 meters across the shoreline from the US Embassy area and 60 meters towards the sea.

Leones said the department is ready to answer to any legal actions that may be filed against them on the Manila Bay rehabilitation.

Cebu-based journalist Dale Israel contributed to this report



Cease and desist order issued vs 2 firms in Manila Bay 'beautification'

Published September 8, 2020 7:27pm

By JON VIKTOR D. CABUENAS, GMA News

Cebu Governor Gwendolyn Garcia on Tuesday issued a cease and desist order on two companies involved in the extraction and sale of the dolomite used in the Manila Bay "beautification" project.

In Executive Order 25 dated September 8, Garcia instructed both the Dolomite Mining Corporation (DMC) and the Philippine Mining Service Corporation (PMSC) to stop activities involving dolomite.

The two companies were ordered to "immediately cease and desist from further extracting, processing, selling, and transporting of dolomite, associated mineral deposits, and other quarry resources."

GMA News Online has reached out to PMSC for comment on the matter, but no response has been received as of posting time. The company is still trying to reach DMC.

According to the order, DMC was earlier granted a Mineral Production Sharing Agreement (MPSA) to extract dolomite from the municipality of Alcoy.

DMC then sold the extracted dolomite to PMSC which was allowed by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) to transport a total of seven wet metric tons of dolomite to Manila for the beautification project.

In the Executive Order, Garcia noted that both the provincial government of Cebu and that of the municipality of Alcoy were not informed of the beautification project, as she said there was no public consultation for the transport from Cebu to Manila.

"[T]he issuance of the OTPS (ore transport permits) to PMSC without the proper notice to the local government unit and the absence of public consultation and participation clearly lacks transparency on the part of the MGB, PMSC, and DMC," the order read.

The order also noted that there is no proof that the project has an Environment Impact Study.

"[T]o further prevent more damage to the terrestrial environment in the Municipality of Alcoy there is a need to immediately stop PMSC and DMC from further extracting, processing, selling, and transporting of dolomite, associated mineral deposits, and other quarry resources," it read.

Provincial Board Member John Ismael Borgoni earlier said the board was [left in the dark](#) about the use of dolomite from Alcoy.



This comes as synthetic white sand was shipped to the Manila Bay as part of the P389-million beautification project of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

This was [slammed by environmental groups](#) and Vice President Maria Leonor "Leni" Robredo who tagged the project as ["insensitive" and "insulting"](#) amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire on Monday also said the [inhalation of crushed dolomite rock can cause respiratory problems](#), among other health issues.

Still, Malacañang on Monday backed the project, claiming that this will help in flood control and prevent soil erosion.

For his part, Interior Secretary Eduardo Año said the plan to cover the Baywalk on Roxas Boulevard with synthetic white sand [could be stopped](#) if proven that it is harmful to the public. — **DVM, GMA News**



DENR bawal humakot ng bato sa Cebu

By Abante Tonite — Last updated Sep 8, 2020

NEWS



Photo courtesy of facebook.com/GwenGarciaCebu



Inawat ni Cebu Governor Gwendolyn Garcia ang operasyon ng dalawang korporasyon na nagsu-supply ng dolomite rock sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) na nilagay sa Manila Bay.

Ad Asia Banner – below 1st paragraph

Ayon sa nilabas na Executive Order No. 27 series of 2020 ni Garcia, kanyang pinag-utos ang agarang cease and desist order para sa Dolomite Mining Corporation at Philippine Mining Service Corporation (PMSC) para mag-extract, magproseso, magbenta at magbiyahe ng dolomite rock at iba pang resources sa kanilang lalawigan.

Saad sa nilabas na kautusan ni Garcia, hindi umano nagpaalam sa mga lokal na opisyal ng Cebu, maging sa bayan ng Alcoy kung saan ginanap ang pagkuha ng mga dolomite rock, ang naturang mining corporation para humakot ng pitong tonelada ng bato at dalhin ito sa Manila Bay.

Ito'y sa kabila ng pagbibigay ng dalawang ore transport permit ng Mines and Geosciences Bureau Central Visayas sa PMSC para sa mga dolomite rock.

Isa pang punto ni Garcia ay ang piniling extraction site para sa gagamiting synthetic white sand sa Manila Bay kung saan tinuturing na ang lugar na 'environmentally critical area'.

Bukod pa dito, habitat area din ng Siloy, isang endangered species ng ibon, ang lugar ng Alcoy, ngunit ito pa rin ang pinagkunan ng bato para sa DENR project. (Ray Mark Patriarca)



Mayor Isko asks DENR to clarify harmful effects of dolomite on humans

Published September 8, 2020, 6:25 PM

by [Minka Klaudia Tiangco](#)

Manila Mayor Francisco “Isko Moreno” Domagoso asked the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to clarify the possible health risks that crushed dolomite rocks can pose to humans.



Manila Mayor Francisco “Isko Moreno” Domagoso (Manila City Public Information Office / MANILA BULLETIN)

This after Department of Health (DOH) Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said the synthetic white sand, dumped on Manila Bay in a bid to improve its appearance, can cause respiratory and gastrointestinal problems, as well as eye irritations.

In his letter dated September 7, Domagoso said he is seeking clarification on the issue to ensure the safety of the city’s residents.

“Pursuant to the faithful discharge of my duty to promote health and safety, enhance the right of the people to a balanced ecology and preserve the comfort and convenience of the city inhabitants, may we seek your clarification on this declaration of Usec. Vergeire to make sure that the health, comfort and convenience of the city inhabitants and other neighboring local government units are properly taken care of,” he wrote.

Earlier, the Manila mayor said he supports the DENR in the project, saying that the department would know better if the materials that they are using are harmful to people and the environment.

DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said the project is for people, who have never visited white sand beaches in the country, to have a similar experience in the middle of the capital city.

Several environmental groups and government officials have been opposing the use of the synthetic white sand along Manila Bay, saying that it could harm the natural ecosystem and coastal integrity of the area.

Others accused DENR of focusing on the aesthetic improvement of Manila Bay instead of its problems of environmental degradation.

Vice President Leni Robredo said the project is ill-timed as the country’s focus should be battling the coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and giving aid to affected individuals.

Meanwhile, Palace Spokesman Harry Roque said the project can help improve the public’s mental health amid the COVID-19 crisis.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/09/08/mayor-isko-asks-denr-to-clarify-harmful-effects-of-dolomite-on-humans/>



Manila mayor seeks Cimatu's clarification on effects of dolomite

By: [Gabriel Pabico Lalu](#) - Reporter / [@GabriellLaluINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 12:55 AM September 09, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — Manila Mayor Isko Moreno has written a letter to Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu asking him to clarify whether it is true that crushed dolomite — used to simulate white sand on Manila Bay — poses hazards to public health.

In his letter, dated Sept. 9, Moreno referred to statements issued on Monday by the Department of Health (DOH) saying that dolomite could cause eye and gastrointestinal irritation in persons to dolomite particles.

“It was reported that Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire of the [DOH] declared that the inhalation of crushed dolomite rock, the material used as white sand filling Manila Bay coastline, can cause respiratory problems as it will have adverse reaction to one’s respiratory system,” Moreno said.

“Hence, pursuant to the faithful discharge of my duty to promote health and safety [...] may we seek your clarification on this declaration of Usec. Vergeire to make sure that the health, comfort, and convenience of the city inhabitants and other neighboring local governments are properly taken care of,” he added.

Last Friday, Moreno voiced his [support for the project](#) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) at Manila Bay, thanking the national government for its efforts to beautify the tourist spot, popular for its famed sunset.

However, several experts cited studies from American companies saying that dolomite might cause cancer and damage to the lungs through prolonged or repeated exposure.

Another research stated that dolomite, which contains crystalline silica, might be carcinogenic inside the human body.

Aside from the health hazards, various government officials said that the timing of the project was off because the country was still reeling from the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

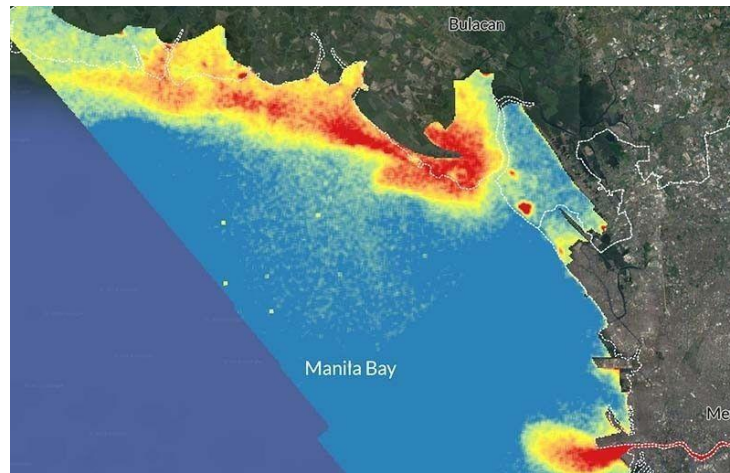
But earlier, [Cimatu](#) refuted the DOH and the opinion of experts on the issue, claiming that the dolomite sourced from Cebu would pose no danger, as it was not classified as a carcinogen by the Mines Safety and Health Association, the Occupational Safety and Health Association, or even the International Agency for Research Of Cancer.

“What is hazardous is the fine silica quads in some dolomite in the form of dust that is generated during crushing and screening,” Cimatu said.

Despite the concerns, Moreno assured the DENR that the city would still support moves to rehabilitate Manila Bay.

“We trust that you will give this matter your utmost attention as your City Government reiterates its full support, as it is very grateful, to the continued rehabilitation of DENR of Manila Bay, portion of Manila,” Moreno said.

Source: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1333032/manila-lgu-seeks-cimatus-clarification-on-possible-hazards-with-dolomite-sand>



Manila Bay rehabilitation, reclamation

LATEST UPDATE: September 8, 2020 - 3:31pm

LOCATION:

MANILA BAY

15 hours ago

Manila Mayor Isko Moreno seeks clarification from Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu over the pronouncement of the Department of Health that using crushed dolomite rock for the beach nourishment project of Manila Bay can cause respiratory problems.

In a letter dated Sept. 7, 2020, Moreno cited the remarks of Health Undersecretary Rosario Vergeire that the material used as white sand in filling Manila Bay coastline may be harmful to people's health.

"Hence, pursuant to the faithful discharge of my duty to promote health and safety, enhance the right of the people to a balanced ecology and preserve the comfort and convenience of the city inhabitants, may we seek your clarification on this declaration of Usec. Vergeire to make sure that the health, comfort and convenience of the city inhabitants and other neighboring local government units are properly taken care of," Moreno says in the letter.



Mayor Isko wants clarification from DENR regarding alleged hazards of crushed dolomite

Published September 8, 2020 4:22pm

Manila Mayor Isko Moreno is seeking clarification from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) regarding the possible health risks of the crushed dolomite rocks that were used as "white sand" in filling a portion of the Manila Bay coastline.

In a letter dated September 8, 2020, Moreno said GMA News, citing Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire, has reported that inhalation of dolomite particles could cause respiratory problems.

"Hence, pursuant to the faithful discharge of my duty to promote health and safety, enhance the right of the people to a balanced ecology and preserve the comfort and convenience of the city inhabitants, may we seek your clarification on this declaration of Usec. Vergeire to make sure that the health, comfort and convenience of the city inhabitants and other neighboring local government units are properly taken care of," Moreno said in the letter addressed to DENR Sec. Roy Cimatu.

Crushed dolomite rocks from Cebu province were placed on the shoreline of Manila Bay as part of the DENR's P389-million beach nourishment project.

Aside from respiratory problems, Vergeire, during an online forum on Monday, said crushed dolomite rocks could also [irritate the eyes and result in "gastro-intestinal discomfort" when ingested.](#)



Vergeire, however, said that it is up to the DENR to say if placing crushed dolomite rocks along Manila Bay's shoreline is a sound move.

In an interview on Dobol B sa News TV on Tuesday, DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said the health hazard that Vergeire was referring to takes place during the process of crushing dolomite rocks, which emits dolomite dust, and not the crushed rocks themselves like the ones used in Manila Bay

“Finished product na po ito, at five millimeters po ito, 100 times na mas malaki sa dolomite dust kaya hindi po mai-inhale ito,” Antiporda said. —**KBK, GMA News**



Isko sinita DENR sa delikadong 'white sand'

By Abante News Online — Last updated Sep 8, 2020

NEWS



Photo courtesy of facebook.com/ManilaPIO



Nais ni Manila Mayor Isko Moreno na maglabas ng pahayag ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources sa report na kumakalat na mapanganib ang dolomite rock sa kalusugan, kung saan ang naturang bato ang ginamit para sa synthetic white sand sa Manila Bay rehabilitation project.

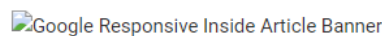
Ito'y matapos ilahad ng Department of Health na posibleng magdulot ng respiratory issue ang isang tao na makakalanghap ng naturang bato.

"Ang dolomite po is a form of a rock na meron pong mga sinasabi sa mga pag-aaral na kapag na-inhale natin ito mga tao, may mga adverse reactions, respiratory mainly," ayon kay Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire sa virtual briefing nitong Lunes.

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Sa sulat ni Moreno para kay DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu, sinabi nito na bilang duty ng alkalde na isaalang-alang ang kalusugan at kaligtasan ng kanyang mga residente, dapat ay linawin ng kanilang ahensya kung ano nga bang totoo tungkol sa paggami ng nasabing bato.



"Hence, pursuant of the faithful discharge of my duty to promote health and safety, enhance the right of people to a balanced ecology and preserve the comfort and convenience of the city inhabitants, may we seek your clarification on this declaration of Usec. Vergeire," saad ni Moreno.

Nitong Martes ay binawi ni Vergeire ang kanyang naging pahayag at sinabing ang proseso lamang umano ng pagpino ng dolomite rock ang posibleng magkaroon ng epekto sa kalusugan.

"Sinisiguro naman po ng DENR na ito po ay will not harm the environment nor the population. Hindi naman po yan bibigyan ng clearance ng DENR kung ito ay makakasama sa kalusugan ng ating mga kababayan," pagtanggol pa nito.

Wrong Priorities? DENR Under Fire, ‘White Beach’ In Manila Bay Could Be Harmful, Unnecessary Amid The Pandemic

Ill-timed, may pose health risks, legally questionable – these are only some of the issues that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources has to face due to its “white beach” project in Manila Bay.

Paolo Romero, Vince Nonato, Sheila Crisostomo, Alexis Romero, Rhodina Villanueva

Tuesday, September 8, 2020



Workers start filling the shore of Manila Bay with ‘white sand’ on Sept. 3, 2020. Photo by KJ Rosales, The Philippine STAR

Amid the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, the government could have allotted the P389.8-million funds for the “white beach” in Manila Bay for more important projects, according to critics.

Vice President Leni Robredo expressed belief on Sunday, Sept. 6 that the funds for the project should have been used to aid the poor during this difficult time.

“*Parang napaka-insensitive na gagawin mo iyan sa height ng pandemic, na ang daming nagugutom. Ang daming naghihirap, gagawin mo iyong pag-beautify* (It seems very insensitive to do that at the height of the pandemic, when many are going hungry. Many are suffering, but you have to do that beautification),” Robredo said in her weekly radio show “BISerbisyong LENI.”

Department of Education Secretary Leonor Briones on Monday, Sept. 7 said during a virtual “Laging Handa” public briefing that such a budget could be utilized for the purchase of gadgets, computers and radios for distance and blended learning of students.

On Friday, the fisherfolk group Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) stressed that instead of the white beach project, the government should have covered the 13,000 hectares of Manila Bay’s coast with mangroves.

Pamalakaya national chairperson Fernando Hicap said mangroves serve many important purposes to marine environment and coastal communities. Its amenities include community defense against strong waves, storm surges, flood regulation, sediment trapping, marine wildlife habitat and nurseries.

The Pamalakaya pointed out that mangrove planting costs at least P28,881 per hectare, which means that the P389-million budget for the Manila Bay “white sand” filling would be sufficient to turn 13,469 hectares of Manila Bay into mangrove forests, which could serve as “fish sanctuary, pollution filter, and coastal communities protection.”



The fisherfolk group said thousands of hectares of mangroves were destroyed due to the government's massive reclamation projects favoring commercial and industrial hubs. It added that in the 1990s, mangroves in Manila Bay used to cover 54,000 hectares but they have significantly shrunk to 2,000 hectares after a few years of industrialization.

At present, the Manila Bay is left with less than 500 hectares of mangroves, the Pamalakaya noted.

The Pamalakaya also warned that dolomite, the material used for the artificial white sand, could pose harm to the marine environment and humans, as it contains heavy metals such as aluminum, lead and mercury that could contribute to the pollution and acidity of Manila Bay.

The EcoWaste Coalition likewise said, "Manila Bay does not need cosmetic beautification through beach nourishment that has to be periodically repeated to address coastal erosion due to waves and storm surges."

The group urged the DENR and the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) to publicly disclose studies and proceedings of consultative meetings, if any, that will shed light on the decision to push through with this beach nourishment project.

Rodne Galicha, executive director of Living Laudato Si Philippines, said the dumping of dolomite or any material that is not natural to the area is reclamation.

Health and legal concerns

The "white sand" being dumped into the shores of Manila Bay may pose harm to health, the Department of Health (DOH) warned on Monday.

In a press briefing, DOH Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said there are medical reports that crushed dolomite can cause "adverse reactions" primarily on the respiratory system, if "aerosolized" and inhaled.

"If you inhale the dust, your respiratory [system] will be affected. But we are not saying that when you go to Manila Bay, you'll get it at once," she noted. "But with the clearance of the (DENR), I don't think this [project] will be implemented if it will cause harm to the environment and also to our people."

Sen. Nancy Binay lamented that the DENR failed to see the health hazards caused by the dumping of dolomite and asked the agency to immediately suspend the project.

"The dumping of dolomite as a substitute for white sand only means that this plan on Manila Bay rehabilitation did not pass through the proper process and study," Binay said in a statement.

"There was no public consultation, no environmental clearance, and premature issuance of the environmental impact assessment, and it's clear the plan was haphazardly done," she added.

According to the senator, the public deserved to be informed about the whole context of the project particularly its impact on the environment and public health.

Binay urged the DENR to release to the public the project's budget and approved environmental impact statement in the interest of transparency.



Visitors take pictures of the 'white beach' in Manila Bay on Sept. 6, 2020. Photo by Miguel de Guzman, The Philippine STAR

But these are not the only issues that the DENR has to face. An infrastructure-oriented think tank said on Monday that by seeking an exemption from its own compliance rules, the DENR violated the law and its own regulations on environment compliance certificates (ECC).

Infrawatch Philippines pointed out that the DENR violated Presidential Decree (PD) No. 1586 or the Environmental Impact Statement System Law, and Department Administrative Order (DAO) No. 2003-30, the agency's own implementing rules and regulations on ECC.

Citing PD 1586 and DAO No. 2003-30, Infrawatch convenor Terry Ridon said projects that require an ECC are those located in environmentally critical areas, including those set aside as aesthetic potential tourist spots. He pointed out that Executive Order No. 69, issued in 1999, designates portions of the waters in Manila Bay and its foreshore area as a special tourist zone.

"As such, there is absolutely no basis for the DENR to say that its project is not covered by ECC rules. The proponents should have applied and received an approved ECC before starting the project," Ridon said. "There is therefore clear legal basis for the project to stop proceeding until and unless an ECC has been issued by the DENR itself."

He emphasized that the DENR should be the first to follow its own environment laws and regulations.

Ridon said the situation also presents a prima facie case for a writ of *kalikasan* from the Supreme Court (SC), including a temporary environment protection order stopping the Manila Bay white beach project.

Manila Bay spans several cities and provinces, as far as Bataan and Cavite, so there will be no difficulty complying with the writ of *kalikasan*'s procedural requirements relating to the potential environment impact of the project in several localities, he contended.

At the very least, Ridon thinks the SC should intervene under its Manila Bay Advisory Committee led by Chief Justice Diosdado Peralta. The MBAC was reconstituted by Peralta himself on Dec. 19 last year.

The MBAC is tasked to maintain the mandate of the continuing mandamus and enable the high court to verify the reports of the government agencies tasked to clean up Manila Bay.

"As such, the MBAC should not wait for a fresh case to be filed before intervening on the white sand controversy, as it will afford the public immediate relief from the potential environmental impact of the project," Ridon argued.

Both the SC and the Manila Bay Task Force created by President Duterte call for the cleanup, rehabilitation, restoration and maintenance of the waters of Manila Bay to a level fit for swimming, and also to improve water quality through the reduction of coliform levels in all river systems and tributaries within Manila Bay, he said.

Both also make no mention of a mandate to beautify a short stretch of Manila Bay's 190-kilometer coastline, Ridon said.

Marine environmental law expert Jay Batongbacal, associate dean of the University of the Philippines College of Law and director of the Institute for Marine Affairs and Law of the Sea, also stated that critics can ask the trial courts for a writ of *kalikasan* to prevent the completion of the Manila Bay white beach.

He said this as he cited reports from American cement and mining companies regarding the harmful effects of pulverized dolomite.

Safety data sheets from Lafarge, Vulcan Materials Company, and Lehigh Hanson all warn about the increased risk of cancer and lung damage, as well as eye irritation, caused by inhalation of and repeated exposure to dolomite dust. The companies recommend the wearing of protective clothing and gloves – which would be unfit for recreational activities associated with beaches.

Defenders of the beach project, on the other hand, maintain that the dolomite has not been pulverized into dust that can be inhaled, but merely crushed into larger particles.



Photo taken The Philippine STAR's Miguel de Guzman on Sept. 6, 2020 shows the 'white sand' being used to fill the shores of Manila Bay.

In a radio interview, Batongbacal also noted that the dumping of fake sand may even be considered pollution because "dolomite is not a natural part of Manila Bay."

The writ of *kalikasan* is a remedy available to persons or groups on behalf of those whose constitutional right to a balanced and healthful ecology is violated or threatened by an unlawful act or omission of a public officer or private entity.

Under the Rules of Procedure for Environmental Cases promulgated by the SC on April 13, 2010, the violation or threat must involve "environmental damage of such magnitude as to prejudice the life, health or property of inhabitants in two or more cities or provinces."

"A case for a writ of *kalikasan* may be filed against any activity, especially that done by the government, if it will lead to possible environmental damage and harm to people, so the project may be stopped and other relief or remedy may be sought for the situation," Batongbacal said in a mix of English and Filipino.

"There can be a basis for violations of laws, anti-pollution laws, civil liabilities for deliberately doing an activity that causes damage to other people," he added.



However, Batongbacal noted that the project may become “fait accompli” soon since the government is rushing to finish it. If this happens, there may no longer be any use for an injunction.

Still, he said civil society groups could still sue for damages and ask the court to order the project proponents to “undertake remedial action” by removing the dolomite and hauling it out of Manila Bay.

“There are many laws involved. It has to be studied carefully,” he added.

Oceana Philippines vice president Gloria Estenzo Ramos highlighted the lack of an environmental impact study and environmental compliance certificate as a violation of the Fisheries Code, the Local Government Code, and the Environmental Impact Assessment System Act.

“Ironically, it is the (DENR) that does not seem to follow the requirements set by law,” Ramos said, adding that not only did the agency destroy the bay but also the source of the fake sand in Cebu.

“We want Manila Bay to be clean, safe and healthy. Dumping white sand, however, is not the way to do it. White sand is not a natural feature of the Bay and it will fade away once it is hit by storms. Aside from the harm it may cause on the people and the fisheries and marine ecosystem, dumping sand in this area is also against laws like the Fisheries Code,” she added.

Under the rules, the court can issue the writ within three days from the filing of the petition if it is found to be sufficient in form and substance. The court will require the respondents to file a verified return in which they must defend themselves against allegations of massive violations of environmental laws or regulations.

The court is given 60 days from the submission of the petition for a decision to grant or deny the privilege of the writ of *kalikasan*.

If the privilege of the writ is granted, the court may direct the respondent to cease and desist from the questioned acts, to protect or restore the environment, to monitor strict compliance with the judgment, and to submit periodic reports. Damages are not awarded to the petitioners themselves in a writ of *kalikasan* case.

This would not be the first legal issue to hound Manila Bay – an area generally considered to be unsafe for swimming and recreational activities because of high levels of runoff of lead and contaminants from garbage dumps and fecal coliform caused by the presence of human waste from households with poor sanitation.

The SC, in a groundbreaking Dec. 18, 2008 decision, issued a writ of continuing mandamus directing various government agencies to “clean up, rehabilitate and preserve Manila Bay, and restore and maintain its waters... to make them fit for swimming, skin-diving and other forms of contact recreation.” The DENR has said this is now being attained in portions of the bay.

Besides the DPWH and the DENR, agencies covered by the order were the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, the DepEd, DOH, Department of Agriculture, Department of Budget and Management, Philippine Coast Guard, Philippine National Police Maritime Group and Department of the Interior and Local Government.

Pamalakaya said the environmental and health issues raised so far should be “more than enough basis” to suspend the project. Hicap underscored that “synthetic beautification is far from genuine rehabilitation” required by the SC decision.

“The SC mandamus never mentioned any beautification component programs such as the present project of the DENR,” Hicap added.

The SC decision was the basis for President Duterte to issue Administrative Order No. 16, dated Feb. 19, 2019, which created a Manila Bay Task Force and sought to fast-track the “rehabilitation and restoration of the coastal and marine ecosystem.”

The DENR also made the Manila Bay Cleanup Program a “priority activity.” But the program’s page in the DENR website did not mention that the DPWH’s Beach Nourishment, Coastal Restoration and Enhancement of Manila Baywalk Area project would be part of the Proposed Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program.

The DPWH Central Office awarded the project – which will create a white sand beach along a 500-meter stretch from the United States embassy to the Manila Yacht Club – to the joint venture of Mac Builders and Dragonhart Construction Enterprise Inc. on Dec. 27. The notice was signed by DPWH Undersecretary Emil Sadain.

The contract agreement for the P389.8-million project was signed on Jan. 15 and the notice to proceed was issued by DPWH Regional Director Ador Canlas on Jan. 16. The project was supposed to be completed within 180 calendar days.

According to the procurement documents, the project called for the use of 62,100 cubic meters of the “top layer of sand” at a cost of P2,271.36 per cubic meter or a total of P141.05 million.

The backfill, or the “bottom layer of sand,” amounted to 102,600 cubic meters and cost P1,155.62 per cubic meter or a total of P118.57 million. This is slightly cheaper than the P124.68-million cost of 6,120 square meters of geotextile bags.

Mac Builders and Dragonhart joint venture, based in Barangay Bagumbayan, Quezon City, was the only interested bidder for the project. It submitted a bid offer slightly lower than the P397.9-million approved budget for the contract.



Families enjoy swimming in Manila Bay on Easter Sunday in April 2018 despite stern warnings from the local government and the Department of Health that the murky waters may cause various skin and health problems.
Photo by Miguel de Guzman, The Philippine STAR

Project defended

Environment officials continue to defend the use of the crushed dolomite as part of the Manila Bay rehabilitation program, saying that it will provide more benefits for the seawater.



Director Wilfredo Moncano of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau said they are ready to counter moves that will prevent the DENR from pursuing the “white sand project.”

“In any case that a group or groups make a legal move to oppose the project, we will immediately answer them and provide a detailed explanation,” he added.

At the same time, Moncano explained, “These pulverized dolomite boulders are composed of calcium magnesium carbonate, which doesn’t have any adverse effects whatsoever to the ecosystem. It has long been used in several famous beach resorts in Cebu.”

He said that even in other countries such as Singapore and France, dolomite, which is formed in a marine environment, has been used for manmade beaches.

Moncado added the shipment of the “dolomitic limestone rock” is covered by an ore transport permit issued by the MGB Region 7.

“Taxes and fees were paid, and the material came from a legitimate source: the Dolomite Mining Corp. in Alcoy, Cebu, a Mineral Production Sharing Agreement holder,” he noted.

Director William Cuñado of the Environmental Management Bureau also expressed belief that the material will have a positive effect on Manila Bay.

“Apart from contributing to Manila Bay’s physical makeover, this white sand will play a big role in the bay’s nourishment,” Cuñado said.

Moncano addressed reports that dolomite could be hazardous to people’s health: “If we are talking about mining processes and there is the generation of dolomite’s fine particles, and the person is not wearing protective equipment, there is a high chance for it to affect one’s health.”

But there is nothing to worry about, Moncano said, with regard to the crushed dolomite that will be placed along the shoreline in the city of Manila.

“An engineering intervention will be employed, such as the use of Geotubes, to hold the sand in place,” he added. Geotubes are marine construction devices for preventing the erosion of seawalls, among others.

For his part, Cuñado stressed that the project is part of the overall Manila Bay rehabilitation program and that prior to using the crushed dolomite, the DENR had already recorded improvements in the water quality of the bay.

Data from the DENR’s EMB showed that as of January 2020, the coliform levels in the bay have “drastically decreased.”

DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda also pointed out that before rehabilitation commenced, around 50 trucks of garbage were collected in the bay area during storms and heavy monsoon rains.

“Right now, only two to three trucks of garbage are collected during habagat, and much less during amihan season,” Antiporda said, referring to the monsoons.

Antiporda has said the artificial beach is tentatively set to open on Sept. 19.

Malacañang also defended the project, saying it would help control floods and prevent soil erosion.



File photo taken by The Philippine STAR's Miguel de Guzman shows a scavenger collecting reusable materials in Manila Bay after Typhoon Ompong hit the country in September 2018.

Malacañang also defended the project, saying it would help control floods and prevent soil erosion.

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque said the Manila Bay project is part of the “overall adaptation policy” of the DENR.

“What they did was beach enhancement. It’s not just for beautification. Beach enhancement seeks to prevent soil erosion and to help in flood control. So although it is primarily beautification, there is a reason for doing so,” Roque said in a press briefing.

Reacting to claims that the white sand project is ill-timed, Roque clarified that it was conceptualized before the pandemic.

“The plan to put white sand in Manila Bay is part of the budget for 2020. That means it was approved in 2019. We did not expect COVID-19. You know the budget rules. If it is in the line item, you cannot use the funds for something else,” the Palace spokesman said.

“So it’s not as if the project was planned during COVID. The 2020 budget was used for this project and it was approved in 2019. We did not have COVID then,” he added.

Roque also assured the public that the DENR has assessed the possible impact of the project on the environment. Engineering works were also conducted to ensure that the sand would not be swept away easily, he added.

“Do not worry... They approved the environmental impact assessments and environmental impact studies and they know what they should do and what they are not supposed to do,” he said. “It won’t be approved by the (DENR) if it would not be beneficial to us.”

Roque also expressed confidence that the project would withstand legal scrutiny.

“Some are saying the Supreme Court should take action. We will respect the decision of the Supreme Court, but I think the Supreme Court will also respect the primary jurisdiction of DENR to take care of our environment,” he said.

Source: <https://www.onenews.ph/wrong-priorities-denr-under-fire-white-beach-in-manila-bay-could-be-harmful-unnecessary-amid-the-pandemic>



ALAMIN: Mga sakit na maaaring makuha dahil sa paglanghap ng dolomite dust

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Sep 07 2020 07:44 PM | Updated as of Sep 07 2020 08:42 PM

MAYNILA — Mismong ang Department of Health (DOH) ang nagkumpirma nitong Lunes na may mga negatibong epekto sa kalusugan ang paglanghap sa dinurog na dolomite, na itinatambak ngayon sa Manila Bay.

"Ang dolomite po is a form of a rock na meron pong mga sinasabi sa mga pag-aaral na kapag na-inhale natin ito mga tao, may mga adverse reactions, respiratory mainly," ani Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire sa isang virtual briefing.

Sabi ni Vergeire, iba't ibang sakit ang maaaring madampot dahil sa dolomite dust, base na rin sa mga medical journal.

"Ang dolomite dust, pag napunta sa mata, nagkakaroon ng kaunting irritation. You wash is off with water. Pag na-ingest, it can have discomfort sa gastrointestinal system natin and magkakaroon lang ng kaunting pananakit ng tiyan at pagtatae," ani Vergeire.

Nauna nang sinabi sa pag-aaral ng grupong Infracatch Philippines na nagdudulot ang dolomite dust ng iritasyon sa mata, mga sakit sa baga at maging cancer.

Dinurog na dolomite rock ang ginamit bilang artificial white sand sa Manila Bay, na bahagi ng P389 milyon na beach nourishment project, ayon sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

LEHITIMO

Sa pahayag ng Mines and Geosciences Bureau-Region 7, may permit umano ang mining corporation na nagmimina ng dolomite sa Cebu na nagdala ng mga ito sa Maynila.

Inisyuhan din nila ng permit noong Agosto 26 ang pag-transport ng 3,500 metric tons ng dolomite sa Maynila mula Cebu.

Gayunpaman, ipinatitigil pa rin ng ilang grupo ang pagtambak ng artificial white sand sa Manila Bay.

Sabi ng Oceana Philippines, madaming nilabag na batas ang proyekto dahil sa kawalan ng environmental impact assessment, at hindi rin kinonsulta ang publiko tungkol dito.

Tinawag naman na "insensitive" ni Vice President Leni Robredo ang proyekto.

Pero kumpiyansa ang Palasyo na pinag-aralan ng DENR ang proyekto na isa umanong anti-soil erosion project.

"Ito pong ginawa nila ay tinatawag na beach enhancement , so hindi lang ito pagpapaganda. Itong beach enhancement ay para po maiwasan ang soil erosion at makatulong sa flood control. So while primarily it is a beautification, mayroon din pong ibang dahilan kung bakit po ginawa iyan," ani Presidential Spokesman Harry Roque.

—Mula sa ulat nina Raphael Bosano at April Raffles, ABS-CBN News



GMA News
Yesterday at 4:15 AM -

Nagkokontra ang dalawang ahensya ng gobyerno kaugnay ng proyekto sa Manila Bay. Posibleng may masamang epekto raw sa kalusugan ang dinurog na batong dolomite na inilalagay doon para magmukhang puting buhangin, ayon sa DOH. Ang sagot naman ng DENR, nasaan ang pruweba diyan?

Balikan ang 24 Oras via livestream: <https://bit.ly/333qnM5>



DOH: POSIBLENG MAY MASAMANG EPEKTO SA KALUSUGAN ANG DINUROG NA DOLOMITE

Nagkokontra ang dalawang ahensya ng gobyerno kaugnay ng proyekto sa Manila Bay. Posibleng may masamang epekto raw sa kalusugan ang dinurog na batong dolomite na inilalagay doon para magmukhang puting buhangin, ayon sa DOH. Ang sagot naman ng DENR, nasaan ang pruweba diyan?

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ABS-CBN News

September 6 at 11:30 AM

Tila aksaya umano sa pondo ng bayan ang ginawang pagtambak ng gobyerno ng "fake sand" sa Manila Bay, lalo na ngayong may krisis. <https://bit.ly/321L4si>



“

Even scientists themselves are saying this is a waste of taxpayers' funds. Sigurado na pag umuulan ay madadala ito sa karagatan. And it's disheartening because ang dolomite pala, so fake na sand ito, has mercury and lead contents. There's no safe level for mercury.

OCEANA PHILIPPINES VICE PRESIDENT
GLORIA ESTENZO-RAMOS
expressing disappointment over DENR's move to dump synthetic white sand on Manila Bay's baywalk as part of its rehabilitation | Sept. 6, 2020

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"The people cannot eat white sand."

Sa magkakahiwalay na tweets, pinuna ni Comelec Commissioner Rowena Guanzon ang paglalagay ng "white sand" sa Manila Bay na inilarawan niya rin bilang "extravagant and useless."



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NGOs seek probe on P389M Manila Bay white beach project

Published September 8, 2020, 1:02 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

Non-government organizations (NGOs) on Tuesday urged the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Agriculture (DA), and the Manila City government to revisit and investigate why the P398-million Manila Bay beautification project was able to push through.



(JANSEN ROMERO / MANILA BULLETIN)

“We call on the following to investigate why this beautification project pushed through: DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu, DA Secretary William Dar, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Director Eduardo Gongona, Senate and House of Representatives in the exercise of their oversight powers and functions, the Ombudsman, Mayor Francisco Damogoso of the City of Manila and the Sangguniang Panglungsod of Manila, and chair Rene Escalante of the National Historical Commission,” the groups said.

In a position paper led by Oceana Philippines, the NGOs said that “the dumping of crushed dolomite boulders in Manila Bay can only be described as an abdication of that grave responsibility to protect and preserve Manila Bay.”

“That this is the brainchild of DENR, whose very mandate is to protect the environment and enforce environmental laws, erodes trust in our institutions which are mandated to protect our environmental rights,” it added.

Others signatories include the Living Laudato Si’ Philippines, Environmental Legal Assistance Center, Philippine Earth Justice Center Inc., Archdiocese of Manila-Ministry on Ecology, Dr. Jurgenne Primavera of the Zoological Society of London Integrated Rural Development Foundation, NGOs for Fisheries Reform, Tambuyog Development Center, and Pangangisda Natin Gawing Tama Network.

They asked that the dumping of “white sand” must be stopped and the officials behind this project be held accountable.

The NGOs said that among the impacts of the dump-and-fill activities in Manila Bay are aquatic pollution, marine habitat degradation, loss of globally important waterbird site, loss of sardine spawning grounds, and loss of mangroves and wetland areas.

“We condemn this project and it must be stopped as it has not undergone an environmental impact assessment nor a consultative and participatory process in both Manila Bay and in Cebu, as to its environmental impacts, thereby violating several environmental laws,” they said.

“Moreover, we cannot gloss over the fact that sea level rise will lay to waste the funds expended for this beautification project,” they said.



The advocates reiterated that the “white sand” is not the natural substrate of that portion of the bay and will eventually be washed away by waves that may erode the coast especially during this typhoon season.

Given the likelihood of erosion of the introduced sand, maintaining the area’s status requires periodic maintenance of the beach and will require replenishment of huge amounts of dolomite, which will entail more use of public funds.

To cover the 500-meter stretch baywalk in the coast of Manila Bay with white sand, they explained that the government transported 3,500 metric tons of dolomite to Manila from Alcoy, Cebu, which is close to the location of the largest remaining forest in Cebu and where populations of globally threatened species, like the critically endangered Cebu Flowerpecker, endangered Black Shama, Cebu Hawk Owl, and Streak-breasted Bulbul flock to.

“This project has dire impacts likewise on the integrity of the source of this substrate and the biodiversity that this habitat caters,” they added.

“We recommend that the Manila Bay rehabilitation be focused on addressing the ecological degradation, pollution, and socio-economic issues in the area,” the groups said.

The rehabilitation activities, they said, should particularly focus on reducing chemical, organic, and plastic pollution; installing water treatment facilities; banning the cutting of mangroves, and rehabilitating degraded areas; stopping the conversion of mangroves and wetlands through reclamation projects; protecting critical habitats such as mangroves and wetlands and declare them as protected areas; improving the management of protected areas such as the Las Piñas-Parañaque Critical Habitat and Ecotourism Area, and establishing formally the Fisheries Management Area for a holistic, science-based decision making on fisheries management.



Groups seek deeper probe into Manila Bay's 'beach nourishment' initiative

By [Jonathan L. Mayuga](#)

September 8, 2020

At least 10 environmental and cause-oriented groups on Wednesday called for an investigation into the controversial "beach nourishment" project at a portion of Manila Bay's shoreline.

The call for the probe was contained in a position paper sent to Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu, Agriculture Secretary William Dar, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Director Eduardo Gongona, and the Senate and House of Representatives, in the exercise of their oversight powers and the Office of the Ombudsman.

The group also prodded Manila Mayor Francisco Domagoso, Sangguniang Panlungsod ng Manila and Chairman Rene Escalante of the National Historical Commission (NHC) to investigate the violations committed by the proponents of the project.

In the position paper, entitled "DENR's Dumping of Crushed Dolomite Boulders in Manila Bay," groups that include Oceana, Living Laudato Si' Philippines, Environmental Legal Assistance Center Phil. Earth Justice Center Inc. Archdiocese of Manila-Ministry on Ecology Dr. Jurgenne H. Primavera, Chief Mangrove Scientific Advisor of Zoological Society of London, Integrated Rural Development Foundation, NGOs for Fisheries Reform, Tambuyog Development Center, and Pangingsda Natin Gawing Tama (PaNaGat) Network expressed alarm the P398-million Manila Bay "beautification project" is being implemented without compliance with national laws amid the pandemic and climate crisis.

The dumping of dolomite, they alleged, would create adverse environmental impacts, such as aquatic pollution, marine habitat degradation, loss of a globally important water bird site, loss of sardine spawning grounds, and the loss of mangroves and wetland areas.

They pointed out that Manila Bay waterfront was declared a National Historical Landmark by the National Historical Commission of the Philippines in 2012, and hence, it is protected by the National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009.

The law mandates that the bay "shall be maintained as close to their appearance at the time the area was of most importance to Philippine history as determined by the National Historical Institute."

They said Manila Bay is also a key biodiversity area identified by the Biodiversity Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/09/08/groups-seek-deeper-probe-into-manila-bays-beach-nourishment-initiative/>



People gather at a pedestrian overpass to see the controversial sand made of crushed dolomite boulders along the shoreline of Manila Bay while viewing the sunset on September 6, 2020.

The STAR/Miguel de Guzman

Groups call for halt to 'ill-conceived' Manila Bay 'white sand' project

[Gaea Katreena Cabico](#) (Philstar.com) - September 8, 2020 - 2:51pm

MANILA, Philippines — The government's project to build an artificial "white sand" beach on the shore of Manila Bay should stop as it violates at least five environmental and cultural laws, groups opposing the "beach nourishment" project said.

In a position paper Tuesday, fishers and environmental groups said they are alarmed that the P389-million Manila Bay beautification is being implemented allegedly without compliance with national laws.

The government began filling a stretch of Manila Bay's rocky shore last week with artificial sand made from crushed dolomite rocks as part of its program to rehabilitate the degraded body of water, earning criticism from organizations saying it may potentially harm the marine ecosystem and communities.

"We condemn the project and it must be stopped as it has not undergone an environmental impact assessment nor a consultative and participatory process in both Manila Bay and in Cebu, as to its environmental impacts, thereby violating several environmental laws," the groups said.

Environmental Impact Statement system

The groups pointed out that the "ill-conceived" project should have gone through the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) system like other projects or undertakings which are seen to have a significant adverse impact to the quality of the environment.

"No person may undertake environmentally critical projects or any project in environmentally critical areas without an environmental compliance certificate," they said.

Department of Environment and Natural Resources Undersecretary Benny Antiporda earlier said the project is not covered by the EIS system and only a certificate of non-coverage, which is issued for undertakings that are deemed unlikely to cause significant adverse impacts on the environment, was secured.

The Fisheries Code also prohibits aquatic pollution, which is defined as anything introduced to bodies of water that can harm living and non-living marine resources or humans. Depositing of any materials into bodies of water or their margins that cause water pollution is also not allowed under the Clean Water Act.

Historical landmark

The organizations also stressed that the National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009 prohibits the alteration of Manila Bay's original features.



“Mania Bay waterfront was declared a National Historical Landmark by the National Historical Commission of the Philippines in 2012. It is protected by the National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009. The act mandates that the bay ‘shall be maintained as close to their appearance at the time the area was most of importance to Philippine history as determined by the National Historical Institute,’” they said.

The groups also slammed the lack of consultation with the city of Manila, which violates the Local Government Code of 1991.

“The project cannot proceed without consultation with and prior approval of the Sangguniang Bayan of Manila,” they said.

Antiporda earlier said no public consultation was needed because it was only a “beach nourishment” project.

According to a DENR information sheet obtained by **Philstar.com**, the agency defined “beach nourishment” as an “adaptation technology primarily used in response to shoreline erosion, although flood reduction benefits may also occur.”

Rising sea level, erosion

The government’s plan is to fill a portion of Manila Bay with artificial white sand at one-meter thick.

“We cannot gloss over the fact that sea level rise will lay to waste the funds expended for this beautification project,” the groups said, citing a study of the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority that sea level is rising four times faster than the global average of 3.2 millimeters a year in the Manila Bay area.

They also said periodic maintenance of the beach and replenishment of huge amounts of dolomite are expected given that the coast along Roxas Boulevard is constantly subject to strong waves, storm surges and flooding.

The DENR said having a “nourished” beach will prevent erosion “by dissipating wave energy and having a balanced sediment budget.”

Geotextile tubes filled with sand have been also installed on the beach it said, which would act as a breakwater and will allow water to pass through while preventing the filling material from being washed away.

According to the groups which include Oceana, Living Laudato Si Philippines and the Archdiocese of Manila-Ministry of Ecology, the dumping of artificial white sand could also lead to aquatic pollution, marine habitat degradation, loss of globally important waterbird site, loss of sardine spawning grounds and loss of mangroves and wetland areas.

“The dumping of crushed dolomite boulders in Manila Bay can only be described as an abdication of that grave responsibility to protect and preserve Manila Bay. This is happening at the time when our nation faces serious health, economic and climate crises,” they said.

In a separate statement, fishers group PAMALAKAYA said the “beach nourishment” project was not in compliance Supreme Court mandamus on Manila Bay. The mandamus, issued on 2008, directed agencies to clean up and rehabilitate Manila Bay and restore its waters for recreational use and fishery resources development.



Focus on ecological degradation

The groups stressed that the dumping of “white sand” should be halted and the government behind the project should be held accountable.

“That this is the brainchild of DENR, whose very mandate is to protect the environment and enforce environmental laws, erodes trust in our institutions which are mandated to protect our environmental rights,” they said.

Instead of turning to beautification, authorities should reduce pollution on the bay, ban the cutting of mangroves and stop conversion of mangrove areas and wetlands through reclamation projects and improve the management of protected areas.

They also called for the establishment of the Fisheries Management Area for a science-based decision making on fisheries management.

The position paper will be sent to the DENR, the Department of Agriculture, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, both legislative chambers, Office of the Ombudsman, the office of Mayor Isko Moreno and the National Historical Commission of the Philippines.



Crushed dolomite dumping in Manila Bay raises more issues, environmental woes

September 8, 2020

Environmental group Nilad is calling for the termination of the plan to fill the stretch of Manila Baywalk with artificial white sand while an online protest has been initiated against the controversial project.

"Stop muna tayo tapos investigate natin, kasi maraming katanungan. Siempre number one, nasaan 'yung study ninyo? (We should stop then investigate because there are many questions. Number one, where is your study?)," Living Laudato campaigner Rodne Galicha said.

Oceana Philippines also submitted a position paper to agencies assigned by the Supreme Court (SC) to rehabilitate Manila Bay, stating the effects of the placement of sand such as aquatic pollution, marine habitat degradation, loss of a globally important water bird site, loss of sardine spawning grounds, and loss of mangroves and wetland areas.

In case the project pushes through, the groups want to hold accountable DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu, DA Secretary William Dar and BFAR Director Eduardo Gongona, Senate and House of Representatives in the exercise of their oversight powers and functions, Ombudsman, Mayor Francisco Damogoso of City of Manila and the Sangguniang Panglungsod of Manila, and Chair Rene Escalante of the National Historical Commission.

"Klaro 'yung executive order na inisyu ni President Duterte...Walang beautification doon (The executive order issued by President Duterte is clear. There is no beautification included)," Oceana Philippines VP Gloria Ramos claimed.

The group believes the enhancement project violates five laws, including Presidential Proclamation No. 2146, The Fisheries Code (RA 8550) as amended by RA 10654, The Clean Water Act (RA 9275), The National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009 (RA 10066), and The Local Government Code of 1991 (RA 7160).

UP Institute for Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea Dir. Jay Batongbacal explained the issue might reach the Supreme Court with the filing of Writ of Kalikasan petition if the DENR remains adamant on the matter.

"Because dolomite appears to be hazardous materials that can cause respiratory diseases and even cancer, just because of that, there's already a possible cause of action under the special rule," Batongbacal stated.

The DENR stood by its plan and will push through with the controversial project.

"They can do whatever they want to do, that's their freedom. Basically, what I'm trying to say, it is illogical for us to be branded as killer of the biodiversity. What we're doing right now is we're trying to do something which is good for the environment," DENR USec. Benny Antiporda claimed.

– Report from Cleizl Pardilla

Source: <https://ptvnews.ph/crushed-dolomite-dumping-in-manila-bay-raises-more-issues-environmental-woes/>



Despite opposition from various groups, the DENR's project to cover the Manila Bay beachfront with crushed dolomite continues on Tuesday, Sept. 8, 2020. Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said the project covers three hectares.
Tina Panganiban-Perez

Marine conservation group launches online petition vs. Manila Bay white sand project

Published September 8, 2020 7:18pm

By TINA PANGANIBAN-PEREZ, GMA News

Environmental group Oceana Philippines on Tuesday launched [an online petition](#) to stop the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' Manila Bay "white sand" project.

"We are opposed and we want this project, a useless expenditure of public money, stopped," Oceana Philippines vice president Gloria Ramos told GMA News.

"Walang environmental impact study na ginawa before they even thought of the project. And it's ironic kasi the DENR and the EMB [Environmental Management Bureau] is tasked to do that," she added.

The online petition cites five laws that the project is supposedly violating: Presidential Proclamation 2146, the amended Fisheries Code, the Clean Water Act, the National Cultural Heritage Act, and the Local Government Code.

"Ginawa nila yung illegal acts and there are damages, they can be held liable for that. Meron tayong Code of Ethical Conduct. Puwedeng tingnan ang mga provision doon. So may mga accountability," Ramos said.

She also warned that local government officials of Manila may also be held liable for allowing the project without issuing a resolution.

"They can be held answerable if they allowed that project. That's dereliction of duty. Kaya isasama rin namin sa sulat namin, bigyan namin ng position paper ang Ombudsman kasi puwede siyang mag-investigate just sa reports sa newspapers is already ground for the Ombudsman to start investigations," Ramos explained.



She added that Oceana Philippines is already “preparing for lawsuits.”

Manila Mayor Isko Moreno wished the group “all the best, good health, good luck.”

Environment and Natural Resources Undersecretary Benny Antiporda expressed confidence that the department would be able to show in court that the project is above board.

“They are welcome to do whatever they want to do, especially on this legal aspect. In the first place, we know that what we are doing is right. They didn’t even show us any concrete evidence that will justify 'yung kanilang grievances kaya I don’t think we will give in to them. We will finish this,” Antiporda told GMA News. — **BM, GMA News**



Despite opposition from various groups, the DENR's project to cover the Manila Bay beachfront with crushed dolomite continues on Tuesday, Sept. 8, 2020. Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said the project covers three hectares.

Tina Panganiban-Perez

Think tank urges COA audit of DENR's Manila Bay white sand project

Published September 8, 2020 6:30pm

By TINA PANGANIBAN-PEREZ, GMA News

Public policy think tank Infrawatch PH on Tuesday called on the Commission on Audit to conduct a special audit into the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' controversial Manila Bay "white sand" project.

Infrawatch convenor Terry Ridon suspects the project to be overpriced by as much as 55%.

Ridon told GMA News that based on current market prices, the project should cost only about P200 million, and not P389 million as previously stated by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

"I think we can lead to that conclusion kung hindi po maglilinaw ang DENR doon sa actual costing nitong proyektong ito. Dapat mag-intervene na po 'yung Commission on Audit. Magkaroon na po ng actual special audit diyan para tingnan na ho nila. Baka naman sobra talaga yan kasi it's not difficult to assess," Ridon said.

Infrawatch also questioned the project's lack of an Environmental Compliance Certificate.

"Paano ngayon sasabihin ng DENR na 'hindi kami kasali diyan' eh 'yung ECC makes no distinction whether it's an actual project or it's just a beach nourishment. So dapat kumuha ho sila ng ECC. Kung wala kang ECC, dapat hindi magpatuloy 'yan. It should stop today," Ridon said.

Infrawatch also said the project should be temporarily stopped to assess its impact on the environment and on people's health, citing reports that dolomite may be harm the respiratory system.

Ridon said their group is prepared to write the Manila Bay Advisory Committee to seek intervention and to file a case.

"We would want them to intervene initially at this point. Pero siyempre, if they will say na I think it would be better to have an actual case, then we will do it as soon as we reach that point," he added.



'Moral ascendancy'

DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda, for his part, questioned Ridon's "moral ascendancy" to criticize the project.

"When he became chairman of PCUP [Presidential Commission on the Urban Poor], sumobra 'yung biyahe niya. Hindi niya yata nabilang kaya siya natanggal. So I don't think he has the moral ascendancy to count something," Antiporda told GMA News.

Antiporda also said that the white sand project is aboveboard.

"Corruption will not be permitted and will not be tolerated by this administration," he said.

Antiporda also said that an ECC was not needed for the project.

"This is just a nourishment project, this is just a rehabilitation project. This is not a reclamation or construction. Hindi ho kailangan 'yan ng ECC. Nourishment lang po yan. Kumbaga dati na po yan. Pinaganda lang," he stressed. — **BM, GMA News**



Mga protesta laban sa Manila Bay 'white sand' project umarangkada

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Sep 08 2020 08:55 PM



Umarangkada na ang online petition at iba pang protesta para ipatigil ang paglalagay ng dolomite dusts sa Manila Bay. Nais ding panagutin ng mga grupo ang mga ahensiya, maging ang pamahalaang lungsod ng Maynila, sa proyektong lumabag umano sa hindi bababa sa 5 batas. Nagpa-Patrol, April Raffles. **TV Patrol**, **Martes, 08 Setyembre 2020**



Funds for Manila Bay ‘white sand’ project could have been better spent, says bishop

By CBCP News - September 8, 2020 - 3:35 PM



People gather at a pedestrian overpass to see the controversial sand made of crushed dolomite boulders along the shoreline of Manila Bay while viewing the sunset on September 6, 2020. (The STAR/Miguel de Guzman)

A Catholic bishop said that the government’s massive spending to overlay ‘white sand’ on the shores of Manila could have been better used to aid those greatly affected by the health crisis.

Bishop Broderick Pabillo, the administrator of the Manila archdiocese, said the P389 million project is ill-timed, pointing to the coronavirus pandemic the country is facing.

“During these times, where many are without jobs and have no food to eat, this project amounting to over P300 million just for the ‘white sand’ appears to be ill-timed,” Pabillo said over Radio Veritas.

“There are many incorrect things with this project, foremost is that it is not attuned with the current predicament of our nation,” he pointed out.

The bishop also echoed the concerns of some environmentalists that the synthetic white sand could be washed away by the waves, especially during typhoons.

“We are not even certain if this ‘white sand’ will be able to stay there since tons of trash fill up Manila Bay whenever there are typhoons,” Pabillo said.

“Therefore, this beautification may only be temporary,” he added.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources said it would fill Manila Bay’s shore with white sand, which are actually refined dolomite rocks sourced from Cebu province.

The rehabilitation project that started two years ago has drawn controversy over its cost and environmental concerns.

The University of the Philippines Marine Biological Society (UP MBS) also condemned the project, “which does nothing to actually improve the worsening environmental and poverty conditions of the inhabitants of Manila Bay”.

Source: <https://interaksyon.philstar.com/politics-issues/2020/09/08/176476/funds-for-manila-bay-white-sand-project-could-have-been-better-spent-says-bishop/>



Stop wasting people's money by beautifying Manila Bay with artificial sand – solon

Published September 8, 2020, 11:58 PM

by [Ben Rosario](#)

Buhay Party-list Rep. Lito Atienza on Tuesday asked the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to stop throwing people's money down the drain by dumping synthetic white sand – crushed dolomite – onto the polluted Manila Bay.



Buhay Party-list Rep. Lito Atienza

Atienza, former mayor of Manila, said the DENR must “first address the real problem” of hundreds of tons of sewage dumping in Manila Bay before thinking about using cosmetics that will not last long in covering up the stink.

“What good will covering the Baywalk with artificial sand does when the waters of Manila Bay remain as polluted as ever?” Atienza asked.

The veteran lawmaker said pollution will continue until Metro Manila's two water concessionaires are able to deliver on its responsibility of putting up wastewater treatment facilities.

The Maynilad Water Services, Inc. and Manila Water Company have “continuously failed” to deliver the treatment facilities from which they have already collected payment for, he said.

“But what's worse is that since 1997 when the contract started, these two big corporations have been charging consumers for this non-existent service and even been able to borrow money from foreign banks on sovereign guarantee, in the name of the Filipino people,” Atienza stated.

The DENR has ignored the strong opposition against the use of crushed dolomite for the 500-meter Baywalk along the historic Roxas Boulevard in Manila's tourism area.

Aside from the allegedly overpriced cost of the project, the use of crushed dolomite has been assailed as dangerous to public health.

“We are appealing to the DENR – Don't fool the people. The waters of Manila Bay will remain unswimmable and deadly for as long as the waters are not cleaned by the two water concessionaires,” said Atienza.

He added: “Building a white sand beach along Manila Bay is a pipedream, or worse, a camouflage for these companies' failure to do what they should have done in the first place.”

“You seem not to even mind the non-delivery of this service. Let's stop entertaining people with this song-and-dance routine,” stated the former Manila chief executive.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/09/08/stop-wasting-peoples-money-by-beautifying-manila-bay-with-artificial-sand-solon/>



Sandamakmak na basura, palutang-lutang sa Manila Bay

Setyembre 8, 2020 7:44am GMT+08:00

Kahit na ginagawa na itong white sand beach, sandamakmak pa rin na basura ang makikitang palutang-lutang sa Manila Bay.

Ayon sa ulat ni Jonathan Andal sa Unang Balita nitong Martes, makikita ang mga lumulutang na basura malapit sa Manila Yacht Club.

Aniya, mas marumi rito kumpara sa kabilang dulo ng Manila Bay kung saan naman nagtatambak ng 'white sand' ang Department of Environment at Natural Resources.



Nagdudulot daw ng mabahong amoy sa lugar ang mga basura.

Ayon sa mga opisyal, regular naman daw ang ginagawang paglilinis sa nasabing lugar.

Dagdag pa nila, galing daw sa ibang lugar ang mga basura at inanod lang sa Manila Bay.

Normal daw ito sa mga buwan ng Hulyo hanggang Setyembre. —**KBK, GMA News**

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/balitambayan/balita/754637/sandamakmak-na-basura-palutang-lutang-sa-manila-bay/story/>



Ilang residente sa paligid ng Manila Bay may agam-agam sa 'white sand' project

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Sep 08 2020 03:55 PM | Updated as of Sep 08 2020 08:42 PM

MAYNILA — Sa gitna ng batikos sa ginagawang pagtatambak ng pinulbos na dolomite sa bahagi ng Manila Bay para umano magmukha itong "white sand" ala Boracay, marami ang may agam-agam sa maaaring epekto nito sa kalusugan.

Noong Lunes kasi, sinabi ng Department of Health (DOH) na ang paglanghap ng dolomite dust ay maaaring magdulot ng iba't ibang sakit.

Dinurog na dolomite rock ang ginamit bilang artificial white sand sa Manila Bay, na bahagi ng P389 milyon na anila'y beach nourishment project, ayon sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Sa tabi ng US Embassy ang bahagi ng Manila Bay na tinatambakan ngayon ng pinulbos na dolomite para ilatag sa coastal area pero halos wala pang isang kilometro ang layo nito sa tila dagat ng mga basura.

Para sa lolong si Sixto Abito, na nakatira malapit sa Manila Bay, hindi na dapat pang pag-aksayahan ng pondo ang proyekto lalo't nasa gitna ang Pilipinas ng pandemya.

"Balewala lang 'yan. Useless lang 'yan kasi di naman bato ang itinambak dyan kagaya dito eh," aniya.

Para naman sa iba, nangangamba sila na baka makasama sa kalusugan nila ang paglanghap sa buhangin.

"Syempre takot ang tao dito. Bakit ganun imbes na amoy dagat, iba ang nalalanghap nila, 'yun pang nakakasama," ani alyas "Ces."

Pero nitong Martes, nilinaw ng DOH na ang proseso ng pagpulbos ng dolomite ang delikadong malanghap.

"Ito pong proseso ng pagka-crush ng dolomite, dun po tayo nagkakaroon ng hazardous event or effects sa katawan. As long as it is processed already, hindi na po ganun ang kaniyang epekto sa mga population o sa mga tao," ani DOH Undersecretary at spokesperson Maria Rosario Vergeire sa TeleRadyo.

Sa Setyembre 19 inaasahang matatapos ang paglalalatag ng puting buhangin sa Manila Bay. —**May ulat ni Jeck Batallones, ABS-CBN News**



Algo: Natural rehabilitation for a healthier Manila Bay

[JOHN LEO ALGO](#)

September 8, 2020

WHEN we demanded for Manila Bay to be rehabilitated after decades of neglect, this is not what we expected or needed.

The beautification of Manila Bay with "white sand" or crushed dolomite has been met with criticism. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has stated that the project is aimed at boosting the mental health and simulate the beach experience for Metro Manila residents, with travel limited during the pandemic.

Environmental advocates, fisherfolk groups, scientists, and other concerned individuals and organizations have raised many issues about the project. These include the extraction and health impacts of dolomite, poor timing amid the pandemic, conflicting statements between governments units, and the project budget despite claims of a lack of funds to address Covid-19.

In short, the beautification of Manila Bay with "white sand" is what many believe to be a perfect representation of the Duterte administration's proposed solutions to long-standing issues: style over substance.

If the government is serious about the beautification and preventing further littering of the Manila Bay, it should focus on promoting nature-based solutions instead of engineered solutions.

With a renewed sense of environmental awareness due to the Covid-19 pandemic comes an ample opportunity to expose the residents of Metro Manila to a relatively unfamiliar sight within the vicinity of the urban center: a genuine view of nature.

The successful rehabilitation of Manila Bay is dependent not only on cleaning the waters, but also restoring the ecosystems that once thrived within it. This process is an opportunity for the Philippine government to show its commitment to promoting nature-based solutions, which are generally more cost-effective than corresponding engineered solutions and provide economic, environmental, and social benefits to multiple sectors. Beauty may be in the eyes of the beholder, but the benefits and consequences are seen through evidence and facts.

There is a high possibility that the crushed dolomite could easily be washed away by high tides, heavy rainfall, or a storm surge, as that section of the Manila Bay has been documented to be easily flooded in recent years. As climate change becomes more extreme in the coming decades, sea level rise coupled with land subsidence can completely wipe out the dolomite away.

Instead of "white sand," the DENR should instead focus on restoring natural ecosystems along that portion of the Manila Bay coastline. It may only be a 500-meter stretch, but what is done with arguably the most famous portion of the area carries a symbolic message of the government's priorities during the rehabilitation process.

For instance, restoring seagrass communities along that area would provide more benefits than continuing with the current beautification process. It is established within the Manila Bay Sustainable Development Master Plan that they, along with other ecosystems such as mangroves and coral reefs have degraded due to sediment deposition, reclamation activities, and other anthropogenic activities.

Seagrasses provide multiple benefits, including nurturing fish populations, serving as home to many organisms, and filtering pollution from seawaters. When managed well with nearby coral reefs and mangroves, these ecosystems can provide the same benefits for mental health, beautification, and environmental awareness that the government seeks at lower costs.



In the context of the climate crisis, they also help weaken storm surges, an important component of coastline defenses amidst more extreme impacts of the climate crisis. Seagrasses are also highly-efficient carbon sinks; while they cover less than one percent of the global ocean floors, they store up to 18 percent of the carbon captured by marine and coastal ecosystems. This carbon, known as "blue carbon", is a key part of the Philippines's commitment to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Moving forward

It should be noted that the positives observed during the ongoing rehabilitation process, including the decrease in fecal coliform contamination and the installation of a solar-powered water treatment plant near the current "white sand" site, must be recognized. However, as the many agencies of the Philippine government are obligated to clean the Manila Bay through a mandamus, it is only fair for the Filipino public to give credit where it is due and criticize when there is legitimate basis.

Furthermore, we must also remember that this is one part of an integrated approach towards the rehabilitation of the Manila Bay, a process that will take years, perhaps even decades to complete. Preventing the pollution of waterways leading into the bay and avoiding reclamation projects that favor high-income sectors at the expense of practically everyone else, some of which are being prioritized in the midst of the pandemic, are just as vital of steps in this process that the public must keep monitoring in the years to come.

This process will only succeed if current and future policymakers have the foresight and will to not only clean up the Manila Bay and make it beautiful, but also ensure that the area is reflective of the necessary commitment to prioritizing planetary and human health. Given the conflicting statements and plans we have seen so far, it is clear that reforms need to be urgently implemented by the current and future administrations, preferably with substance and natural style.

John Leo is the program manager of Living Laudato Si Philippines and Climate Action for Sustainability Initiative (Kasali). He has been a citizen journalist and feature writer since 2016.



MMDA leads Manila Bay cleanup

Jonathan Cellona, ABS-CBN News

Posted at Sep 08 2020 04:02 PM



Workers from the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) clean up trash and debris that washed up along the shores of the Manila Bay on Tuesday. Rehabilitation continues at the bay, including the controversial laying of crushed dolomite on a part of the coast to give the area a white sand beach look. The project has drawn criticism, with concerns over possible health hazards that the crushed dolomite might cause, and the use of millions in public funds on a beautification project as the country continued to be gripped by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Source: https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/multimedia/photo/09/08/20/mmda-leads-manila-bay-cleanup?fbclid=IwAR1WgErdDmPDoVj_ixghX79iRTCDHQwKSqVWw9kRWcBv81aSqS4cMRa5K3U



Urban gardening isinusulong ng DENR



September 8, 2020 @ 5:48 PM 13 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Upang matugunan ang krisis dulot ng coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemya isinusulong ngayon ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Region 10 ang urban gardening bilang alternatibong mapagkukunan ng pagkain.

Ayon sa DENR bukod sa alternatibong agricultural farm maaari rin pagkunan ng alternatibong pagkain ang urban gardening na siyang pinakamabisang paraan na maaaring pagkunan ng gulay.

Kaugnay nito, ipinagmalaki ni Environment Management Bureau (EMB) Region 10 Director Reynaldo S. Digamo ang mga inaning pechay mula sa EMB urban garden na matatagpuan sa EMB Compound, Barangay Puntod, Cagayan de Oro City.

Ayon sa DENR, bukod sa pechay kabilang sa kanilang mga inani ay pipino at okra na ipinamamahagi sa kanilang mga empleyado bilang ayuda sa panahon ng pandemya.

Sinabi pa ng DENR ang Urban backyard gardening ng EMB Region 10 ay sinimulan bilang environmental activity kasabay ng pagdiriwang ng World Environment Day noong nakalipas na Hunyo.

Samantala kaugnay nito dahil sa tagumpay ng proyekto ay inilunsad ng EMB Region 10 ang regionwide na programang Search for Best Urban Backyard Garden para sa indibidwal at grupo upang makatugon sa gitna ng pandemya. **Santi Celario**



Cebu City Council to DENR: Probe ‘illegal quarry’ operations in Brgys Agsungot, Pardo

By: Delta Dyrecka Letigio - Multimedia Reporter - CDN Digital|September 08,2020 - 12:44 PM



The unauthorized quarry of limestones in Barangay Pardo, Cebu City was done while the city was under community quarantine.
| Photo courtesy of Councilor Joel Garganera

CEBU CITY, Philippines — The Cebu City Council is asking the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to probe the operation of two “quarry sites” in Barangays Pardo and Agsungot.

Legislators made their request after Councilor Joel Garganera, the chairperson of the Council’s environment committee, raised a concern on the presence of illegal quarry sites in the two barangays.

Quoting reports that he received from the barangay officials of Pardo and Agrungot, Garganera said that quarry operations started in March and are being done by the same contractor.

Garganera said that he also visited the two quarry sites but he never had a chance to speak with the contractor (name withheld for now.)

He said in a report which he made during the Council session on Monday, September 7, that it appears that the contractor “took advantage of the community quarantine to proceed with the quarry unnoticed.”

The Cebu City Environment Office (CCENRO) already issued a cease and desist order against the quarry operations in Barangay Pardo following a call for help from barangay officials.

CCENRO’s order came after the office found out the quarry site lacked a permit and an environmental compliance certificate that are basic requirements for any mining or quarry operations.

The contractor is yet to issue its official statement as of this writing.

But during earlier discussions with CCENRO, the contractor had denied any quarry operations in Barangay Pardo. The contractor reasoned that they merely lend their backhoes for a road project that will connect to the mountain barangays of Pamutan and Bonbon.

During his visit, Garganera said he saw a total of five backhoes that were used to extract limestones in Barangay Pardo.



On the other hand, Garganera said that the contractor had claimed of securing a permit for their operation in the mountain barangay of Agsungot.

He was also told that the barangay called for a public hearing and agreed to allow the quarry operation provided that the contractor would provide people who will man the traffic on roads that are located close to the quarry site.

The contractor even promised to provide the barangay with a share of revenues earned from their quarry operations, Garganera said.

However, he said that the Council never got hold of a copy of the barangay resolution that authorizes the quarry operation.

Garganera said that the properties that are being quarried are also subject to an unresolved ownership dispute.

“I will be presenting all these documents to DENR so that they can investigate the matter,” said Garganera.

Councilor Raymond Alvin Garcia, the Council’s majority floor leader, had also asked the CCENRO to furnish the Council with a copy of the CDO which they issued against the quarry operation in Barangays Pardo. / dcb



Apo Reef turtle sightings increase during lockdown

By: [Maricar Cinco](#) - Reporter / [@maricarcincoINQ](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 04:18 AM September 08, 2020



SANCTUARY Apo Reef off Sablayan town in Occidental Mindoro serves as a sanctuary and nesting ground of endangered marine turtles. Turtle sightings in the reef increased when the waters were left undisturbed due to community lockdowns that restricted travel for leisure and recreation in the past months. —PHOTO TAKEN BY MABEL DEMAIVIVAS AS PROVIDED BY APO REEF NATURAL PARK PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT OFFICE

The number of critically endangered hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) and green sea turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) in Apo Reef doubled during the period when the vast underwater ecosystem off Occidental Mindoro province was closed to visitors during community lockdowns imposed to stop the spread of the new coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

Former camping sites on Apo Island, which is largely covered with mangrove forests, have also become nesting grounds that park managers are now considering to declare permanently off-limits, even when tourism fully resumes.

Krystal Dayne Villanada, protected area superintendent of Apo Reef Natural Park, said 29 sea turtles were sighted on the beach as of Aug. 31, or almost twice the 15 seen inside the 15,799.23-hectare natural park in 2019. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) took this growth as a positive effect of closing down Apo Reef, as well as other protected areas, on March 13 to slow down the coronavirus transmission.

Apo Reef, which hosts the world's second largest contiguous coral reef and attracts divers around the globe, was reopened to local tourists on July 20, "but no one has come in yet," Villanada said on Monday.

She said the increase in the turtle population was "quick and a big improvement," noting that 21 of the turtles already laid their eggs based on inspections of nesting spots and tracks left by hatchlings when they rushed back into the sea.

The number of crown-of-thorns starfish (*Acanthaster planci*), which feeds on coral polyps, was also reduced.

"We've had [an infestation] of the crown-of-thorns in 2018 to 2019 that rangers had to clean up 10,680 individuals. From February to March [this year], there were about 500 and nothing more since then," she said. Crown-of-thorns tend to reproduce faster when stressed or disturbed.



Villanada said the absence of tourists and underwater activities had allowed Apo Reef to “rejuvenate.”

Less pressure

“It’s both a boon and bane. Less pressure [on the environment] but no income to manage [the protected areas],” said lawyer Ipat Luna, DENR consultant, during the third in the series of online “PA (Protected Area) Talk” held on Aug. 25.

The tourism slump, primarily due to travel restrictions, had also affected other protected areas such as the Batanes Protected Landscapes and Seascapes and the Apo Island in Negros Oriental province. Apo Reef was declared a natural park on Sept. 6, 1994, with the government granting it special protection and sustainable tourism programs.

But Villanada said it lost about 2,500 tourists from March to June alone, or about P4 million in income from park and diving fees.

The Integrated Protected Area Fund is mainly used to sustain environmental programs and pay for the salaries of 20 Apo Reef personnel.

“It will definitely affect our programs for next year. There’s a possibility for activities to be canceled, or [employees] to be laid off,” Villanada said.

To assist displaced park rangers and ecotour guides, the DENR’s Biodiversity Management Bureau pushed for cash-for-work programs.

Protected area managers were also encouraged to maximize distance learning modes and incorporate biodiversity conservation in local schools.



Couples in Nueva Ecija town told to donate tree seedlings before marriage

By: [Armand Galang](#) - Correspondent / [@AMGalangINO](#)

[Inquirer Central Luzon](#) / 05:43 PM September 07, 2020

SANTA ROSA, Neva Ecija -- Before couples get married, the city government will ask them to donate tree seedlings as part of a local environmental initiative.

The move was contained in an executive order that Mayor Josefino Angeles issued recently, citing the destruction of forests that “resulted in the loss of biodiversity, erratic climate change, strong typhoons, flood, and siltation of rivers.”

Under the order, a couple undergoing counseling as a requirement for marriage will be encouraged to donate a tree seedling each.

The seedling shall be received by the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office in collaboration with the Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office (MENRO), which will identify the planting site.

Angeles also cited the constitutional obligation of the State “to protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology...”

It also referred to Republic Act 10176 known as the Arbor Day Act of 2012, mandating all provinces, cities, and municipalities to observe Arbor Day by planting trees at public and private (with the permission of the owner) lots.

LZB



Basura sa QC creek, inanod, nagdulot ng pagbaha sa ilang bahay

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Sep 08 2020 07:49 PM

MAYNILA - Umagos sa Talayan Creek sa Quezon City ang tone-toneladang basura na naanod papunta sa ilang mga kabahayan.

Lumagpas sa taas ng creek ang tubig-baha nang bumuhos ang malakas na pag-ulan sa lugar, hapon ng Lunes.

Tanghali nitong Martes ay tinatayang nasa anim na truck na ng basura ang natanggal mula sa naturang creek.

Isa sa mga naapektuhan si Ofelia Vargas, na hindi matapos-tapos sa paglilinis ng bakuran sa dami ng basura.

"Nakakapagod na! talagang nakakapagod po. Lalo na 'yung maglinis. Anong oras na kami kagabi natulog, mag-aalas-2 nang madaling araw kasi nga hinintay pa namin humupa," ani Vargas.

Karamihan sa mga nakuhang basura sa naturang creek ay mga plastic, styrofoam na pinaglagyan ng pagkain, plastic cups, mga bote na pinag-inuman.

Kapag bumaha sa daluyan ng creek ang mga ito, posibleng magdulot ang mga ito ng mataas na pagbaha.

Nanggaling sa mga matataas na lugar sa Quezon City ang mga basura sa creek.

Natatamaan din dito ang mga informal settler tulad ni Josephine Gabelo, na matagal nang naghihintay ng paglilipatan.

Umaagos kasi mismo sa loob ng kanilang bahay ang basura.

"'Yung iba sinusunog po. 'Yung iba, diretso na lang po... Ipinapaagos na lang po 'pag malakas 'yung tubig. Pero pag ganyan po hindi naman kami nagtatapon, kapag bumara kami rin naman po maapektuhan," ani Gabelo.

Ayon sa Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, ganito ang sitwasyon lalo na kapag tag-ulan.

"It is frustrating... Totally frustrating. Iiwan mo 'yan ng ala-5 ng hapon na malinis at walang basura. Pero kapag umulan, kinaumagahan ganyan na po ang tatambak sa mga creeks po natin. Talayan creek pa lang po 'yan. We have hundreds of creeks in Metro Manila," ani MMDA spokeswoman Celine Pialago.

Isa lang ang Talayan creek sa higit 100 estero na binabantayan ng MMDA sa Metro Manila.

— Ulat ni **Jacque Manabat**, ABS-CBN News

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/09/08/20/basura-sa-qc-creek-inanod-nagdulot-ng-pagbaha-sa-ilang-bahay?fbclid=IwAR0WRaFg7TJTYu6aAAkaDrYx3Vf-wyoY61MvGuYiuUjTEFOzk9jzCHyAHm0>



Angat Dam water level falling slowly, PAGASA says

Published September 8, 2020 8:47pm

Though still far from critical, PAGASA on Tuesday said that the water level at the Angat Dam is slowly decreasing.

According to Emil Sumangil's report on "24 Oras," the dam's water level reached 178.73 meters on Tuesday morning, only slightly lower than the 178.90 meters recorded on Monday.

On Sunday, the dam's water level was recorded at 179.44 meters.

The water level at the Angat Dam will become critical once it reaches 160 meters.

PAGASA also warned that the rains in Luzon in the past few days may not be enough to bring the water level back up, especially over the portion at the Angat reservoir.

Despite this, the weather agency still hopes the dam's water level will go up during the rainy season.

It also advised the public to conserve water.

"Sa ngayon po, hindi naman po natin masasabing nasa critical water level, kasi panahon pa po tayo ng tag-ulan. Maari pa po ulanin 'yung mga damns na 'yan, at maari pa po makapag-ipon ng tubig. Sana 'yung kaulapan or 'yung pag-uulan ay tumama mismo sa reservoir ng damn," PAGASA Hydrologist Maximo Peralta said.

More than 90 percent of the water supply in Metro Manila comes from the Angat Dam. -

MDM, GMA News

Source: https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/regions/754761/angat-dam-water-level-falling-slowly-pagasa-says/story/?utm_source=GMANews&utm_medium=Facebook&fbclid=IwAR0iTB0VH1ysiFa9khHOBW3nIYY1uplssKJ-VpY4VAe7sgv55oOmvYYcG7g



Despite the positive developments, the President reminded the people to remain vigilant and “not let complacency overwhelm us and reduce our sacrifice to naught.”

Alber Alcain/Presidential Photo

Duterte: Be vigilant even with flattened COVID-19 curve

[Edith Regalado](#) (The Philippine Star) - September 9, 2020 - 12:00am

DAVAO CITY, Philippines — President Duterte has called on Filipinos to remain vigilant and not be complacent even if the country has shown encouraging results in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

Experts said the Philippines has flattened the COVID-19 curve, which Duterte attributed to the country’s being on the right track in fighting the virus.

Despite the positive developments, the President reminded the people to remain vigilant and “not let complacency overwhelm us and reduce our sacrifice to naught.”

“The coronavirus curve flattened, meaning to say, there are now less people with contaminated disease called COVID-19. Recent scientific studies have shown that COVID-19 curve in the Philippines has flattened,” Duterte said during his address to the nation Monday night.

The Chief Executive stressed that no significant contamination of COVID-19 has been noted by government in the past few weeks.

“This means that the government’s effort, that we are guided by the best interest of public health and the crucial data provided by medical science, paid off,” he said.

Experts said the two-week modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ) implemented by the government in Metro Manila and nearby provinces last month greatly contributed to reducing the number of COVID-19 cases.

One of the important factors that helped flatten the curve, according to Duterte, is public awareness. He said the government truly appreciates the actions of the majority who follow the minimum health protocols set by the Inter-Agency Task Force on the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF).

The President also recognized the efforts by local chief executives, saying they “played a vital role in the implementation of anti-virus or virus measures in their localities.”



“Mayroong iba talagang to the hilt, followed protocol to a T. Well, it redounded to the benefit of the people of their localities and I salute you for doing your duty very well,” he said.

During the meeting with the President, Health Secretary Francisco Duque III said COVID-19 cases in Quezon City, Manila and Caloocan City have dropped because of the implementation of MECQ on Aug. 4-18.



Residents gather debris from their destroyed houses after typhoon Kammuri hit the city of Sorsogon, south of Manila on Dec. 3, 2019.

AFP/Razvale Sayat

Cooperate on climate or 'we will be doomed' — UN chief

[Kelly Macnamara](#) (Agence France-Presse) - September 8, 2020 - 9:06pm

LONDON — World powers must pull together and retool their economies for a green future or humanity is "doomed", UN chief Antonio Guterres has warned, telling AFP that failure to control the coronavirus pandemic illustrates the danger of disunity.

Before the virus struck, 2020 was billed as a pivotal year for the plan to dodge the bullet of catastrophic global warming, with high profile summits planned to catch a wave of public alarm over the future of the planet.

The coronavirus crisis may have shunted climate into the sidelines as nations launched unprecedented shutdowns to try to slow its spread, but Guterres said the need for climate action was more urgent than ever.

In a searing assessment of the international response, Guterres said the pandemic should sharpen governments' focus on cutting emissions, urging them to use the crisis as a springboard to launch "transformational" policies aimed at weaning societies off fossil fuels.

"I think the failure that was shown in the capacity to contain the spread of the virus — by the fact that there was not enough international coordination in the way the virus was fought — that failure must make countries understand that they need to change course," he told AFP.

"They need to act together in relation to the climate threat that is a much bigger threat than the threat of the pandemic in itself — it's an existential threat for our planet and for our lives."

The UN chief said "pollution and not people" should be taxed and called for nations to end fossil fuel subsidies, launch massive investments in renewables and commit to "carbon neutrality" — net zero emissions — by 2050.

"We need to have a number of transformational measures in relation to energy, in relation to transportation, in relation to agriculture, in relation to industry, in relation to our own way of life, without which we would be doomed," he said.

His comments come as the landmark Paris climate deal goes into effect this year in a bid to cap the rise in temperature to "well below" two degrees Celsius (3.6 Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels.



The accord was already on a knife edge before the pandemic, with doubts over commitments from major polluting nations and concerns that it is still far short of what science says is needed to avert disastrous climate change.

US President Donald Trump shocked the world in 2017 when he said the United States — history's largest emitter — was withdrawing from the Paris deal. It is due to leave on November 4, just after the country's presidential election.

The pandemic has further dented hopes that diplomatic pressure could sweep foot-dragging nations into announcing bold climate action plans, as major summits were postponed and nations focused inwards.

Guterres said there was currently no clear sign that a United States government recovery policy would align with Paris goals, but he expressed hope that states, businesses and individuals "will compensate for the lack of political commitment that exists at the present moment".

He said much now rests on the actions of major emitters, China, the US, Europe, Russia, India and Japan, in interviews with AFP and other members of Covering Climate Now, a global collaboration of news outlets committed to increased climate coverage.

"We have never been as fragile as we are, we never needed as much humility, unity and solidarity as now," he said, blasting "irrational demonstrations of xenophobia" and the rise of nationalism.

"Either we are united, or we will be doomed," he added, ahead of a largely virtual UN General Assembly this month.

'Wake up'

Climate change warnings are no longer predictions of a distant future.

Earth's average surface temperature has gone up by one degree Celsius since the 19th century, enough to increase the intensity of droughts, heat waves and tropical cyclones.

Burning fossil fuels has been by far the main driver of rising temperatures, with concentrations of CO2 in the atmosphere now at their highest levels in around three million years.

The last five years were the five hottest on record, while ice sheets are melting at a rate that tracks scientists' worst-case scenarios, prefiguring devastating sea level rises.

"The expectations that we have in relation to the next five years about storms, about drought and about other dramatic impacts in the living conditions of many people around the world are absolutely terrible," Guterres said, ahead of a multi-agency climate report on Wednesday.

The United Nations says it is still possible to reach a safer goal of a 1.5C cap in temperature rise, but to get there global emissions must fall 7.6 percent annually this decade.

While the shutdowns implemented during the pandemic could reduce global emissions by up to eight percent in 2020, scientists have warned that without systemic change in how the world powers and feeds itself, the drop would be essentially meaningless.

'A different world'

There are also concerns that massive Covid-19 stimulus packages being devised by governments could provide a crutch to polluting industries.

Guterres has urged Japan, India and China to drop their continued reliance on coal.



China — the world's biggest polluter — has invested heavily in renewable energy, but it has also reportedly stepped up coal production.

The UN head said he was hopeful the EU would make good on its green commitments, after it announced its 750-billion-euro (\$885 billion) stimulus plan that aims in part to reach carbon neutrality targets.

He said the pandemic had demonstrated society's capacity to adapt to transformation.

"I don't want to go back to a world where biodiversity is being put into question, to a world where fossil fuels receive more subsidies than renewables, or to a world in which we see inequalities making societies with less and less cohesion and creating instability, creating anger, creating frustration," he added.

"I think we need to have a different world, a different normal and we have an opportunity to do so."