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SEC. CIMATU: White Sand No Health Hazard

Wednesday, September 9, 2020 Ryan Ponce Pacpaco



House Majority Leader and Leyte Rep. Martin Romualdez (left) welcomes to his office Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu during the latter's courtesy call and their short meeting before the budget briefing for the 2021 budget of the Department of Natural Resources (DENR) at the House of Representatives. Photo by VER NOVENO

ENVIRONMENT Sec. Roy Cimatu on late Tuesday afternoon defended before a House budget briefing the use of dolomite white sand from Cebu's crushed dolomite rocks to transform the Manila Bay shoreline into a white-sand beach, stressing it is not a health hazard and underwent a technical study.

Cimatu pointed this out during the House committee on appropriations deliberations on the proposed budget of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) under the proposed P4.506 trillion National Expenditure Program (NEP) of President Rodrigo Duterte's administration for 2021.

"We are really very sure of the safety of the use of dolomite in that area," Cimatu stressed during the budget briefing following previous warnings from the Department of Health (DoH) regarding its possible health hazards.

"Dolomite in its natural state is not a known health hazard," Cimatu said, recalling that the Manila Bay's beautification project was an offshoot of the mandamus issued by the Supreme Court (SC) for the government to clean up the area.

Cimatu added there was no complaint received from several private establishments and resorts using dolomite.

"A public beach using dolomite is in Dalaguete, Cebu, that for the last six years, no issues or complaints were raised also," Cimatu said. "So I stand by this research coming from our Bureau of Mines and Geosciences."

"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 quartz in some dolomite in the form of dust that is generated during crushing and screening, not the calcium or magnesium (components)," Cimatu explained, adding that the dolomite beach for the artificial rehabilitation of Manila Bay will be 100 meters wide and 60 meters deep once finished.

"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 added that the size of the dolomite sand, which has a striking white color, being used for beach nourishment project in Manila Bay "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."



The DENR secretary also explained that the P389 million funds are sourced from a special purpose fund under the P4.1 trillion 2019 General Appropriations Act (GAA) for the rehabilitation of Manila Bay.

"Mayroon 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," Cimatu said.

He also stressed that the decision to use dolomite underwent a technical study by the department, adding the project is covered by a broader Manila Bay rehabilitation project that was begun with the extensive cleanup last year.

"Yung nakikita po ninyo na tinatambak na dolomite d'yan ay kasama sa proseso. Lalagyan po kasi namin ng konting beach d'yan. Pagdaong mo kasi d'yan noon tuloy tubig na kaya ang daming nadidisgrasya," Cimatu noted.

Cimatu also told lawmakers that the process of nourishing properties of dolomite can turn acidity in water to alkalinity.

The DENR chief recalled that his department initially considered volcanic lahar for Baywalk beautification, but decided to drop the plan because the grain it produced was too fine and could produce mud.

Later on, Cimatu said the DENR learned about dolomite, which since the mid-90s has been used by popular beaches in Mactan, Cebu.

According to Environment Undersecretary Jonas Leones, the DENR spent P28 million for the acquisition and transport of dolomite from a municipality in Cebu.

Leones told the appropriations panel that the amount is just six percent of the P389 million entire budget of the Manila Bay rehabilitation program.

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



Cimatu insists dolomite poses no health risk

posted September 10, 2020 at 02:20 am

by [Maricel Cruz](#)

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu has defended at the House of Representatives the use of dolomite white sand from Cebu's crushed dolomite rocks to transform Manila Bay's shoreline into a white-sand beach. He told legislators late Tuesday that the use of crushed dolomite would not pose any hazards, and that dolomite had undergone a technical study negating the health risks on its use.

"We are really very sure of the safety of the use of dolomite in that area," Cimatu said during the budget briefing following the previous warnings from the Department of Health over dolomite's possible health hazards.

"Dolomite in its natural state is not a known health hazard," Cimatu said. He said Manila Bay's beautification project was the result of the mandamus issued by the Supreme Court for the government to clean up the area. He said there had been no complaints from several private establishments and resorts using dolomite.

"The public beach using dolomite is in Dalaguete, Cebu, and for the last six years no issues or complaints had been raised there," Cimatu said.

"So I stand by this research coming from our Bureau of Mines and Geosciences. It is not listed by the Mines Safety and Health Association.

"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]."

Cimatu says the dolomite beach for the artificial rehabilitation of Manila Bay will be 100 meters wide and 60 meters deep once finished.

He says the size of the dolomite sand, which has a striking white color being used for the beach nourishment project in Manila Bay, "is two to five 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."

Cimatu also said the P389 million in funds came from a special-purpose fund under the P4.1-trillion 2019 General Appropriations Act for the rehabilitation of Manila Bay.

He said the decision to use dolomite underwent a technical study by his department, adding the project was covered by a broader Manila Bay rehabilitation project that was begun with an extensive cleanup last year.

He told the lawmakers that the nourishing properties of dolomite could turn the acidity in water to alkalinity. His department initially considered volcanic lahar for Baywalk beautification, but decided to drop the plan because the grain it produced was too fine and could produce mud.

Environment Undersecretary Jonas Leones said they spent P28 million to acquire and transport dolomite from a municipality in Cebu. The amount was just six percent of the P389 million total budget of the Manila Bay rehabilitation program.



Crushed dolomite safe, Mgb assures

Published 6 hours ago on September 10, 2020 02:30 AM

By [Francis Wakefield](#)



The bureau director of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)-Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) Central Office on Wednesday, allayed fears by Manila Mayor Francisco “Isko Moreno” Domagoso that crushed dolomite can cause respiratory issues as earlier warned by the Department of Health.

Engineer William Cuñado, DENR-EMB Central Office Bureau Director, assured that there is no cause for the public to worry as the crushed dolomite being dumped along the shoreline of Manila Bay is already the “finished product” and will not endanger the health of the people.

ADVERTISEMENTed dolomite stone is bigger and “very heavy” and cannot be inhaled.

“The sizes of crushed dolomite ranges from 2.5 to 5 millimeters, you cannot inhale that because that is already big,” Cuñado said. “That is already the granule, the fine one.”

Domagoso, in a letter addressed to DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu, who is also the chairperson of the Manila Bay Task Force, expressed concern over the use of crushed dolomite rocks as part of the government’s rehabilitation and beautification efforts of the Manila Bay shoreline.

The Manila Bay “White Sand” Beach Nourishment Project has total budget of P2.1 billion coming from President Rodrigo Duterte’s contingency fund.

The project is covered by the seven Special Allotment Release Orders released by the Department of Budget and Management in 2019.

The local chief executive cited Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire’s pronouncement that the inhalation of crushed dolomite rock, the mineral used as white sand in filling the Manila Bay coastline, can cause serious problems to one’s respiratory system.

Domago stressed that while he supports the government’s efforts to restore Manila Bay’s old glory, his primary duty is to ensure the health and safety of his constituents as well as those residing in cities and towns within close proximity to the waterway.

Cuñado tempered the Manila city mayor’s qualms and insisted that crushed dolomite stones will not only contribute to the nourishment of Manila Bay but also improve its water quality.

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/09/10/crushed-dolomite-safe-mgb-assures/>



DENR won't stop 'Manila Beach' project despite criticisms

By: [Melvin Gascon](#) - Correspondent / [@melvingasconINO](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 04:06 AM September 09, 2020



'WHITE SAND' DUMP Children play on floating barriers put up near where the controversial "white sand" is being poured on the shore of Manila Bay as part of a project to rehabilitate the heavily polluted water body. —

MARIANNE BERMUDEZ

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) will not stop its controversial "white sand" beach project on a strip of the Manila Bay shore, despite criticism that the earth material being used poses health hazards, and that the fake sand will be washed away over time, causing a huge waste of public funds.

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu and other DENR officials defended the P389-million project before the House appropriations committee on Tuesday, saying it was part of the government's long-term efforts in the rehabilitation of Manila Bay, in compliance with a Supreme Court order.

"[The calls for a stop to the project] are unfortunate. However, we believe we have adequately defended our position that the material dumped is not hazardous, as this has been used in many beach areas since 1996 and there has not been any reported problem," Cimatu said.

Budget hearing

Cimatu affirmed his stand as he and other DENR officials faced House members to defend their agency's proposed P25.6-billion funding for 2021.

The DENR has been under public criticism, mostly expressed on social media, for its dumping pulverized dolomite on a 120-meter stretch of the Manila Bay shore, adjacent to the US Embassy.

According to Cimatu, the project will form a beach spanning 60 meters of that segment of the shore of Manila Bay, which, he noted, is popular among tourists for its sunset.

Cimatu said the particles of the dolomite powder being used on the project was thrice bigger than dust particles, which posed a health hazard when inhaled.

He conceded that silica, which is present in the powdered dolomite, may be hazardous if inhaled, but only during crushing and screening.



According to Cimatu, the “beach nourishment” project is a continuation of the Manila Bay rehabilitation, which was preceded by efforts to reduce the pollution of river water flowing into the bay, as well as desilting of nearby waters that had been found clogged with garbage carried from river tributaries. The DENR reportedly shipped 3,500 metric tons of dolomite from a mining site in Alcoy town in Cebu province to Manila International Container Terminal, about 4.5 kilometers from the project site.

Adverse public comments

Cavite Rep. Elpidio Barzaga Jr., chair of the House environment committee, spoke about adverse public comments, such as why the DENR was spending P389 million on an artificial sand beach amid the coronavirus pandemic that had seen many poor Filipinos deprived of government aid due to supposed lack of funds.

In response, lawyer Ernesto Adobo Jr., undersecretary of environment for finance, said the P389-million funding for the project was derived from the “contingency fund” of President Duterte, which was released by the Department of Budget and Management in 2019 for the rehabilitation of Manila Bay.

“The DENR has complied with the directive to return 10 percent of our 2020 funding, which is roughly P1.069 billion, purposely to help in the COVID-19 response,” he said.

House Minority Leader Bienvenido Abante Jr. reminded DENR officials that without any effort to stop the dumping of trash and dirty water into the river tributaries of Manila Bay, all efforts, including the “white beach” project, will just go to waste.

“Probably the river with the worst level of pollution is San Juan River, which will just make that white beach black,” he said.

Buhay Rep. Lito Atienza, a former mayor of Manila, said turning the Manila Bay shore into a tourist-friendly area by building an artificial sand beach there was nothing more than a “pipe dream” as long as the bay’s waters remained polluted.

“We are appealing to the DENR, don’t fool the people,” Atienza said in a statement.

He said the waters of Manila Bay would remain “unswimmable and deadly” for as long as the two water concessionaires in Metro Manila, Maynilad Water Service Co. and Manila Water Co., failed to deliver on their obligation to the government to build wastewater treatment plants to stop sewage from flowing directly into the bay.

Dolomite costs only P28M

At the hearing, Jonas Leones, undersecretary of environment for priority programs, clarified that the actual amount used for the dolomite was only P28 million, and the remaining funds would be used for the construction of other support structures, including “geointerventions” supposedly meant to prevent the artificial sand from being washed away.

He said the project was conceptualized in 2019, and was due for implementation in 2020, until it was overtaken by the coronavirus pandemic.



“Cleaning the San Juan River is part of the priority, and we have some plans to clean the esteros with the help of the [Department of Public Works and Highways, or DPWH],” Leones said. A coalition of environmental groups led by Oceana Philippines said on Tuesday that the dumping of artificial sand on the Manila Bay shore “must be stopped and the officials behind this project held accountable.”

The groups also called on the DENR, Congress, the Office of the Ombudsman, Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Fisheries and Manila Mayor Francisco “Isko Moreno” Domagoso to investigate why the project pushed through despite violating at least five national laws.

“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 and Cebu as to its environmental impact, thereby violating several environmental laws,” the groups said in a statement.

‘Good luck’

Domagoso, who earlier expressed support for the project, said he wished the project’s critics “good health” and “good luck” in seeking an investigation. In a radio interview on Tuesday, Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said only a court order could stop the project.

“Now we are still grateful to everyone who had provided their own input on the project, some of them were actually useful for us to improve what we are doing,” Antiporda said. “But [unless] critics truly have strong proof [of potential environmental harm], then we see no reason to discontinue the project.” He said the DENR and the DPWH had their own experts, too. The Department of Tourism (DOT) called on the public to support the project.

“We should not stop the battle of Manila Bay. Let’s rather support it,” Woodrow Maquiling Jr., the DOT regional director, said in a Facebook post.

—*With reports from DJ Yap, Krixia Subingsubing, Jodee A. Agoncillo and Jerome Aning*



CDO sa dolomite mining sa Cebu, oks sa DENR



September 9, 2020 @ 12:37 PM 20 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Sinabi kahapon ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources na malayang maglabas ang provincial government ng Cebu ng cease and desist order sa pagmimina ng dolomite sa bayan ng Alcoy sa nasabing lalawigan.

Sakop ng CDO ang Dolomite Mining Corporation (DMC) at ang Philippine Mining Service Corporation (PMSC) na nagmimina, nagbibiyahe at naglalako ng dolomite.

Nagkaroon umano ang dalawa ng kasunduan para magmina ng dolomite at pitong metriko tonelada rito ang nakarating sa Manila Bay para gamitin ng DENR sa rehabilitasyon at pagpapaganda ng lawa.

Magkagayunman, sinabi ni DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda na walang kinalaman ang DENR sa nasabing kontrobersya dahil panloob lamang na usapin ng pamahalaang Cebu at Alcoy, ang may-ari ng minahan at kontraktor ang problema.

Kapangyarihan umano ng pamahalaang Cebu na unghatin ang anomang paglabag sa batas ng mga may-ari ng minahan at mga kontraktor kung mayroon man.

Kung madawit naman sa problema ang DENR- Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) Region 7, dito lamang papasok ang DENR Central Office upang umalalay sa MGB.

Ayon kay Governor Gwendolyn Garcia, hindi nasabihan ang pamahalaang panlalawigan at pamahalaang bayan ng Alcoy ukol sa proyekto sa Manila Bay at wala rin umanong public consultation ukol sa pagpapabiyahe ng dolomite sa Manila Bay at malilinawan lamang ito sa imbestigasyong isasagawa nila kasunod ng CDO. **RNT**



DENR welcomes cease and desist order vs. 2 firms in Manila Bay 'beautification'

Published September 9, 2020 9:55am

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Wednesday welcomed the issuance of a cease and desist order by the Cebu provincial government on the extraction and sale of the dolomite used in the Manila Bay beautification project.

Interviewed on Dabol B sa News TV, DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said the order will give the provincial government a chance to probe the transaction between the contractor and the mining firm involved in the extraction and sale of the dolomite.

"We welcome the move of the governor because first of all this will give them a chance to look into this problem," Antiporda said. "This is the internal problem of their business in Cebu."

Covered by the [cease and desist order](#) signed by Cebu Governor Gwendolyn Garcia on September 8 are the Dolomite Mining Corporation (DMC) and the Philippine Mining Service Corporation (PMSC).

According to the order, DMC was 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.

However, according to Garcia in her executive order, the provincial government of Cebu and that of the municipality of Alcoy were not informed of the beautification project. She also said there was no public consultation for the transport from Cebu to Manila.

Antiporda said the DENR, which is implementing the Manila Bay project, is not involved in the transaction.

"We are not in any way connected with this transaction of the contractor with the mining company," he said.

He also said they would let the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) in Region 7, which allowed the transport of the dolomite, to answer the alleged health risks posed by the extraction.

"Talking in behalf of MGB-7... ano man po yung mga environmental concerns ng Region 7 eh sila po ang sasagot," he said, adding MGB-7 has been instructed to cooperate in the investigation being conducted by the government of Cebu province. —**KBK, GMA News**

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/754817/denr-welcomes-cess-and-desist-order-vs-2-firms-in-manila-bay-beautification/story/>



ACROSS THE ISLANDS SEPTEMBER 9, 2020

DENR insists Manila Bay ‘white sand’ project safe

by [RITCHEL MENDIOLA](#)



The Manila Bay white sand project continues to pique the public’s curiosity as bikers and other passersby on Sunday, September 6 stop and try to take a look at the large heap of white sand at the bayfront. Manila Bay has always been famous for its breathtaking sunset.

| PNA photo by Avito C. Dalan

THE Philippine Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) maintained that the dolomites used to beautify the stretch of Manila Bay’s shore are safe following claims of its potential health hazard.

“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,” Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said on Tuesday, September 8, during the budget deliberation of the agency before the House committee on appropriations.

Cimatu explained that the hazardous ones are the dolomite dust particles with the size of 10 to 15 microns.

He then pointed out that the size of the dolomites being used in Manila Bay is 2,000 to 5,000 microns or 100 times bigger than dust.

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

The DENR confirmed last September that piles of crushed dolomite were being poured on the stretch of Manila Bay’s shore to act as white sand and beautify the area.

The makeover project, which will fill 500 meters of the Manila Bywalk with white sand, is covered under the P389-million Manila Bay rehabilitation program launched by Cimatu in January last year.

However, several government officials as well as environmental groups opposed the implementation of the project.

Health hazard

According to the Department of Health, dolomite dust — made of calcium magnesium carbonate — can cause respiratory issues 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 (If it comes in contact with the eyes, it can cause irritation so you just have to wash it off with water),” Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said on Monday, September 7.



“Kapag na-ingest ito, it can have discomfort sa gastrointestinal system natin and magkakaroon lang ng kaunting sakit ng tiyan at pagtatae (If this is ingested, it can have discomfort in a person’s gastrointestinal system, causing pain and diarrhea),” she added.

For her part, Senator Nancy Binay called for the suspension of the project, insisting that it was not properly researched.

“Placing dolomite as a substitute for white sand only means the project did not go through proper processes and studies for the Manila Bay rehabilitation,” Binay said in Filipino.

“There was no public consultation, no environmental clearance, and it was clear that the plan was not comprehensive and was done hastily,” the senator added.

Binay also pointed out that the DENR should’ve prioritized Manila Bay’s water quality instead of its appearance.

“In the right order of things, DENR should have prioritized fixing the water quality of Manila Bay before the aesthetics. It is just saddening that instead of first addressing the sewage system in Baseco, it prioritized the funding of white sand from Cebu,” she said.

Rodne Galicha, executive director of environmental group Living Laudato Si Philippines, echoed this sentiment, stressing that Manila Bay’s water pollution should be addressed first.

“The root cause of the problem is pollution. If the root cause of the problem is pollution and you just put bandaid or makeup there, it will not solve the problem, Manila Bay will not be rehabilitated,” he said.

Writ of kalikasan

University of the Philippines (UP) law professor Jay Batongbacal noted that it is possible to secure a writ of kalikasan and injunction against the project due to its potential health hazard.

The writ of kalikasan is a remedy for unlawful actions violating the right to a balanced and healthful ecology.

“This is why any agency should have conducted a thorough assessment of a project first,” Batongbacal said.

“The DENR definitely violated several laws. Even something as basic as a consultation with the local government[s] was not done,” he added.

Advocacy group Oceana Philippines, meanwhile, also said the DENR violated laws governing ecological and heritage conservation.

It claimed that the agency failed to comply with the mandatory environmental impact assessment study required under Presidential Decree No. 1586 and the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998 — both of which require a thorough assessment of possible effects of any project deemed to have an adverse impact on the environment and surrounding communities.

Oceana also said the Wildlife Conservation Act was violated by the DENR for mining dolomite boulders from Cebu.

“Cebu is even one of the 10 provinces considered to be [landslide-prone areas],” Oceana Vice President Gloria Estenzo-Ramos said.

“This is why the [environmental impact assessment] is necessary for both [Manila and Cebu],” she added.

Ramos confirmed that several environmental groups are going to meet and discuss filing a petition for a writ of kalikasan against the white sand project.



“It’s always an option under the rules of procedure for environmental cases, even a threat to destruction...It is a ground for applying a writ of kalikasan,” she said.

“Environmental groups will meet and discuss what will be the next steps, what actions will be taken,” she added.

Robredo: P300-M budget could have fed families amid pandemic

Vice President Leni Robredo, for her part, slammed the project, calling the agency’s move “insensitive” for focusing on beautifying the area while the country is fighting against novel coronavirus pandemic.

“It’s really insensitive for you to do it at the height of the pandemic when so many people are starving. A lot of people are struggling, but what you’re doing is to beautify,” Robredo said in Filipino during her weekly radio show.

The vice president also noted that the project for the white sand project could have gone to the poorest households affected by the global health crisis instead.

“How difficult is it to reassess the budget?...Why did they prioritize this?” Robredo said.

Likewise, Sen. Francis “Kiko” Pangilinan said that the government should be putting Filipinos affected by the pandemic first before the beautifying project.

“It is completely unacceptable that while our people are going hungry, parents have lost their jobs, and children have no gadgets to use for online classes, we are wasting money for a project that can only contribute to the destruction of our environment and our health,” he said.

According to the senator, the project’s budget could have been used to procure sacks of rice as well as provide students with internet connection and laptops.

“The last thing we want in the middle of this pandemic is causing more risks to the health and safety of our people,” Pangilinan stressed.

“Our healthcare system is already overwhelmed due to COVID-19 and the corruption in PhilHealth and we’ll just be adding more problem to that,” he added.

DENR: Funds for Manila Bay white sand can’t be used for pandemic

The DENR, in response, said the budget for Manila Bay’s makeover can’t be diverted to projects addressing the pandemic.

According to DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda, the project was bankrolled and bid out more than a year ago.

“This is not a new project. We cannot connect this with the pandemic,” he told ANC.

“If this were money that we can juggle from one place to another, the government would do that. But that is not possible. That is prohibited,” he added.

Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque backed the DENR, saying that the project was planned before the pandemic.

“The budget for the project is included in the 2020 national budget. It was approved in 2019. We did not expect to encounter the COVID-19 pandemic. Budget rules also state that if it is a line item, the money can only be spent for that specific purpose,” he said in Filipino.



“The project was not planned amid the pandemic. The budget was approved in 2019,”he added.

Earlier, Roque expressed support for the white sand project.

“I was born at the Philippine General Hospital and as a Manila resident, I am glad that there is a Manila Bay beautification project. The people of Manila also need access to a beautiful beach especially now that there are travel restrictions,” he said.

“I am glad that there is a new attraction in the City of Manila,” the Palace official added.



Sa kabila ng puna: DENR pinaninindigan ang Manila Bay 'white sand' project

April Raffles, ABS-CBN News

Posted at Sep 09 2020 08:38 PM

MAYNILA — Patuloy na dinedepensahan ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang kontrobersiyal nilang proyekto sa Manila Bay, sa kabila ng kaliwa't kanang batikos dito mula sa mga eksperto.

Dinurog na dolomite rock ang ginamit bilang artificial white sand na itinatambak ngayon sa Manila Bay, na bahagi ng P389 milyon na beach nourishment project ng DENR.

Pero sabi ng ahensiya, P28 milyon pa lang ang nagagasta nila dito.

Dagdag pa nila, "ligtas" ang dolomite sand sa kalusugan, kahit pa sinabi ng Department of Health na posibleng may negatibong epekto ito sa kalusugan.

"The size of dolomite in the baywalk is 1 to 5 millimeters or equivalent to 2,000 to 5,000 microns or 5 times bigger than dust and therefore not suspended in air and cannot be inhaled," paliwanag ni Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu.

"Two portions lang po ang puwedeng lagyan ng buhangin, ang portion na malapit sa US Embassy at itong konting strip of land dito sa Yacht Club," dagdag naman ni DENR Undersecretary Jonas Leones.

AANURIN LANG?

Sa panayam ng TeleRadyo kay Carlo Arcilla, dating director ng National Institute of Geological Sciences, malamang daw ay aanurin lang ang puting buhangin lalo na kung may bagyo.

"Pag tumatama ang mga waves sa Roxas Boulevard, mataas pa sa mga puno. Kahit na walang bagyo, may tinatawag na long short drift, may movement 'yan laterally kaya napupunta sa ibang lugar overtime," ani Arcilla.

Pero depensa ng DENR, may mga ginawa silang paraan para masigurong mananatili ang mga buhangin. Dagdag pa ng ahensiya, pinili nila ang dolomite na makatutulong daw na linisin ang tubig sa Manila Bay.

Ipinagtanggol din ni Interior Secretary Eduardo Año ang proyekto.

"Ang programa na yan, we started in 2019. Wala pang pandemic no'n. Ginagawa natin ang mga budget wala pang pandemic kasama na itong paglalagay ng buhangin," aniya.

Naghain naman ng resolusyon ang Makabayan bloc ng Kamara para mapatigil ang proyekto, at magamit sa pagsugpo ng COVID-19 ang natitira pang pondo.

Pero nanindigan ang DENR na tuloy pa rin ang proyekto, sa kabila ng mga batikos.

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/09/09/20/sa-kabila-ng-puna-denr-pinaninindigan-ang-manila-bay-white-sand-project?fbclid=IwAR0oGmffaXUy8mc4jt1W0UQEEEqcJapD6-8RmAxSAqKLBjckw34mXVH7ZNU>

DENR defends dolomite project in Manila Bay anew

September 9, 2020



The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) insisted during the house budget hearing for the agency that there is no cause for concern on the dumping of dolomite in Manila Bay.

A study of the department showed that the inhaled dust generated during the processing of the mineral can affect an individual's health. However, the size of dolomite sand in Manila Bay is a hundred percent bigger than dust.

"What is hazardous is the fine silica quads in some dolomite in the form of dust, not the calcium or magnesium," DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu justified.

Some groups including the Mines Safety Association, Occupational Safety and Health Association, International Agency for Research on Cancer do not also consider dolomite as carcinogenic.

Report from the DENR shows that Php 389 million was allocated for the Manila Bay rehabilitation which also covers desilting. Around Php 28 million was earmarked for the dolomite project.

The spreading of artificial white sand will cover a portion near the US Embassy and Yacht Club. The DENR clarified that geo intervention will be utilized to protect the beach and prevent the sand from being washed away.

The DENR also responded to the plan of some environmental groups and advocates to file a petition for the issuance of Writ of Kalikasan before the Supreme Court if the dumping pushes through.

"Kahit po ipahinto man ng Supreme Court kung talagang 'yun po ang kagustuhan na makita ng Supreme Court na mapatigil ang comprehensive rehabilitation po ng Manila Bay ay mag tutuloy-tuloy parin (It will push through even if the Supreme Court orders the suspension of the comprehensive rehabilitation of Manila Bay)," DENR USec. Jonas Leones stated.

House Committee on Natural Resources Chair Rep. Pidi Bargaza expressed full support to the project and is "fully convinced that there is no valid objection in so far as this project is concerned."

Meanwhile, Cimatu said he is ready to face the Senate in case the latter seeks explanation on the controversial project. – Report from Naomi Tiburcio

Source: <https://ptvnews.ph/denr-defends-dolomite-project-in-manila-bay-anew/?fbclid=IwAR0INrQMMMXX2ehempfcslAKZqYOAERidPVPzc1zP3W-8BBkvtNdsKJ8Rw>



'Pagkain hindi buhangin'? DENR says it is doing its part in COVID-19 response

Published September 9, 2020 10:41am

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Wednesday defended its move to push through with the multi-million peso Manila Bay beautification project amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Interviewed on Dabol B sa News TV, DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said the project actually started last year and was supposed to be finished last July if it weren't for the delay caused by the pandemic.

He also said the budget used in the project was from last year.

"Itong budget na ito, ito po ay last year pa, last year na-release, last year din na bid-out, and last year pa nag-umpisa yung proyekto," he said.

"Natigil lang ng konti dahil sa pandemic at ngayon po ay tinatapos na dahil delayed na po ito, natapos po dapat ito nitong July," Antiporda added.

DENR recently came under fire over its controversial "white sand" project on Manila Bay, which is part of the overall initiative to beautify the area, with members of the Makabayan Bloc at the House of Representatives even [calling for a congressional investigation](#).

Critics of the project have also questioned the DENR's use of its budget amid the dire economic situation of the country due to the pandemic, which rendered many businesses closed and workers out of jobs.

According to Antiporda, the DENR did its share regarding President Rodrigo Duterte's call for all government agencies to contribute to the fund that will be used in the national government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Antiporda said the DENR gave close to P2 billion from its 2020 budget for the pandemic response initiative and will give P66 million from its 2021 budget.

"So bilyon po ang binigay namin at hindi po namin pinagwalang bahala itong panawagan ng Pangulo," he said. —**KBK, GMA News**

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/754825/pagkain-hindi-buhangin-dnr-says-it-is-doing-its-part-in-covid-19-response/story/>



Piles of artificial white sand made from dolomite are seen along the shore of Manila Bay on September 6, 2020.

The STAR/Miguel de Guzman

DENR: Manila Bay ‘beach nourishment’ not part of NEDA’s master plan

(Philstar.com) - September 9, 2020 - 11:16am

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of the Environment and Natural Resources admitted that its project to build an artificial “white sand” beach on the shore of Manila Bay was nowhere to be found in the master plan of the National Economic and Development Authority.

DENR Undersecretary Jonas Leones said the “beach nourishment” project was not part of the state planning agency’s Manila Bay Sustainable Development Master Plan.

“Tama po kayo wala sa long-term plan. Di makikita literally or spelling out in the NEDA master plan but in our desire, interest to fast track, comply with the Supreme Court order, ito ginagawa natin ngayon sa Manila Bay,” Leones said, responding to the query of Rep. Ruffy Biazon (Muntinlupa City) during the department’s budget deliberations at the House of Representatives Tuesday.

(You are right that it’s not in the long-term plan. It is not seen literally or spelled out in the NEDA master plan but in our desire, interest to fast track, comply with the Supreme Court order, this is what we’re doing to Manila Bay.)

The DENR official said the agency had to expedite projects for Manila Bay when President Rodrigo Duterte issued Administrative Order 16, which ordered the rehabilitation of the coastal and marine ecosystem in of the bay, in February 2019. The rehabilitation of Manila Bay began in January last year.

“Kung ipa-pattern natin strictly sa NEDA planning, medyo matatagalan ‘yung ating activities,” he added.

(If we pattern it strictly with NEDA planning, it will take time.)

Leones said the “beach nourishment” are among the department's short-term activities “which we believe will support the NEDA plan in the long-term.”

Manila Bay Sustainable Development Master Plan

NEDA is the agency tasked to formulate policies, plans and programs of the government and to review, evaluate and monitor infrastructure projects.

The agency's master plan, which is intended to be conducted within a 22-year period that will end in 2040, includes five focal themes:

- Improved water quality
- Ecosystem protection



- Upgrading of informal settlements
- Disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation
- Inclusive growth

“Ultimately MBSDMP will contribute to an equitable improvement in the quality of life in the Manila Bay areas where communities have access to safe, affordable and formal housing as well as access to basic services and economic opportunities,” the January 2020 version of the MBSDMP final master plan report read.

The formulation of the MBSDMP commenced on January 10, 2018. It was expected to be completed by July 2020.

Environment officials said the “beach nourishment” project was part of the bay’s rehabilitation program as ordered by the Supreme Court in 2008. Government agencies began filling a portion of Manila Bay with artificial white sand made from dolomite.

When it launched the program in 2019, the DENR said the project will be done in three phases:

Phase 1 - Cleanup or water quality improvement

- Cleanup of designated esteros and waterways
- Reduce fecal coliform level and toxic discharges from houses and establishments by causing connection to existing sewerage treatment plants and requiring STPs for government, commercial, industrial, and educational establishments
- Inspect and repair leaks in old sewer lines
- Provide temporary sanitation facilities to informal settlers residing along esteros and shorelines pending relocation
- Implement solid waste management
- Start planning for the relocation of informal settlers

Phase 2 - Rehabilitation and Resettlement

- Rehabilitation of old sewer lines in National Capital Region
- Relocation of informal settlers
- Ensure completion of 340 million liters of water per day of Maynilad and Manila Water by 2022

Phase 3 - Education and Sustainment

- Continuing education of citizens to protect the gains
- Sustained law enforcement and monitoring
- Fast tracking or earlier completion of the sewerage system in Metro Manila from 2037 to 2026

House probe


The lower chamber’s Makabayan bloc filed a resolution seeking an investigation into the controversial “white sand” project following massive backlash from the public.

The Makabayan lawmakers cited the concerns of several groups and members of the academe over the project.

Groups who have long been calling for a genuine rehabilitation of the bay said the “ill-conceived” project failed to comply with national laws and could potentially harm not only the bay’s marine ecosystem but also communities in and around the area. — **Gaea Katreena Cabico**

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/09/09/2041170/denr-manila-bay-beach-nourishment-not-part-nedas-master-plan>





PTV

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READ: Statement of Department of Health on dolomite | via [Mark Fetalco](#)

Photo courtesy of Department of Health (Philippines)

STATEMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH


September 9 | 3:30 PM

ON DOLOMITE:

The Department of Health clarifies that (1) dolomite in its bulk state is not a known health hazard and (2) dolomite in dust form, like any other dust particle, can lead to symptoms such as chest discomfort, shortness of breath, and coughing for this is our body's normal reaction to irritants.

As stated by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the dolomite material that is being used in Baywalk is 2-5mm or 100 times bigger than dust, therefore does not get suspended in air. Moreover, occupational health and safety standards for workers, and precautionary measures for the containment of possible dust formation are being implemented.

Therefore, in terms of the general safety of the public who will be enjoying the shoreline once permitted, DOH assures that no untoward incidents will occur as a result of this endeavour.



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Dolomite in Manila Bay ‘white beach’ won’t cause health risks, DOH now says

By: [Katrina Hallare](#) - Reporter / [@KHallareINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 06:37 PM September 09, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — Two days after saying that dolomite dust can cause respiratory illness and other health risks, the Department of Health (DOH) now said visitors to Manila Bay’s “white beach” would not have to worry.

In a statement on Wednesday, DOH said it learned from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) that the “white sand” it would be used to beautify Manila Bay is a type of dolomite that is two to five millimeters or 100 times bigger than dust.

DOH also said that “occupational health and safety standards for workers and precautionary measures for the containment of possible dust formation” are likewise being enforced in the implementation of the multi-million-peso project, citing information it got from DENR.

“Therefore, in terms of the general safety of the public who will be enjoying the shoreline once permitted, DOH assures that no untoward incidents will occur as a result of this endeavor,” DOH added.

DOH further clarified that dolomite, in bulk state, is not a known health hazard.

But dolomite in dust form, the DOH added, “can lead to symptoms such as chest discomfort, shortness of breath, and coughing for this is our body’s normal reaction to irritants.”

On Monday, DOH Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said that dolomite dust — which comes from crushed rocks — can cause respiratory issues when inhaled, among other health risks.

DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu, however, insisted that the material used was safe, citing medical studies. The dolomite dust being dumped in the Manila Bay project came from Cebu.

“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 during the budget deliberation of the DENR before the House committee on appropriations.

“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.

KGA



DOH, nilinaw ang komento sa masamang epekto ng dolomite



September 9, 2020 @ 8:05 PM 11 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Nilinaw ng Department of Health (DOH) na ang dolomite sa kanyang malaking estado ay hindi maituturing na panganib sa kalusugan.

Ayon sa DOH, ang ginamit na dolomite sand ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sa Manila Bat ay 2-5mm o 100 beses na mas malaki kumpara sa alikabok kaya hindi ito matatangay ng hangin at hindi malalanghap ng indibidwal.

Bukod dito, naipatupad at nasunod umano ng DENR ang lahat ng safety measures para sa mga nagtatrabaho maging ang pagpigil ng posibleng pagbuo ng alikabok.

Kaya sa mga tuntunin ng pagkalahatang kaligtasan ng publiko na tatangkilik sa baybayin sa sandaling buksan na ito ay tiniyak naman ng DOH na walang mangyayaring anomang hindi magandang insidente.

Ginawa ng DOH ang nasabing paglilinaw matapos isa-isahing ipaliwanag ng DENR ang ginawang proseso bago pa man simulan ang pagpapatupad sa muling pagbuhay sa Manila Bay kung saan isa ang pagtatambak ng dolomite boulder o white sand sa nakitang pamamaraan ng ahenysa para dito.

Nauna na kasing sinabi ng DOH na mapanganib ito sa publiko lalo na kamag nasinghot. Jocelyn Tabangcura-Domenden



'Bigger than dust': DOH allays Manila Bay visitors' concerns on crushed dolomite

Kristine Sabillo, ABS-CBN News

Posted at Sep 09 2020 09:47 PM

MANILA — A couple of days after it said that crushed dolomite can cause respiratory issues, the Department of Health issued a statement saying the beautification of Manila Bay will not cause any harm to people.

“As stated by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the dolomite material that is being used in Baywalk is 2 to 5 mm or 100 times bigger than dust, therefore does not get suspended in air,” the DOH said in a statement.

“Moreover, occupational health and safety standards for workers, and precautionary measures for the containment of possible dusty formation are being implemented,” it added.

The agency clarified that in its “bulk state”, dolomite, which is being dumped in Manila Bay as part of the city’s beautification efforts, “is not a known health hazard.”

It said it is only in dust form that it can result in respiratory problems such as shortness of breath, chest discomfort and coughing.

“Therefore, in terms of the general safety of the public, who will be enjoying the shoreline once permitted, DOH assures that no untoward incidents will occur as a result of this endeavor.”

The DENR and other concerned government groups have received flak for dumping crushed dolomite on Manila Bay. Environmental groups and experts said it will only cause problems to the natural ecosystem in the area.



CRUSHED DOLOMITE HINDI NAKAKASAMA SA KALUSUGAN —DOH

written by [Krista De Dios-Dagala](#) September 9, 2020



Nilinaw ng Department of Health (DOH) na hindi mapanganib sa kalusugan ang malaki-laking klase ng dolomite na ginagamit sa pagpapaganda ng pampang ng Manila Bay.

Ayon sa DOH, ang dolomite na kasing liit na ng alikabok ang siyang nakapagdudulot ng ilang sintomas tulad ng chest discomfort, hirap sa paghinga at ubo na karaniwang reaksiyon ng katawan sa mga tinatawag na irritants.

Dagdag ng DOH, may sukat na dalawa hanggang 5 mm ang klase dolomite na ginamit sa kontrobersiyal na Manila Bay white sand project.

Isang daang beses anilang malaki ito kumpara sa alikabok.

Dahil dito, sinabi ng DOH na hindi nadadala ng hangin ang dolomite na ginamit sa Manila Bay.

Tinitiyak din anila ang pagpapatupad ng occupational health at safety standard ng mga manggagawa ng nabanggit na proyekto gayundin ng precautionary measures para makontrol ang posibilidad ng pagbuo ng alikabok mula sa dolomite.

Magugunitang noong Lunes lamang sinabi ni Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire na posibleng magdulot ng problema sa respiratory system ang paglanghap sa durog na dolomite.



Dolomite on Manila Bay shore not small enough to cause health risks, DOH clarifies

By [CNN Philippines Staff](#)

Published Sep 9, 2020 5:09:03 PM



The dolomite or white sand dumped on Manila Bay's shore cannot cause adverse health effects since it is not small enough to be inhaled, the Department of Health said on Wednesday, clarifying an earlier statement that detailed possible risks from exposure to the product. (FILE PHOTO)

Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, September 9) — The dolomite or white sand dumped on Manila Bay's shore cannot cause adverse health effects since it is not small enough to be inhaled, the Department of Health said on Wednesday, clarifying an earlier statement that detailed possible risks from exposure to the product.

The agency made the clarification after learning from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources that the crushed minerals were 100 times bigger than dust and cannot be suspended in the air. The DOH had earlier warned that [inhaling dolomite particles](#) would lead to respiratory complications.

"Therefore, in terms of the general safety of the public who will be enjoying the shoreline once permitted, DOH assures that no untoward incidents will occur as a result of this endeavour," it said in a statement.

This comes shortly after Manila Mayor Francisco "Isko Moreno" Domagoso called the attention of Health Secretary Francisco Duque to inquire on the safety of the white sand project intended to beautify and clean the Manila Bay area.

The project had drawn flak from environment groups that criticized the effort as merely for "aesthetic" purposes. The DENR, in a [recent House committee hearing](#), however, explained that the white sand is often used to filter water such as in aquariums.

Source: https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/9/9/doh-clarifies-dolomite-risks.html?fbclid=IwAR3Ui0Lfpxp3FOmCgxVO2AWmm4fnhQhzhFmqK9Mp1deL0x3wFZ3sIKpe9_g



DOH kumabig sa dolomite statement: 'Delikado lang kung kasing-liit ng alikabok'

By [Bombo Christian Yosores](#) -September 9, 2020 | 6:47 PM

Kumabig ang DOH sa naunang pahayag nito kaugnay ng dolomite o yung artificial white sand na iniimbak ngayon sa Manila bay.

Sa isang statement, nilinaw ng Health department na na hindi mapanganib ang dolomite kung ito ay buo. Pero kung ito ay pino at nasa porma na ng parang alikabok ay maaaring magdulot ng pananakit sa dibdib, shortness of breathe, at ubo sa mga makalalanghap.

“The DOH clarifies that (1) dolomite in its bulk state is not a known health hazard and (2) dolomite in dust form, like any other dust particle, can lead to symptoms such as chest discomfort, shortness of breath, and coughing for this is our body’s normal reaction to irritants.”

Sinabi raw ng DENR na ang ginagamit na dolomite material sa Manila bay ay dalawa hanggang limang milimetro ang laki mula sa alikabok kaya imposible umano na humalo ito sa hangin.

“As stated by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the dolomite material that is being used in Baywalk is 2-5mm or 100 times bigger than dust, therefore does not get suspended in air.”

Christian Yosores
@chrisyosores

BASAHIN: Nilinaw ng DOH ang kanilang pahayag ukol sa panganib ng dolomite, na ginagamit ngayon na articial white sand sa Manila bay. |
[@BomboRadyoNews](#)

**STATEMENT OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

September 9 | 3:30 PM

ON DOLOMITE:

The Department of Health clarifies that (1) dolomite in its bulk state is not a known health hazard and (2) dolomite in dust form, like any other dust particle, can lead to symptoms such as chest discomfort, shortness of breath, and coughing for this is our body's normal reaction to irritants.

As stated by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the dolomite material that is being used in Baywalk is 2-5mm or 100 times bigger than dust, therefore does not get suspended in air. Moreover, occupational health and safety standards for workers, and precautionary measures for the containment of possible dust formation are being implemented.

Therefore, in terms of the general safety of the public who will be enjoying the shoreline once permitted, DOH assures

3:39 PM · Sep 9, 2020

See Christian Yosores's other Tweets



Sa kabila nito, pinaalalahan pa rin ng DOH ang mga manggagawa na mag-ingat sa posibilidad ng dust formation ng dolomite. Pati na ang publiko, kapag binuksan na ang atraksyon sa maraming tao.

“Therefore, in terms of general safety of the public who will be enjoying the shoreline once permitted, DOH assures that no untoward incidents will occur as a result of this endeavour.”

Source: <https://www.bomboradyo.com/doh-kumabig-sa-dolomite-statement-delikado-lang-kung-kasing-liit-ng-alikabok/>



Covid-19 not reason to stop gov't projects: Panelo

By Azer Parrocha [September 9, 2020, 5:39 pm](#)



Manila Bay beach nourishment project. (File photo)

MANILA – Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Salvador Panelo on Wednesday said the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic should not bring government projects to a halt.

Panelo defended the controversial Manila Bay “white sand” project telling critics who questioned its timing that it has been on the pipeline and has already been allotted with funds a year before the health crisis started.

He said the government has allocated enough funds for the health crisis through the soon-to-be signed Bayanihan to Recover as One Act or Bayanihan 2 bill.

“*Merong na ngang budget dati dun, meron din tayong budget sa Covid-19* (There has been a budget allocated for the project, there’s also a budget for Covid-19,” he said in an interview over PTV-4.

Amid calls to prioritize the Covid-19 response, Panelo said concerned agencies are already doing their part in relation to their respective mandates.

He cited the Department of Health, which in charge of testing efforts, and the Department of Social Welfare and Development, which in charge of the distribution of cash aid among others.

“*Yung iba, siyempre kung ano ang trabaho nila ‘yun yung gagampanan nila* (The other agencies, whatever their job is, that’s what they’ll perform),” he said.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the agency in charge of the white sand project, is in charge of assuring the sustainability of the country’s natural resources.

Panelo, however, pointed out that Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu was also assigned to oversee the Covid-19 response in Cebu.

“*Sa madaling sabi, mag-mu-multitasking tayo* (In other words, we have to multitask),” he said.

The public, he said, will have to live with Covid-19 by following minimum health and safety protocols until a vaccine is made available.

“*Whether we like it or not, it’s there. Hindi pupuwedeng tayong kadenahan nito, maging sagabal sa ating ginagawa sa araw-araw. Hindi pupuwede yung takot mangibabaw sa’tin na hindi na tayo makagalaw* (It should not chain us, it should not hinder our daily activities. We cannot allow fear to prevent us from doing anything),” he said.

On Monday, Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque said the white sand project will prevent soil erosion and flooding.



“Itong ginawa po nila, ito po ay tinatawag na beach enhancement, so hindi lang po ito pagpapaganda. Itong beach enhancement pong ito ay para po maiwasan ang soil erosion at para makatulong din po sa flood control (What they’re doing is called beach enhancement, so it’s not just beautification. This beach enhancement is also to prevent soil erosion and help flood control),” he said in a virtual presser.

Lawmakers and environmental groups criticized the project since the sand is made from dolomite rocks transported from Cebu which could pose public health risks and environmental problems.

Cimatu said that dolomite is safe to use and that several resorts in Cebu have been using the same artificial sand for their beaches. **(PNA)**



Isko on Manila Bay rehab: 'Believe the process'

By Marita Moaje September 9, 2020, 5:36 pm



MANILA BAY REHAB. The Manila Bay white sand project continues to pique the public's curiosity as bikers and other passersby on Sunday (Sept. 6, 2020) stop and try to take a look at the large heap of white sand at the bayfront. Manila Bay has always been famous for its breathtaking sunset. (PNA photo by Avito C. Dalan)

MANILA – While the crushed dolomite boulders which are placed by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) over Manila Bay earned criticisms citing health hazards, Manila Mayor Francisco "Isko Moreno" Domagoso defended the move, saying the department and its officials know what they are doing.

"Our stand is very clear, until particular sand is found pollutive harmful without proper studies, we will support the rehabilitation of Manila Bay," Domagoso said in an interview at the Kapihan sa Manila Bay on Wednesday.

He said there is a "semblance of regularity" as he does not believe that the agency tasked to protect the environment will be the same organization to pollute it.

"To know na makapaminsala syempre me mga syentipiko naman and I think DENR is in the right position to know better than me, sapagkat sila naman ang talagang tinalaga ng batas na mangalaga sa ating kapaligiran (to know that it is indeed dangerous, there are scientists, and I think that the DENR is in the right position to know better than me because they are the ones tasked to protect the environment)," he said.

He added that the Manila Bay rehabilitation has been long overdue, adding that for over 20 years now, nobody really gave attention to the state of the area once known for its breath-taking sunset.

Domagoso said they passed a very "painstaking" process before the Supreme Court to come up with a mandamus that requires preservation of the bay not only in Manila but all local government units around Manila Bay -- which is bounded on the south, facing west by Batangas, Cavite, Paranaque, Pasay and Manila, and on the other side by Bataan, Pampanga, Bulacan, Malabon, Navotas and Manila.

Domagoso said Manila Bay has become so polluted that from the time he took office in July last year up to the present, the Manila Department of Public Service already collected over 3.5 million kilos of solid wastes.

Domagoso said the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) is very clear in saying if someone inhales the pulverized dust, then it becomes harmful just like an ordinary cement.

"The MGB said it is the dust size which is about 10 to 50 microns that is hazardous if inhaled for a long period of exposure without personal protective equipment. However, the size of dolomite in the baywalk is 2 to 5 millimeters or equivalent to 2,000 to 5,000 microns which is 100 times bigger so this means that this is not suspended in the air," Domagoso said in a mix of Filipino and English.

Domagoso said the people must continue to believe in the process.

On Monday, Domagoso said he sent a letter to DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu citing a statement made by Department of Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire that the inhalation of crushed dolomite rock can cause respiratory problems as it will have an adverse reaction to one's respiratory system.



In a text message to Domagoso, Cimatu said “dolomite, in its natural state, is not a known health hazard,” adding that it is “not listed by the Mine Safety and Health Assn, Occupational Safety and Health Association, or even the International Agency for Research of Cancer as a carcinogen”.

It added that what is hazardous is the fine silica quartz in some dolomite in the form of dust that is generated during crushing and screening, and not the calcium or magnesium.

Cimatu also said some plantations already used dolomites since 1996, citing that even the well-known Sheraton and Hilton Hotels also used it in their beachfront for over 20 years and has not caused any problem.

Cimatu added that some public beach in the country using dolomite is in Dalaguete, Cebu that for the last six years, no issues or complaint have been raised. **(PNA)**



Moreno to critics of Manila Bay rehab: Trust the gov't; believe the process

By: [Consuelo Marquez](#) - Reporter / [@ConsINO](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 02:25 PM September 09, 2020



Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu (left) and DENR's Solid Waste Management Usec. Benny Antiporda (center) are accompanied by Manila Mayor Isko Moreno (sitting) in the inspection of Malate creek, which will undergo rehabilitation. INQUIRER.net file photo / Ryan Leagogo

MANILA, Philippines — Manila Mayor Isko Moreno on Wednesday brushed off environment groups' remarks that Manila officials must be held accountable for the controversial white sand makeover in Manila Bay by saying the organizations must continue to believe in the government's "process."

"I wish them all the best and good luck," Moreno said during a Kapihan sa Manila Bay online forum, reacting on Oceana Philippines-led environmental coalition's request to stop the transformation of Manila Bay coastline and hold officials, including Moreno, accountable for the project.

"That is why there is government e, that is why may pamamahala at may mga ahensya ng gobyerno. We must continue to believe in the process. Sometimes, yes, we get frustrated and say parang 'ang hirap naman' but you know in a civilized world, in a civilized time, we must be guided with the law and order," Moreno added.

(That is why there is a government, that is why there are leadership and agencies of government. We must continue to believe in the process. Sometimes, yes, we get frustrated and say "this is hard" but you know in a civilized world, in a civilized time, we must be guided with law and order.)

The environmental groups on Tuesday said the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources, Congress, Office of the Ombudsman, Department of Agriculture, and Moreno must [be held responsible for filling the Manila Bay's shore with artificial sand](#) made out of crushed dolomite, which Department of Health (DOH) flagged as dangerous to public health. The groups said the officials must also investigate why the project continued despite violating five national laws.

Moreno also reiterated that he already sent a letter to Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu to clarify if there is proof that dolomite poses risk to health.



“Ang sabi ni (Health) spokesperson Doctor (Rosario) Vergeire, kapag na-inhale (‘yung dolomite dust), iyon nakuha atensyon ko noon, doctor yun e, na bahagi ng gobyerno. Baka may maganda siyang opinyon na pwedeng maging basehan ng diskurso at bigyan ng atensiyon,” he said.

(What Doctor Vergeire said, if it is inhaled, that gave me attention because she is a doctor and a member of the government. But she has a good opinion that can become a basis for discourse and can be given attention.)

The DENR [insisted that the crushed dolomite used in the Manila Bay white sand makeover project is safe](#) because it was already processed. Cimatu also added that the size of a crushed dolomite is larger like a sand and not like a dust that may fly in the air and cause respiratory illness when inhaled.

The Manila Bay white sand project is part of the January 2019 Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program which seeks to remove pollution in the bay. The Manila government has been actively participating in the cleanup process of Manila Bay.

JPV



Mayor Isko: Call other LGUs' attention to clean Manila Bay

Published September 9, 2020, 7:08 PM

by [Minka Klaudia Tiangco](#)

Manila Mayor Francisco "Isko Moreno" Domagoso on Wednesday appealed to the public to call the attention of other local government units (LGUs) to clean the Manila Bay.



Manila Mayor Francisco "Isko Moreno" Domagoso

(Manila City Public Information Office / MANILA BULLETIN)

In an online forum, Domagoso said members of the city government pick up garbage from the two-kilometer stretch of Manila Bay every day. However, some of the garbage that ended up at their turf may have also drifted from other areas.

"Huwag niyong alalahanin 'yung less than two-kilometer length. 'Yung alalahanin niyo, (buong) Manila Bay (Do not worry about the less than two-kilometer length. Worry about the entire Manila Bay)," he said.

"I am definite, wala kaming palaisdaan, wala kaming fish cages, at hindi pwedeng ikubli 'yung mga styro at net at kawayan na nadudurog kapag malakas ang alon o may bagyo sa (we do not have fisheries, fish cages, and we cannot forget about the styro, nets, and bamboo that are crushed during strong waves or when there are storms in) Metro Manila or a portion of those provinces," he added.

"While we don't blame, we also know where it (garbage) came from," Domagoso said.

According to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the Manila Bay area covers eight provinces and 178 LGUs in three regions of the country.

The Manila mayor also cited the Supreme Court Mandamus on Manila Bay, directing 13 government agencies to rehabilitate and preserve Manila Bay and improve its water quality to make it fit for recreation activities.

But Domagoso stressed that they will continue their clean-up operations along Manila Bay, regardless of where the garbage came from.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/09/09/mayor-isko-call-other-lgus-attention-to-clean-manila-bay/>



During the Kapihan sa Manila, Manila Mayor Isko Moreno said he understood the decision of Cebu Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia to halt the extraction and transport of dolomite for the bay's beautification program.

Edd Gumban

Moreno defends Manila Bay white sand project

[Marc Jayson Cayabyab](#) (The Philippine Star) - September 10, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Mayor Isko Moreno again defended yesterday the white sand project in Manila Bay, saying the dolomite believed to be hazardous to people's health is not fine enough to pose risks when inhaled.

During the Kapihan sa Manila, Moreno said he understood the decision of Cebu Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia to halt the extraction and transport of dolomite for the bay's beautification program.

Garcia on Tuesday ordered two mining firms to stop extracting dolomite in Alcoy town.

With the halt order, Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said the Cebu government could probe the deal between the contractor and the mining companies.

Without findings of any anomaly in the project, Moreno said he would support the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in rehabilitating Manila Bay.

He also cited a reply to him by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau that only dolomite dust measuring up to 50 microns would be hazardous to health.

The dolomite dumped in Manila Bay measures two to five millimeters or 2,000 to 5,000 microns, 100 times bigger than fine dust that could be suspended in the air and inhaled, Moreno explained.

He said hotels also used dolomite sand in their beach fronts.

Asked about the waste of taxpayers' money in case the P28 million worth of dolomite gets washed away after heavy rains, Moreno said he would have to trust the DENR's engineering plan to prevent this.



House probe sought

Lawmakers yesterday sought a congressional inquiry into the white sand project.

The Makabayan bloc led by Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Carlos Zarate cited the public outrage on the dumping of artificial white sand along the 500-meter coastline of the bay.

Lawmakers echoed the appeal of environmental groups for the DENR to suspend the beach nourishment project.

The lawmakers also cited the warning of University of the Philippines Institute of Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea director Jay Batongbacal on health hazards that crushed dolomite may bring such as cancer and damage to the lungs.

The Department of Health (DOH) clarified that dolomite in its “bulk state does not pose health risks.”

“Crushed dolomite, like any other dust particles, can cause chest discomfort, shortness of breath and coughing as our body’s normal reaction to irritants,” the DOH said.

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatú defended the project and insisted on the safety of dolomite.

“It is not listed by the Mines Safety and Health Association, Occupational Safety and Health Association and International Agency for Research of Cancer as a carcinogen,” Cimatú said.

“What is hazardous is the fine silica quads in dolomite in the form of dust that is generated during crushing and screening,” he added. — **Edu Punay, Delon Porcalla, Rhodina Villanueva, Sheila Crisostomo**



Maynila katuwang sa paglilinis at pagpapaganda sa Manila Bay



September 9, 2020 @ 2:53 PM 17 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Mahigit na sa tatlong milyong kilo ng basura ang nahakot ng lokal na pamahalaang lungsod ng Maynila sa pamamagitan ng Department of Public Services (DPS) sa patuloy na ginagawang paglilinis sa Manila Bay kasabay ng rehabilitasyon nito.

Ito ang inihayag ni Manila Mayor Isko Moreno Domagoso sa kanyang pagdalo sa virtual media forum ng Kapighan sa Manila Bay ngayong araw kung saan binanggit nito na mula Hulyo 2019 hanggang kahapon Setyembre 8 ay umabot na sa 3.5 milyong kilo o halos 4,000 tonelada ng mga basura ang nahakot dito.

Ayon kay Domagoso, karamihan umano ng mga nahakot na basura ay pawang mga kahoy at kawayan na mula sa palaisdaan na posibleng nagmula sa kalapit na lugar ng nasabing lungsod kung saan bukod pa ang mga basurang plastik. Karamihan din sa mga ito ay nanggaling sa ibang mga lugar lalo na kapag may bagyo o habagat.

Nalulugod naman ang alkalde hinggil sa ginagawang rehabilitasyon sa Manila Bay ilang pinuno na ang dumaan ay ngayon lamang nabigyang pansin ang pagsasaayos at paglilinis dito.

Sa ngayon aniya ay dumarami na ang nagkakaroon ng interes sa Manila Bay kung saan positibo ang tingin ni Domagoso rito dahil nangangahulugan na maraming nag-aalala sa Manila Bay.

Samantala, hinihintay naman ng alkalde ang tugon ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) hinggil sa ipinadala nitong liham sa naturang ahensya kung saan humihingi ng paglilinanaw ang lokal na pamahalaang lungsod ng Maynila kung nakasasama ba sa kalusugan ang puting buhangin na mula sa dinurog na dolomite, na inilalatag ngayon sa pampang ng Manila Bay.

Sa kabila naman nito, sinabi ni Domagoso na batay sa Mines and Geosciences Bureau, hindi hazardous sa kalusugan ang dinurog na dolomite.

Kaugnay nito, ibinida rin ni Domagoso sa nasabing forum na ilang araw mula ngayon ay ilulunsad na ang itinayong “coffee shop” sa Kartilya ng Katipunan na tatawagin umanong “KAPETolyo”.

Ang naturang lugar aniya ay bagong atraksyon sa pinagandang Kartilya kung saan bukod sa nasabing coffee shop ay makikita rin dito ang “dancing fountain” na dinarayo ng publiko.

Bukod sa masarap na kape ay maaari rin ditong gumamit ng computer na may internet connection kaya’t inaasahang darayuhin ito ng mga Batang Maynila gayundin ng mga bibisita sa lungsod. **Jay Reyes**

Source: <https://www.remate.ph/maynila-katuwang-sa-paglilinis-at-pagpapaganda-sa-manila-bay/>

Isko Moreno: Manila Bay white sand project 'not harmful'

Christian V. Esguerra, ABS-CBN News

Posted at Sep 09 2020 07:41 PM



Workers spread white sand along a portion of the Baywalk in Manila Bay on Sept. 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 crushed dolomite spread out as artificial white sand along a portion of the Manila Bay involved bigger particles, which may not necessarily be a health hazard, Manila Mayor Francisco 'Isko' Moreno said Wednesday.

Moreno said he got the information from the Mines and Geosciences Bureau following complaints from environmental groups warning of the alleged dangers of the white sand project by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The Department of Health also clarified Wednesday that the dolomite used in the jaywalk beautification project was "100 times bigger than dust" and won't pose danger to the "general safety of the public."

"How can I act on something that is not illegal, that is not harmful?" Moreno told an online news forum.

Groups earlier cautioned the allegedly negative impact of the P389-million "beach nourishment" project on the environment, especially since crushed dolomite was "not natural" to the Manila Bay.

The artificial white sand is also expected to be washed out during typhoons or high tide, said geologist Mahar Lagmay.



Manila Mayor Isko Moreno. *George Calvelo, ABS-CBN News file*

"Kung may kapabayaan talaga, halimbawa inanod, eh di magmumukha silang katawa-tawa," Moreno said. A DENR undersecretary earlier assured the public that engineering work would prevent this.

(If there was negligence, for example, the sand is washed away, then they would look foolish.)

"It will be quite unfair to anybody who works in government. Madali naman mag-akusa, madaling magbintang e, but it has to be proven," he added.

(It's easy to accuse people, to pin blame, but it has to be proven.)

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/09/09/20/isko-moreno-manila-bay-white-sand-project-not-harmful>



The white beach of Manila

posted September 10, 2020 at 12:30 am

by [Florencio Fianza](#)

"I hope that the project will eventually turn out to be good for the image of the country."

The Duterte administration should be commended for its effort to clean up Manila Bay. Since the Department of Environment and Natural Resources started the process in early 2019, much has been accomplished. Together with the help of other agencies and local government units, the bay is much cleaner now. The smell of sewer is gone, allowing the people promenading along the baywalk to enjoy their strolls. There are even people fishing and the coliform levels have continued to go down considerably, although the waters are still not safe for swimming.

The City of Manila is doing its part with a team cleaning the bay of solid wastes every day. Manila is also redeveloping Manila Zoo with its own sewer treatment system so that no polluted water will discharge into the bay. As if to declare victory, the DENR is now developing a beach with white sands along Roxas Boulevard.

This project, I must say, is a gesture of confidence on the part of the government that the Bay will stay clean or be made much cleaner to allow safe swimming. For people to be able to swim safely, however, coliform level must be around 250mpn/100ml. Right now, it is nowhere near that number.

The project therefore is perhaps a bridge too far. DENR should wait longer until the desired water quality has been attained. Not to be a kill joy, but I am saying that more work, more money and longer time are needed to clean the bay to the level that swimming by the public would be safe.

If we look at the way other countries cleaned their waterways, it took them a much longer period and a lot more money before the clean-up were completed. Tokyo Bay, for instance, took a long time before it became the way it is now. If we watch the updates of the many vloggers on YouTube who regularly report on the Pasig River and esteros, we could see that there are still a lot of solid waste being thrown into the Pasig River which discharges into the bay. There are also about 11 other rivers discharging polluted water into the bay from four other provinces located around it. This is the reason why there is still a considerable amount of garbage being collected every day, especially when it rains.

Along the Pasig River alone, there are many tributaries occupied by thousands of informal settlers discharging sewer and garbage into it every day. This must be stopped permanently if there is even a small chance of being able to keep the bay clean. The government cannot obviously be cleaning the bay area fronting Roxas Boulevard, while other rivers and esteros discharge sewer and solid wastes into the bay every day.

At a certain point in time, we Filipinos must learn how to dispose our trash properly by not throwing waste into our rivers. I do not know the exact percentage of the National Capital Region with a sewer system but it cannot be more than 15 percent, which is very low given that the NCR has a population of about 13 million people. We can only imagine the amount of garbage that is not collected properly and that ends up in our rivers and, ultimately, in Manila Bay.

One official from the DENR said that with the beach, maybe people will be encouraged to keep the bay clean by not throwing garbage anywhere that will eventually end up polluting it. He has a point. He should have also pointed out the beautiful sunset of Manila Bay reputed to be the best in the world that we can all be proud of and prouder still if the bay can be kept clean permanently.

In spite of my serious misgivings, the project deserves a chance to be tried. The critics should hold their punches until the project is completed and then see what happens. There may be issues but the public should concentrate more on the positive things that were accomplished since the clean-up was started instead of the negatives. After all, this project was undertaken partly because of a Supreme Court order. The objectives were good.

As to the medical concerns regarding dolomite, I am sure that the government agency that will eventually manage the beach will have proper protocols. I hope, however, that the DENR took everything into consideration including the fact that during typhoons, storm surges along Roxas Boulevard reaches the road. This has the potential to wipe out the beach that is being developed.

The beach may not end up rivaling Copacabana and Ipanema beaches in Rio de Janeiro, but let us hope that the project will eventually turn out to be good for the image of the country.

Source: <https://manilastandard.net/mobile/article/333710>



On dolomite extraction issue: DENR blames 'Cebu system'

By [Caecent No-ot Magsumbol](#)(The Freeman) - September 10, 2020 - 12:00am



DENR undersecretary and spokesman Benny Antiporda earlier commented that it is no longer their problem if the Cebu Provincial Board or anyone was not informed about the matter.

STAR/KJ Rosales, file

CEBU, Philippines — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources yesterday washed hands of the dolomite extraction controversy, attributing it instead to “a problem with the Cebu system” since such extraction activities have been allegedly going on for 40 years now.

DENR undersecretary and spokesman Benny Antiporda earlier commented that it is no longer their problem if the Cebu Provincial Board or anyone was not informed about the matter.

“Kung hindi niya alam, wag nilang isisi sa national government, sa amin itong contract na to. It’s part of the contract with DPWH,” Antiporda said over PTV.

Yesterday, Antiporda told The FREEMAN that DENR, having sourced the minerals from a contractor, is not involved in the process of extracting the dolomites in Cebu, which are to be used to “nourish” the Manila Bay.

“Just to clarify it, DENR is not in any way connected in this transaction of dolomite which is meant for Manila Bay because it is the contractor that we are talking to, and not us. For us, we are just mere customers here in Manila. We don’t know what is happening in Cebu,” said Antiporda.

Antiporda, though, welcomes Governor Gwendolyn Garcia’s order stopping the extraction and transport of dolomite from Alcoy, south Cebu as this will give the provincial government a chance to check on their business system.

“We, as fellow public servants, welcome this order of the governor so it can give them a chance to look into the internal business system of the province,” said Antiporda. He said he feels there is a problem with Cebu province’s business system.

“Kasi they seem to have a problem with their system. It’s been there for 40 years, and yet ngayon lang nila sasabihin na may problema silang ganyan. It’s the system,” he said.

Antiporda said some of the crushed dolomites needed for the beach nourishment project in Manila Bay are already in Manila.

“Alam ko okay na yun (I knew that it has been shipped),” Antiporda said. He has not responded to The FREEMAN’s query as to how many tons of dolomite have been transported.



Garcia's order

The Manila Bay rehab project has been tentatively set to start on September 19 in time for the International Coastal Clean-up Day.

Garcia's order ordered Dolomite Mining Corporation (DMC) and Philippine Mining Service Corporation (PMSC) to stop "from further extracting, processing, selling, and transporting of dolomite, associated mineral deposits, and other quarry resources."

DMC, through a Mineral Production Sharing Agreement with the national government, extracted the dolomite in Alcoy while PMSC took care of transporting the dolomite to Manila accordingly.

But Garcia said that the provincial government and Alcoy town were not informed of the Manila Bay project nor was there a public consultation held before the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB)-7 issued two Ore Transport Permits (OTPs) to PMSC to allow the company to transport seven Wet Metric Tons of dolomite to Manila from Cebu.

Inspection

Today, the Cebu Provincial Environment and Natural Resources (PENRO) is expected to conduct aerial survey and inspection on the mining area in Alcoy town, about 102 kilometers south of Cebu City.

PENRO chief Rodel Bontuyan said a team composed of civil engineer, geodetic engineer, mining engineer and two other personnel from their office will go to the mining site to check if the mining firms are compliant with the terms and conditions in their mineral production agreement with the government.

"Maong magdala ta geodetic engineer para makita nato unsay coverage sa ilang i-extract nga area," Bontuyan said.

PENRO served a cease and desist order against the mining firms last September 8. Garcia has already warned MGB not to issue further OTP to the firms, which the bureau has heeded.

Bontuyan said it was learned that there are still three pending OTPs applied for by PMSC before the MGB.

"(Some) 3, 500 metric tons kada usa ka OTP (ore transport permit) so more or less seven thousand metric tons na na ilang na transport didto. Kung nalahos ang lima so more or less na sa 17, 000 metric tons pero duha ra man na lahos so naa pa sa 10,000 metric tons ang wala madayon," Bontuyan said.

MGB issues OTPs to large mining firms for transportation of mineral products but Bontuyan said the provincial government is also concerned on the minerals extracted and transported from Cebu.

"Dili man ni permit issuance, it's about asserting the right of the province invoking the general welfare clause. So mao na ang gibasehan para motan-aw ta kay within the Cebu province man gihapon ni siya nga area," he said.

Cimatu's justification

During an inquiry at the House of Representatives, DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu explained that the dolomites are not only for aesthetics but as nourishment for the Manila Bay waters and to avoid drowning incidents there.



“Yung nakikita po ninyo na tinatambak na dolomites dyan ay kasama sa proseso. Kailangang lagyan ng beach dyan dahil walang beach dyan. Pagdaong mo dyan noon, tubig na kaya ang daming nadidisgrasya, tulad ng sinabi ko, nalunod,” said Cimatú.

Before the dolomites, lahar was being considered but it was found to be too fine and would not be good for overlay of the 500-meter area being rehabilitated.

“May nagsabi merong nagsabi ang dolomite, ito ay ginagamit nila sa mga resort sa Mactan, mga malalaking resorts dyan. Ginagamit nila dyan ang dolomites. Meron na kaming experience na nagamit na yan,” Cimatú said.

Cimatú said also said they needed mineral contents to clean the waters of Manila Bay so people will be allowed to swim in the area again.

“Kailangan din natin ng mga magamit na medyo mineral na linisin ang tubig dahil nourishment ang kailangan nito eh, naghanap kami at pwede dito gamitin ang dolomites. Tingnan po ninyo sa mga aquarium, sa mga bumibili ng isda dyan, bato-bato na yan, is dolomite,” he said.

“Lilinisán niya ang tubig nito from acidic magiging alkaline po ito, so kinonsider namin lahat yan, so dolomite,” he added.

Dolomite is 75 percent calcium and more than 20 percent magnesium and the size that DENR has chosen for the project is thrice the granule of an ordinary sand and no dust particles that may be harmful to one’s health, said Cimatú. — **Le Phyllis F. Antojado ,JMD**

ENVIRONMENT

Cebu BM wants MGB issuance of transport permit for dolomites shipment to Manila ‘condemned’

By: Rosalie O. Abatayo - Multimedia Reporter - CDN Digital | September 09, 2020 - 11:37 AM



WHITE SAND- Workers continue to pour white sand composed of crushed dolomite over the 500 meter stretch of Manila bay, part of the DENR’s Manila bay rehabilitation project aimed at discouraging people from littering in the ocean that has now drawn ire from advocates.

| INQUIRER/ MARIANNE BERMUDEZ

CEBU CITY, Phillippines — A Capitol official seeks to condemn the actions of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau in Central Visayas (MGB-7) in issuing the ore transport permits (OTP) that allowed crushed dolomites from Cebu to be brought to Manila for the makeover of the Manila Bay.

Board Member John Ismael Borgonia filed before the Sangguniang Panlalawigan Secretary on Tuesday, September 8, a resolution condemning the issuance of the OTPs “in absence of public transparency and consultation of Cebuanos and in utmost disregard to the authority of the local government of the Province of Cebu.” His resolution will be discussed during the PB session on Monday, September 14.

Borgonia, who chairs the Committee on Environmental Conservation and Natural Resources, said they found during a meeting held on Tuesday morning that there was no prior public consultation on the extraction of the minerals in the southern Cebu town of Alcoy and its eventual use for the Manila Bay rehabilitation project.

The Capitol and the local government of Alcoy had earlier said they had no knowledge that the crushed dolomite from Cebu was brought to Manila for the said project until news broke on local and national media outlets and with DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda confirming that the white minerals were being used to fill the stretch of the Manila Bay are crushed dolomites from Cebu.

Borgonia added that during the meeting, the MGB and the representatives of the mining firm operating in the town failed to produce an environmental impact study on the extraction of the dolomite rocks despite the location of the extraction which is supposedly within the fringe of the Alcoy forest cover. Alcoy town is considered the habitat of the endangered bird black shama, locally known as Siloy, which is endemic in Cebu.



“The act constituted a violation of a number of environmental principle and laws which include the precautionary principle in the Rules of Procedure for Environmental Cases, A.M. 09-6-8-SC, Section 8 (a) of DENR Administrative Order No. 2010-01, and the DENR Department Administrative Order No. 2003-02,” Borogonia’s proposed resolution cited.

“The issuance of an ore transport permit disregards the environment impact and preservation of a critical area in Cebu,” it added.

On Tuesday afternoon, Governor Gwendolyn Garcia had issued a cease and desist order (CDO) against the mining firm and the mineral processing firms in Alcoy prohibiting the two from further extracting, processing, selling, and transporting dolomites, associated mineral deposits, and other quarry materials. / dcb



Gwen Garcia stops dolomite extraction for Manila Bay

Last updated Sep 9, 2020



Cebu Governor Gwendolyn Garcia has stopped the extraction and transport of dolomite from Alcoy town for the Manila Bay rehabilitation project.

On Tuesday, Garcia issued an order directing Dolomite Mining Corp. (DMC) and Philippine Mining Service Corp. (PMSC) to cease "from further extracting, processing, selling, and transporting of dolomite, associated mineral deposits, and other quarry resources."

The governor also directed Alcoy town, the police, and the military to assist the provincial government in implementing the order.

DMC, through a Mineral Production Sharing Agreement with the national government, extracted the dolomite in Alcoy while PMSC took care of transporting the dolomite to Manila.

As stated in her order, Garcia said the provincial government and Alcoy town were not informed of the Manila Bay project nor was there a public consultation held before the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) – 7 issued two Ore Transport Permits (OTP) to PMSC to allow the company to transport seven Wet Metric Tons of dolomite to Manila from Cebu.

"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 the MGB, PMSC, and DMC hence, a violation of Section 8(a) of DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources) Administrative Order No. 2010-21," the cease and desist order read.

Section 8 of the DENR order highlights the role of local governments in mining projects within their jurisdiction as mandated by the Philippine Mining Act, one of which is "to ensure that relevant laws on public notice, public consultation, and public participation are complied with."

Garcia's order said there was no Environmental Impact Study to support the extraction, considering that the extraction was done at an "Environmentally Critical Area" and at a critical slope.

"Under the Precautionary Principle in Environmental Law enshrined in Rule 20 of the Rules of Procedure for environmental cases, it is ordained that when there is a lack of full scientific certainty in establishing causal link between human activity and environmental effect or harm, the right to a balanced and healthful ecology shall be given the benefit of the doubt. The possible harm and effect the Manila Bay aesthetic project has to the ecology of Cebu triggers the operability of this principle to prevent environmental inequity to the present and future generations of Cebuanos," the order also stated.

Source: <https://visayas.politics.com.ph/gwen-garcia-stops-dolomite-extraction-for-manila-bay/>



Preventing another tragedy: Why Cebu province banned dolomite mining

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Sep 09 2020 08:08 AM



Workers spread white sand along a portion of the Baywalk in Manila Bay on Sept. 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 — Cebu banned the extraction of dolomite being used as artificial white sand along the Manila Bay to prevent a repeat of the 2018 landslide that killed nearly 80 people in the province, an official said Wednesday.

Cebu officials did not give any permit and was not consulted for the mining of Alcoy town's dolomite boulders that were crushed and dumped in Manila Bay. Instead, this was allowed by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), said Cebu's legal management consultant, Marino Martinquilla.

The MGB also permitted mining of limestone in Naga, Cebu, where at least 77 people died in a landslide in September 2018, he said.

Cebu Governor Gwendolyn Garcia on Tuesday stopped mining operations in Alcoy.

"The governor does not want another tragedy to happen in Cebu," Martinquilla told ABS-CBN's TeleRadyo.

Despite the permit from MGB, he said the mining operations violated several environmental laws, including failure to coordinate with the local government and lack of a study on its impact on Alcoy, home to an endangered bird species.

Mining companies also contest before the court a Cebu local ordinance levying the extraction of minerals. The province only gets "minimal" excise taxes, he said.

"The province of Cebu has not been given its fare share in terms of revenue in this extraction," Martinquilla said.

Garcia has ordered a ground and aerial survey to determine the extent of mining in Alcoy, he said.

Several environment groups and experts have questioned the Manila Bay makeover, saying waves might just wash away the sand and dolomite could be harmful to the health.

Some critics also said the funds could have been better used to help Filipinos cope with the coronavirus pandemic.

The dumping of artificial white sand around Manila Bay was planned before the pandemic and the government cannot junk the contract for this project without a valid reason, Mayor Isko Moreno had said.

Funds for the P389-million Manila Bay rehabilitation that started 2 years ago cannot be diverted for the pandemic, the environment agency earlier said. Engineering interventions would keep the sand in place, it added.

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/09/09/20/preventing-another-tragedy-why-cebu-province-banned-dolomite-mining>



De Lima tags DENR as ‘Dept. of Environmental Cosmetics’ amid Manila Bay fracas

By: [Bong Lozada](#) - Reporter / [@BLozadaINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 04:47 PM September 09, 2020

MANILA, Philippines—Senator Leila De Lima lashed out at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) while also slamming Malcañang for the government’s decision to dump crushed dolomite in Manila Bay for a beautification project.

In a dispatch sent from Camp Crame, De Lima slammed the “idiotic inevitability” of the DENR for its decision and called the agency the “Department of Environmental Cosmetics.”

“For some idiotic inevitability, the DENR has caught the window-dressing bug of this administration and has now decided to become the Department of Environmental Cosmetics. Again, DENR’s mandate is rehabilitation, preservation, and protection of our environment. It is not a beach resort developer,” said the senator who is detained at the Philippine National Police Custodial Center in Camp Crame.

“Listening to Malacañang try to spin this colossal waste of public funds is both laughable and infuriating. Aside from deflecting public disapproval of spending millions of pesos on band-aid solutions in the middle of increasing hunger and joblessness, proponents of this project have the audacity to claim that this would somehow be beneficial to the mental health of Filipinos.” The project, which costs P389 million or P795,000 per square meter, immediately drew ire from critics not only for its price but also for the materials and the timing when it was done.

Crushed dolomite was sourced from Cebu was used instead of natural white sand and the dumping of this material will cause both ecological and health problems in the surroundings with the Department of Health warning against the respiratory issues it may cause.

The Philippines is still under the grips of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic with cases still increasing by the thousands each day.

“Anong akala ninyo sa buhangin na iyan—may mahika na sa isang iglap ay kayang punuan ang kumakalam na sikmura ng mga Pilipino, may kapangyarihan na isalba ang nalulunod na mga pangarap at kinabukasan ng bayan?” said De Lima.

“Sa dami-daming nagugutom at naghihirap ito pa talaga ang inuna niyo? Hindi pa nga natin nalalagpasan ang pandemya, dagdag na sakit at peligro pa ang ihahatid ninyo?!”

(Do you think that this sand has magic powers that in one swing will feed the stomachs of hungry Filipinos? That this has the power to save the drowning dreams and future of this nation? There are so many hungry and poor Filipinos and this is what you do first? We haven’t even gone through the pandemic and now you’re bringing new sickness and dangers to the public!)

The government reasoned that the project was meant to transform Manila Bay into a version of Boracay and that it would be better for the mental health of Filipinos.



De Lima, who's an opposition senator, blasted the administration's argument and questioned the government's alleged failure to listen to the people.

“Ano ba talaga ang prayoridad niyo?! Kailan ba kayo matututong makinig sa hinaing ng taumbayan?! Bigas na isasaing ang kailangan, hindi puting buhangin!” she wrote.

(What is your priority really?! When will you learn to listen to the qualms of the nation?! Rice is what's needed and not white sand!)

/MUF



Urban poor families fear eviction due to Manila Bay white sand project

Published September 9, 2020, 8:05 PM

by [Raymund Antonio](#)

With the ongoing artificial rehabilitation of Manila Bay, over 200,000 informal settler families have become apprehensive that they will be evicted from their homes.

Jeorgie Tenolete, president of Kabalikat sa Kaunlaran, a people's organization in Baseco, Manila, expressed worry over the possible eviction of the thousands of poor families living along waterways of the Manila Bay.

"The fear of eviction among Baseco families has always haunted us every time that the government does cosmetic rehabilitation in the Manila Bay," Tenolete said.

Last year, families from the 20-meter easement were notified of relocation by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the implementing agency of the Manila Bay shore rehabilitation project.

The DENR is not stopping the project despite calls to suspend it due to health and environmental issues. The project cost is estimated at P389 million.

In Baseco compound, the group placed the number of families in danger of displacement at 1,000.

Tenolete said they hoped the eviction would not take place during the health crisis.

"The people of Baseco or the urban poor families living along the Manila Bay do not oppose the clean-up and the rehabilitation...but this should not be at the expense of displacing thousands of families," he added.

Kabalikat asserted the urban poor families have been doing their part to help clean and rehabilitate the Manila Bay by planting 1,000 mangrove trees in Baseco since 2010.

"For the past ten years, we made sure that we took good care of our mangroves. We believe that this is the right and genuine way to rehabilitate the Manila Bay," said Kabalikat secretary Mayeth Betasolo.

Betasolo added they also initiated efforts to reduce waste in the bay by collecting water lilies and using them for their livelihood projects.

"I hope the government will not only see us as polluters but as citizens who through our small initiatives and contributions definitely help in the rehabilitation of the Manila Bay," said Tenolete.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/09/09/urban-poor-families-fear-eviction-due-to-manila-bay-white-sand-project/?fbclid=IwAR2Ta-Pko1V9k344nBCBCqX2ruhJaUvFygElpcJu0eoDxZFWjgX0YFyD1fY>



Solons to conduct inquiry on Manila Bay 'white sand' snafu

Published September 9, 2020, 6:28 PM

by [Ben Rosario](#)

House Deputy Minority Leader and Probinsyano Ako Partylist Rep. Jose "Bonito" Singson Jr. urged government to immediately stop the dumping of crushed dolomite as part of the P397.8 million Manila Baywalk clean-up plan, saying that the project is "inappropriate and unnecessary" at this time of public health crisis.

This developed as the Makabayan bloc headed by Senior Deputy Minority Leader Carlos Isagani T. Zarate filed House Resolution No. 1194 proposing the conduct of an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the "suitability and sustainability of the Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program" being carried out by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

In a press statement, Singson backed the conduct of a congressional probe into the issue that has alarmed health and environmental advocates.

Singson slammed Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque for saying that the project would benefit Filipinos' mental health. He also lamented DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda's argument that the project would discourage people from littering in the Manila Baywalk area.

"The government should be prioritizing the health and safety of everyone amidst the COVID-19 pandemic instead of spending on unnecessary beautification projects disguised to promote the mental health of a few who may be lucky enough to pass by the Manila Baywalk project vis-a-vis the general population of over a hundred million Filipinos.," Singson pointed out.

"To top it all, the dumping of foreign materials such as the dolomite is not a sustainable endeavor as these will eventually be washed out into the open sea as declared by environmentalists and numerous experts", the parytlst solon explained.

Singson chided the proponents of the dolomite dumping scheme for pursuing "this quixotic project is a bare faced corruption-related scheme."

Makabayan lawmakers cited the objections of numerous groups against the project, saying that all of these have been ignored by the DENR.

"Various groups are also expressing deep concern on the utilization of the P389 million funding for the 500-meer stretch of site or P778,000 per meter, as bared by Usec Antiporda, which could be better used for genuine and more productive component projects such as mangrove reforestation in the Manila Bay," the lawmakers said.

Oppositors of the project included lawyer Jay Batongbacal of the University of the Philippines Institute of Maritime Affairs who said that there are serious public health hazard that should concern proponents of the project.

Executive Director Mahar Lagmay of the UP Resilience Institute also questioned the sustainability of the project, pointing out that beach nourishment projects in other countries have proven to be very costly. Greenpeace questioned the project's environmental impact as it pointed out that "dumping of sand does not add to the objective and cleaning" of Manila Bay.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/09/09/solons-to-conduct-inquiry-on-manila-bay-white-sand-snafu/>



Bay project probe set

Move backs Makabayan bloc reso to look into its cost, timing

posted September 10, 2020 at 02:30 am

by [Maricel Cruz](#) and [Rio N. Araja](#), [Macon Ramos-Araneta](#), [Willie Casas](#)

The House of Representatives will investigate the P384-million project to dump synthetic white sand onto the shoreline of Manila Bay, a lawmaker said Wednesday.



NEAR AND FAR. Workers continue to lay down the crushed dolomite used to whiten the beach at the Manila Baywalk (inset) while on the southern end of the bay near the Manila Yacht Club, a fisherman gets ready to set out for his daily catch on the waterway. Norman Cruz

Rep. Elpidio Barzaga Jr. of Dasmariñas City in Cavite, chairman of the House committee on natural resources, said the investigation will allow the public and legislators to hear all sides of the issue—government proponents, stakeholders, as well as those who oppose the project.

The move supports House Resolution 1194 filed by the six-man Makabayan bloc, which directs the chamber to inquire into “the suitability and sustainability to the Manila Bay Reclamation Program” of the shoreline filling project spearheaded by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DPWH).

Those who oppose the project, lawmakers and environmental groups alike, have complained about its cost, its timing—in the middle of a pandemic—as well as health concerns over the crushed dolomite being used as overlay to the existing black sand.

Barzaga did not say when the hearings would be held, which would have to be scheduled by the House Committee on Rules, but already began defending the project.

The lawmaker said that at a budget hearing Tuesday, Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu was able to defend the project by presenting documents proving that it was aboveboard and had been a well thought-out part of the government’s rehabilitation plan for Manila Bay (see related story below -- Editors).

However, Cebu province — the source of the synthetic white sand — had banned the extraction of dolomite from the hills of Alcoy town to prevent a repeat of the landslides in 2018 that killed 77 people, a provincial government official said Wednesday.

Legal management consultant Marino Martinquilla told ABS-CBN News that Cebu officials did not give any permit and were not consulted on the dolomite mining in Alcoy, which was allowed by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau under the Environment department.

Cebu Governor Gwendolyn Garcia, who ordered a halt to the dolomite extraction on Tuesday, is hoping to avert a repeat of the landslide that claimed the lives of limestone miners and residents in Naga, Cebu, Martinquilla noted.

Garcia has also ordered a ground and aerial survey of Alcoy to determine the extent of mining in the town, he added.

Barzaga said Cimatu told lawmakers during the budget hearing that the project had been conceptualized even before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bidding for the project was done in late 2019, he said, with the execution scheduled for January 2020.

Barzaga said the biggest beneficiary for the project is the government through increased domestic and foreign tourism.



“Projects like this are necessary investment in infrastructure since they will generate more income for the government, that will, in the final tally, be able to give more benefits for the poor and those adversely affected by the pandemic,” Barzaga said

However, Deputy Speaker Bernadette Herrera questioned the priorities of the government, saying: “Before we talk about the white sand, I would rather know their plans for the sewer and water treatment of Manila Bay. Having a mini Boracay is okay if it includes the water and sewage treatment, just like Boracay.”

“The white sand should be secondary,” Herrera added.

Earlier, the leftist Makabayan bloc denounced the project as “artificial rehabilitation” that focused on aesthetics rather than addressing the environmental degradation of Manila Bay.

They said the project might destroy not only the natural ecosystem in Manila Bay but also the source of the synthetic white sand, made from crushed dolomite.

They also cited the possible health hazard posed by crushed dolomite.

During the budget hearing Tuesday, Cimatú said the effort to rehabilitate Manila Bay was in response to the writ of mandamus issued by the Supreme Court to the government to clean up the body of water.

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

Meanwhile the Department of Health (DOH) said the crushed dolomite used in Manila Bay was too large to cause any health problems.

In a statement, the department said dolomite, in its bulk state, is not a known health hazard. In its dust form, like any other dust particle, it can be an irritant that can lead to chest discomfort, shortness of breath, and coughing.

“As stated by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the dolomite material that is being used in Baywalk is 2-5 mm or 100 times bigger than dust, therefore does not get suspended in air. Moreover, occupational health and safety standards for workers, and precautionary measures for the containment of possible dust formation are being implemented,” the DOH said in a statement. Despite the criticism of the project, the DENR said it would not stop dumping crushed dolomite onto the 500-meter stretch of Manila Bay.

In an interview over radio dzBB, Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said the rehabilitation of the Manila Bay has long been overdue, and that the cease-and-desist order of Cebu Governor Garcia to stop the mining of dolomite is an internal matter between the provincial government and the mining contractor.

“There is no stopping. Work (in the area) continues,” he said.

Also on Wednesday, opposition Senator Leila De Lima slammed the DENR, saying the project to make Manila Bay look like Boracay will be done as the rest of the country is still reeling from the COVID-19 pandemic. She also said that the people are too stressed, tired, broke, and jobless to even care that the color of the sand on Manila Bay is black.

The DENR, she added, is supposed to protect the environment, not to artificially change it by creating a white sand beach where previously there was none.

She said environmentalists agree that it is not proper practice to replace the naturally occurring sand on a beach with a totally different kind of sand from another beach that is not part of the beach’s ecosystem.

“DENR’s mandate is rehabilitation, preservation and protection of our environment. It is not a beach resort developer,” said De Lima.

“Listening to Malacañang try to spin this colossal waste of public funds is both laughable and infuriating,” she added.

Source: <https://manilastandard.net/mobile/article/333763>



Regional Updates (09/08/20)

September 9, 2020 | 1:00 am

DENR's Manila Bay 'white sand' project violates at least five laws — NGOs

SEVERAL NONGOVERNMENT organizations (NGOs) claimed that the dumping of crushed dolomite or 'white sand' along the coast of Manila Bay by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) violated at least five laws that affected fisheries, biodiversity, and marine habitats. In a position paper, Oceana Philippines and other civil society groups said the DENR's project failed to comply with the Fisheries Code, the Clean Water Act, National Cultural Heritage Act, Local Government Code of 1991, and Presidential Proclamation No. 2146, which declares "certain areas and types of projects as environmentally critical." The Manila Bay is a declared national historical landmark. "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 (where the dolomite was sourced), as to its environmental impacts, thereby violating several environmental laws," the position paper states. On the other hand, Interior and Local Government Secretary Eduardo M. Año sees expressed support to the DENR. "This would not only give a nicer view but it could provide a safety buffer," he said in an interview over CNN Philippines. "What we have learned *ay hindi na siya* (is it is not) harmful," he said. Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario S. Vergeire, in a briefing on Sept. 7, said studies indicate that the inhalation of crushed dolomite may pose respiratory issues and other minor health risks to people. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave and Emmanuel Tupas/PHILSTAR**



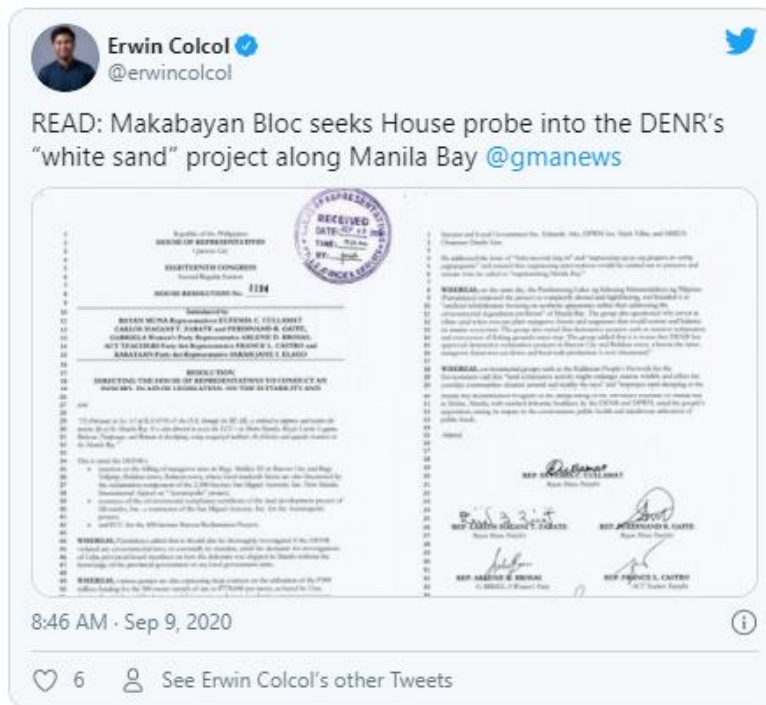
Makabayan solons seek House probe into DENR 'white sand' project along Manila Bay

Published September 9, 2020 10:07am

By ERWIN COLCOL, GMA News

The House Makabayan bloc is calling for an investigation into the controversial "white sand" project of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) along Manila Bay.

The six-member group has filed House Resolution 1194 directing the House of Representatives to conduct an inquiry into the suitability and sustainability to the Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program of the dump-filling of the Manila Bay shoreline with crushed dolomite rocks.



In their resolution, the Makabayan bloc noted the opposition of concerned members of the public to the project, as well as its impact in the environment and public health, and the "injudicious" utilization of public funds.

They pointed out that several civil and environmental organizations such as the Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas, Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment, Oceana, and Greenpeace have expressed concern over the project, noting its applicability and impact on the marine wildlife and natural ecosystem of Manila Bay.



The lawmakers also cited the opinion of some members of the academe like Professor Mahar Lagmay of the University of the Philippines (UP) Resilience Institute who questioned the sustainability of the project and its cost.

At the same time, the Makabayan bloc cited reports quoting Atty. Jay Batongbacal of the UP Institute of Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea as also raising the public health hazard of dolomite, resulting in respiratory issues and a potential carcinogen.

Batongbacal had also said that critics of the Manila Bay "white sand" project may [file a writ of kalikasan before the Supreme Court in order to stop the undertaking](#).

The lawmakers also raised the concern of various groups on the utilization of the P389 million funding for the project, which they said "could be better used for genuine and more productive component projects such as mangrove reforestation in the Manila Bay."

DENR defends project

During the budget hearing on Tuesday, Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu [defended their initiative to decorate the Manila Bay shoreline with white sand](#) using crushed dolomite rocks.

He 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.

He added that 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.

Dolomite rocks can also treat the pH level of water, from acidic to alkaline, Cimatu said.

He also disputed claims that crushed dolomite rocks are harmful when inhaled, explaining that only fine silica quartz in some dolomite in the form dust generated during crushing and screening is hazardous.

"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, 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.

Cimatu added their source of funding was a special purpose fund under the 2019 General Appropriations Act intended for the rehabilitation of Manila Bay. — **RSJ, GMA News**

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/754819/makabayan-solons-seek-house-probe-into-denr-white-sand-project-along-manila-bay/story/>



HR 1194 cited the clamor of environmental groups such as Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamalakaya ng Pilipinas, the Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment, Greenpeace and Wavefarers on the government's "artificial rehabilitation focusing on aesthetic appearance rather than addressing the environmental degradation" of Manila Bay.

It also cited the points of University of the Philippines Institute of Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea Director Jay Batongbacal about the potential health hazard that dolomite rocks may bring, such as damage to the lungs or trigger cancer due to exposure to carcinogen.

Health Spokesperson Rosario Vergeire had also said that based on medical studies, dolomite can cause irritation in the eyes, and discomfort in the gastrointestinal system, pain, and diarrhea once ingested.

Last week, Cebu provincial board members sought a probe into the extraction of dolomite rocks from their area to overlay the "white sand" along the coast line of Manila Bay for aesthetics without their information. The DENR had already defended this move, noting that [the project was done with "engineering intervention."](#)

But on Tuesday, the Cebu provincial government issued [a cease and desist order](#) against Dolomite Mining Corporation and the Philippine Mining Service Corporation in Alcoy town, the two mining firms behind the mineral extraction, to prevent them from further extracting, processing and transporting dolomite deposits.

Environmental officials earlier clarified that the budget for the dolomite extraction and transportation was only ₱28 million compared to the earlier reported ₱389 million.

The department is ready to answer to any legal actions that may be filed against it on the Manila Bay rehabilitation, officials added.



Editorial: The timing stinks

By [BusinessMirror](#)

September 9, 2020

Environmental organizations that have been calling for a genuine rehabilitation of Manila Bay were the first ones to oppose the recent dumping of artificial white sand along the shore of Manila Bay by the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). The project will create a white sand beach along a 500-meter stretch from the United States embassy to the Manila Yacht Club. Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu launched the project in January 2019 under the P389-million Manila Bay rehabilitation program. Nobody raised any objection when the project was launched.

Now that the “white sand” is here, detractors call it evil. The pandemic obviously made this kind of project seemingly “ill-conceived,” especially when so many hungry and jobless people stand to benefit from the money earmarked for the rehabilitation project. In fairness to the DENR, the word “pandemic” was not even in the vocabulary of people currently raising hell with the agency when the Manila Bay rehabilitation program was being planned.

As the world is in the middle of a health crisis, health concerns are likewise being raised because the DENR, it turned out, is not pouring white sand on Manila Bay but crushed dolomite, which is also being used as a feed additive for livestock. Department of Health 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. She clarified: “If you inhale the dust, your respiratory system will be affected. We are not saying that when you go to Manila Bay, you’ll get it at once. 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.”

Many people on social media are now saying that the Manila Bay “white sand” is harmful, based on the pronouncements of the good Health undersecretary about its potential health hazard. They completely missed her qualifying condition—that crushed dolomite can cause adverse reactions “if aerosolized and inhaled.”

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said the dolomites used to beautify the stretch of Manila Bay’s shore are safe. “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,” he said during the budget deliberation of the agency before the House committee on appropriations. Cimatu explained that the hazardous ones are the dolomite dust particles with the size of 10 to 15 microns. He pointed out that the size of the dolomites being used in Manila Bay is 2,000 to 5,000 microns or 100 times bigger than dust. “Therefore, they are not suspended in air and cannot be inhaled.”

The marine conservation group Oceana Philippines launched an online petition to stop the implementation of the Manila Bay white sand project. “We are opposed, and we want this project, a useless expenditure of public money, stopped,” said Gloria Ramos, Oceana Philippines vice president. According to the online petition, the Manila Bay white sand project allegedly violated five laws: Presidential Proclamation 2146, the amended Fisheries Code, the Clean Water Act, the National Cultural Heritage Act, and the Local Government Code.

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/09/09/editorial-the-timing-stinks/>



EDITORIAL - Daming basura sa Manila Bay

(Pang-Masa) - September 10, 2020 - 12:00am



KAHAPON, nagsagawa ng paglilinis sa dalampasigan ng Manila Bay ang mga tauhan ng Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) at sandamukal na basura ang kanilang nahakot. Pawang mga plastic na basura na hindi nabubulok ang kanilang nakuha sa baybayin. Tinangay ito ng alon sa dalampasigan. Ang mga basura ay galing sa mga bayan at probinsiya na nakapaligid sa Manila Bay. Mayroon ding galing sa mga estero sa Maynila. Kapag lumalaki ang alon na dala nang masamang panahon, lalo nang maraming basura ang dinadala sa dalampasigan.

Sa mga nakaraang taon, lalo na sa panahon ng bagyo, ang mga basura sa Manila Bay ay iniaakyat ng alon sa Roxas Blvd. Nagkalat ang basura sa nasabing kalsada na iniwasan ng mga motorista. Asahan na kapag may bagyo, ang mga itinapong basura sa Manila Bay ay ibinabalik sa pinagmulan. Kung ano ang itinapon, iyon din ang ibinabalik at mas marami pa. Sandamukal na basura ang hinahakot ng MMDA pagkatapos ng bagyo. Trak-trak ng basura ang nakukuha sa dalampasigan.

Pero sa kabila na marami pang basura na dapat alisin sa Manila Bay, mas pinrayoridad ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang paglalagay ng puting buhangin sa dalampasigan. Tuloy ang beautification project na ayon sa DENR ay noong nakaraang taon pa pinlano at ngayon na lamang naituloy. Ang proyekto ay nagkakahalaga ng P389 milyon.

Tone-toneladang buhangin na nanggaling pa sa Alcoy, Cebu ang tinambak sa dalampasigan. Ang puting buhangin ay mula sa giniling na dolemite. Ang dolemite ay isang uri ng bato na nakukuha sa kabundukan. Tinitibag ang bundok sa Alcoy at kinukuha ang bato at saka gigilingin.

Marami nang nakatambak na buhangin at sabi ng DENR tuloy ang proyekto kahit sinabi ng DOH na mapanganib sa kalusugan ang giniling na dolemite. Marami pa ang bumabatikos sa buhangin.

Nakapagbibigay ng pangamba na maaaring tangayin nang malakas na alon ang mga buhangin. Kung ang mga basura ay isinusuka at dinadala sa Roxas Blvd. kapag malakas ang bagyo, maaaring ganito rin ang mangyari sa dolemite. Mabubura ang mga ito sa dalampasigan.

Kapag nangyari ito, sayang ang P389 milyon na tinangay lamang ng alon. Sana nag-concentrate na lang muna ang DENR sa paglilinis ng basura at pinaigting ang kampanya na huwag magtapon sa Manila Bay.

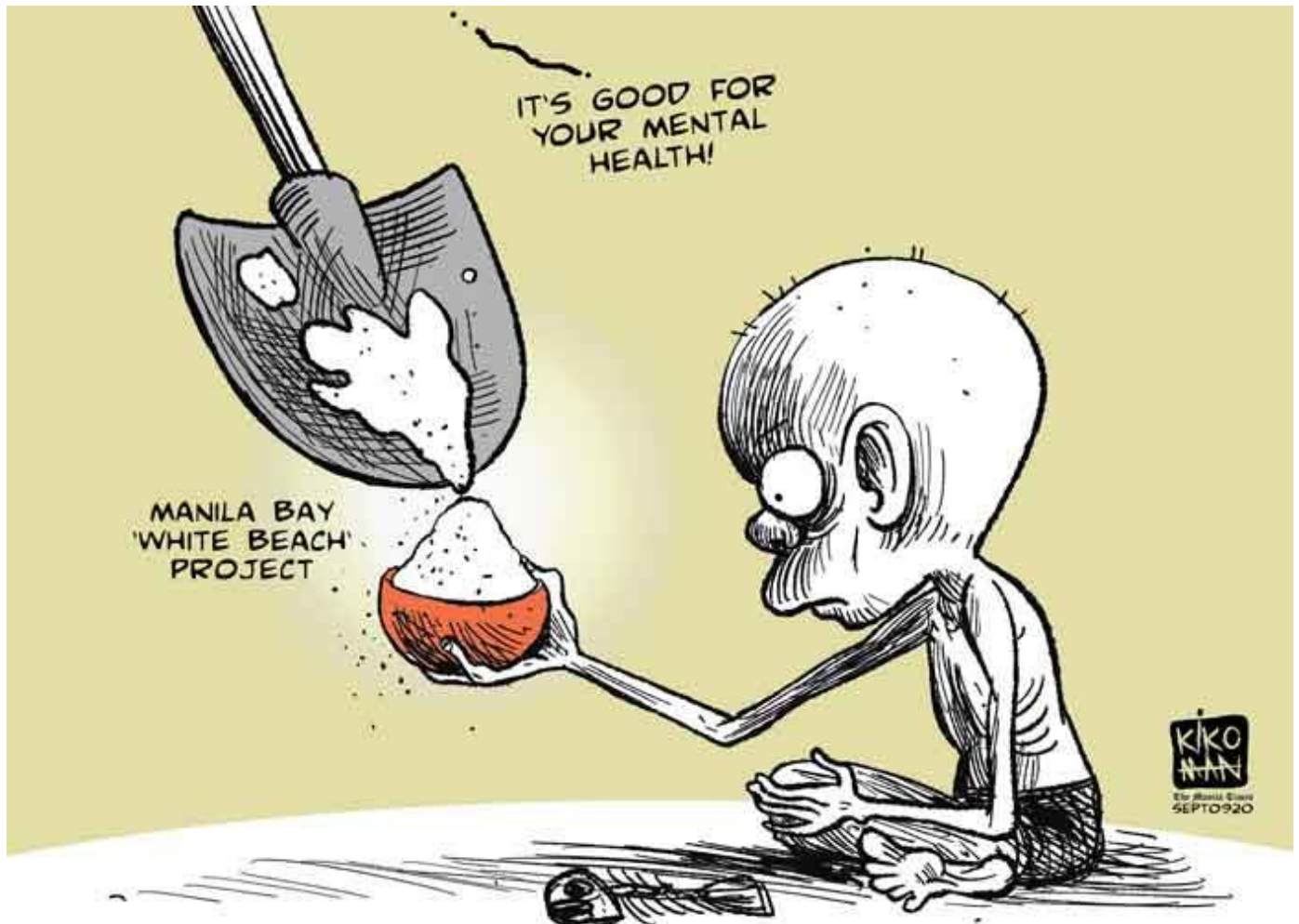
Source: <https://www.philstar.com/pang-masa/punto-mo/2020/09/10/2041383/editorial-daming-basura-sa-manila-bay/amp/>



MANILA BAY 'WHITE BEACH' PROJECT

By The Manila Times

September 9, 2020



Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/09/09/editorial-cartoons/manila-bay-white-beach-project/766456/>



Mining is the answer to PH economic woes — Barbers

Published September 9, 2020, 10:25 AM

by [Ellson Quismorio](#)

Surigao del Norte 2nd district Rep. Robert Ace Barbers believes that the latent mining sector is one of the country's potential tickets out of its COVID pandemic-induced economic slump.



Surigao del Norte 2nd district Rep. Robert Ace Barbers
(MANILA BULLETIN FILE PHOTO)

During the House Appropriations Committee's briefing on the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) budget Tuesday night, Barbers urged the agency to maintain a stable policy on mining moving forward. He said this consistency will be the key in attracting investors as far as the industry is concerned.

"I think the government must be very clear on our mining policy. If indeed this is the only way to go (to help the country in its economic turnaround), kailangan natin mag-invite ng investors, kailangan natin magkaroon ng influx of investments (we need to invite investors, we need an influx of investments). And the only way to do that is for an investor to think their investment in the country is safe, na hindi pabagu-bago yung policy (we're not fickle with our policy)," he said.

"Now is the time. Perhaps (the help of Congress) is needed to push more and ask the President to open up our mines, make sure that best practices will be implemented in the operations of these mines and enjoy the fruits of our endowment so to speak. Mr. Secretary (Roy Cimatu), kailangan ho siguro itulak natin ng husto (I think we need to push for this aggressively)," Barbers said.

Minutes earlier, DENR-Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) Director Wilfredo Moncano told the panel that the Philippines' mining potential is worth a whopping \$7 trillion.

"The mining policy of government really right now is to promote the utilization of mineral resources in the country. In fact, we have submitted to Congress the endowment potential of the country. We have about \$7 trillion (in) endowment. But this is endowment. These are minerals that are still on the ground, (they) still have to be extracted," said Moncano. Barbers said mining currently contributes less than 1 percent to the Philippines' gross domestic product. This is weak compared to Australia's 7 percent and Canada's 5 percent.

Cimatu concurred with the Mindanao lawmaker as to the huge potential of the local mining industry.

"I fully agree with the statement of Congressman Barbers. He lives in a mining province and he knows the advantage of mining these assets. Kailangan yung mining companies natin maka-contribute sa economy (Our mining companies should contribute to the economy)," he said.

The DENR chief said Congress has already paved the way for this by raising the mining excise tax to 4 percent from the previous 2 percent.



He also acknowledged that a known route for impoverished countries to become rich is to tap its natural resources. “Kuwait used to be a poor country, dependent on fishing. When they discovered oil, nag-boom ang Kuwait (Kuwait’s economy boomed).”

Barbers emphasized the importance of a consistent policy, saying the country shouldn’t open up mines one day only to shut down the following just because it encountered small challenges or problems.

“The country is now in almost about P1 trillion in debt because of COVID. All the economic stimulus that Congress passed are actually anchored on debt. Inutang ho natin yun. Ang tanong, after we recover from COVID, paano natin babayaran yun? (We borrowed that money. The question is, how are we going to pay for that once we recover from COVID?) We have to have a good and strong economy,” he said.

“We should have an industry na matibay at malakas. Dito sa Pilipinas, yun (mining) na lang ang ating pag-asa (We should have an industry that is stable and strong. And here in the Philippines, mining is our only hope),” added the solon.



DENR-9 warns public vs. illegal collection of wild plants

By Teofilo Garcia, Jr. September 9, 2020, 6:23 pm



ZAMBOANGA CITY-- The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has warned the public against the collection of wild flora from the forest--especially those considered as threatened species--without the necessary permit from the agency.

DENR-Region 9 executive director Crisanta Marlene Rodriguez said Wednesday the collection of wild flora is strictly prohibited under Republic Act 9147, otherwise known as the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act.

Rodriguez issued the warning as online selling of plants, including wild flora, flourished amid the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic.

DENR Department Administrative Order No. 2017-11, Rodriguez said, prohibited the "collection and trade of threatened species are prohibited unless such acts are covered under a permit issued by the DENR and the species found in areas under a valid tenure instrument or a parcel of land covered by a title under the Torrens System."

"Furthermore, collection of plant species within Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System (E-NIPAS) sites are strictly for research purposes and would require Gratuitous Permits issued by the DENR," she said.

Violators can face imprisonment from six to 12 years and a fine of PHP100,000 to PHP1 million the wild plants collected are classified as critically endangered, she added.

Some examples of plants considered as critically-endangered, the DENR official said, are the Giant staghorn fern or Capa de Leon (*Platycerium grande*), Staghorn fern (*Platycerium coronarium*), and the Waling-waling (*Vanda sanderiana*).

The other threatened species are the Green Velvet Alocasia (*Alocasia micholitziana*), Kris plant (*Alocasia sanderiana*) and the Zebra Plant (*Alocasia zebrina*).

Rodriguez advised flower growers and enthusiasts to secure proper permits in the collection and trade of plant species, adding she has already instructed the different DENR field offices to strengthen surveillance and monitoring of illegal plant trade.

ScienceDirect studies indicate that aside from harboring crop viruses and other pathogens, wild plants act as important reservoirs and sources of insects, mites, and nematodes.

Certain wild plant species may also be indispensable to a vector as its alternate host, acting as an essential intermediary in the ecology of the virus. **(PNA)**

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1114863>

DENR Zamboanga warns against poaching endangered plants

By [CNN Philippines Staff](#)

Published Sep 9, 2020 8:08:09 PM



As "plant parenting" becomes popular, a regional environment office warned against "plant poaching" or collecting threatened species without a permit. (FILE PHOTO)

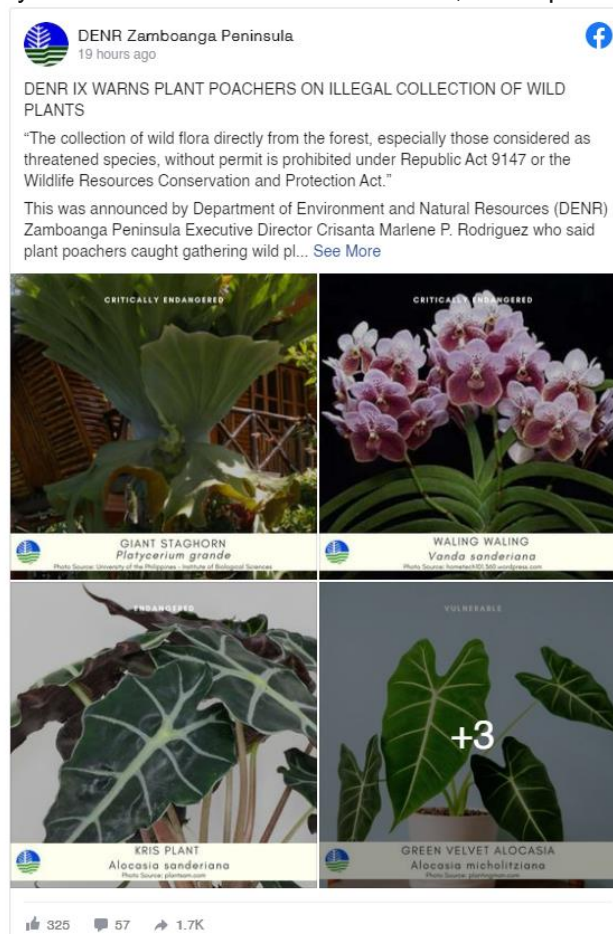
Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, September 9) — As "plant parenting" becomes popular, a regional environment office warned against "plant poaching" or collecting threatened species without a permit.

"The collection of wild flora directly from the forest, especially those considered as threatened species, without permit is prohibited under Republic Act 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act," said Crisanta Rodriguez, executive director of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in the Zamboanga Peninsula.

The department said collectors of critically endangered wild plants will be fined from ₱1,000 to ₱1,000,000 and imprisoned from six to 12 years.

Among the critically endangered plants are Giant Staghorn or Capa de Leon, Staghorn fern and the Waling-Waling, as indicated in the list under Department Administrative Order 2017-11.

Apart from a permit, the threatened flora must also be found in areas under a "valid tenure instrument" or land with a title under the "Torrens System" to allow trade and collection, the department stressed.







DENR Zamboanga Peninsula
19 hours ago

DENR IX WARNS PLANT POACHERS ON ILLEGAL COLLECTION OF WILD PLANTS

"The collection of wild flora directly from the forest, especially those considered as threatened species, without permit is prohibited under Republic Act 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act."

This was announced by Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Zamboanga Peninsula Executive Director Crisanta Marlene P. Rodriguez who said plant poachers caught gathering wild pl... See More

 <p>CRITICALLY ENDANGERED</p> <p>GIANT STAGHORN <i>Platycerium grande</i></p>	 <p>CRITICALLY ENDANGERED</p> <p>WALING WALING <i>Vanda sanderiana</i></p>
 <p>ENDANGERED</p> <p>KRIS PLANT <i>Alocasia sanderiana</i></p>	 <p>VULNERABLE</p> <p>+3</p> <p>GREEN VELVET ALOCASIA <i>Alocasia micholitziana</i></p>

325 57 1.7K



DENR-EMB REGION 10 “SEARCH FOR BEST URBAN BACKYARD GARDEN”



September 10, 2020 @ 12:24 AM 6 hours ago

ISINUSULONG ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources REGION 10 ang urban gardening bilang pantugon sa pandemya.



DENR REGION 10 PROMOTES URBAN GARDENING-Ipinagmamalaki at ipinakikita ni Environment Management Bureau Region 10 Director Reynaldo S. Digamo (kaliwang larawan) ang mga inaning pechay mula sa EMB urban garden (makikita sa kanang larawan) na matatagpuan sa EMB Compound, Barangay Puntod, Cagayan de Oro City.

Bukod sa pechay, kabilang sa kanilang mga inani ay pipino at okra na ipamamahagi sa kanilang mga empleyado bilang ayuda sa panahon ng pandemya. Ang Urban backyard gardening ng EMB Region 10 ay sinimulan bilang environmental activity kasabay ng pagdiriwang ng World Environment Day noong nakalipas na Hunyo.

Dahil sa tagumpay ng proyekto ay inilunsad ng EMB Region 10 ang region wide na programang Search for Best Urban Backyard Garden para sa indibidwal at grupo upang makatugon sa gitna ng pandemya.

Ang mga nanalo ay inanunsyo noong Agosto 30, 2020.



-ooOoo-

OATH TAKING NG MGA OPISYALES NG DOLE



PINANGASIWAAN ni Labor Secretary Silvestre H. Bello III ang panunumpa sa tungkulin ng anim na na-promote na pangunahing opisyal noong Hulyo 11, 2020, pinangunahan ni Undersecretary Benjo Santos M. Benavidez, isang dating assistant secretary.

Nasa larawan mula sa ibaba (mula kaliwa pakanan), pinanunumpa rin ang assistant secretaries na sina Ma. Teresita S. Cucueco at Philip A. Paredes. Si Maria Consuelo S. Bacay, Director ng Bureau of Labor Relations at mga director ng Overseas Workers Welfare Administration na sina Rosalia Susana A. Catapang at Jocelyn O. Hapal.



Bilang ng infectious waste na nahahakot sa mga ospital lumobo

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Sep 09 2020 06:03 PM | Updated as of Sep 09 2020 07:32 PM

Umaapaw ang push cart na tulak-tulak ng janitor na si Ruel Morales at kaniyang kasama patungo sa segregation facility sa Lung Center of the Philippines.

Ang mga basurang dala nila ay galing sa COVID-19 ward at mga pinaggamitang personal protective equipment (PPE) ng mga pasyente at health workers, pati mga gamit na heringgilya.

Ayon kay Morales, kung dating isa hanggang 2 beses lang, ngayon halos 4 na beses na ang paghakot nila ng basura sa maghapon.

Ayon sa Lung Center of the Philippines, lumobo ang dami ng kanilang infectious waste mula nang magka-pandemya.

"Five to 10 times [ang paglobo] especially among doon sa wards, which are taking care of COVID and suspect cases," ani Lung Center Spokesperson Tony Ramos.

"You don't know who is positive and negative. So every time you go to a patient, palit ka ng PPE, so next patient palit ka na naman tapos palit ka na naman."

Ayon sa Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources, umabot sa 19,000 metric tons ang dami ng medical at infectious waste mula sa health care institutions na na-record ngayong pandemya o mula Abril hanggang Hulyo.

"Definitely, there's an increase kasi, sinasabi naming siguro mga 150 percent or 200 percent," ani Geronimo Romero Sañez, chief ng hazardous waste management ng EMB.

Nababahala naman ang Greenpeace Philippines sa epekto sa kalikasan ng pagdami ng infectious waste.

Hinimok din ng Greenpace ang publiko na gumamit ng reusable PPE, tulad ng face mask na yari sa tela.

Ayon naman kay Sañez, sirain na lang ang PPE sa oras na itatapon.

Samantala, ayon sa Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases, kinakailangan na ang pagsusuot ng face shield sa lahat ng pampublikong lugar.

-- **Ulat ni Maan Macapagal, ABS-CBN News**

Source: https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/09/09/20/bilang-ng-infectious-waste-na-nahahakot-sa-mga-ospital-lumobo?fbclid=IwAR15hG8utqjpR2D97Liu3uwB86tFw4Am2UKvOHe_IQmcWvJbZXQwXC6L6t4



MMDA employees collect tons of trash along Manila Bay's coastline on Sept. 5, 2020. Danny Pata

Philippines seen to produce 16.6M metric tons of garbage by end-2020

Published September 9, 2020 9:21pm

The Philippines is projected to generate 16.6 million metric tons (MT) of trash by the end of 2020, according to Mark Salazar's report on "24 Oras."

Senator Sherwin Gatchalian said the Philippines is ranked third country in Southeast Asia for the most trash, with each individual able to generate 0.414 kilogram of waste per day.

"This means that the average Filipino adult produces between two to three times their own body weight in trash over the course of a single year," Gatchalian said.

According to Gatchalian, the 16.6 MT of trash may fill more than 23,000 swimming pools or 99 Philippine Arenas, which is one of the biggest indoor arenas in the country.

"If we continue down this current path of waste generation, the amount of solid waste we are projected to produce in 2030 is enough to fill an additional 5,435 Olympic-size swimming pools or another 24 Philippine Arenas," Gatchalian said.

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) said it uses 290 dump trucks to collect trash from only nine pumping stations every three months.

"Ang pinaka-marami po diyan, plastic. 'Yan ho 'yung nangunguna. Ngayon ho, may makikita tayong padagdag na mga mask. So 'yung mga face mask po na surgical, dumagdag po 'yan, pero hindi naman po ganoon kadami. At lalo na ho 'yung kitchen waste, 'yung mga basura ho na galing naman sa bahay," MMDA Assistant Secretary Celine Pialago said.

Gatchalian added that only 30 percent of barangays segregate the trash that they collect. Should the segregation be followed, most of the country's waste may be converted into fertilizers as they are biodegradable, 28 percent may be recycled, while 18 percent are residual waste such as sanitary napkins, he said. — **Joahna Lei Casilao/BM, GMA News**

Source: https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/754938/philippines-seen-to-produce-16-6m-metric-tons-of-garbage-by-end-2020/story/?utm_source=GMANews&utm_medium=Facebook&fbclid=IwAR1VzGQ_ZgOOR_UW9M-7RKSejV4DCNDAHgRjF14wVTYlaLLZdX5SzNFTzExA



Masungi Georeserve

9h · 🌐

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🚨 #ForestPatrol: Last week, rangers and local enforcers monitored an illegal logging activity and found these young and helpless Narra trees shamelessly cut down on a portion of the reforestation area and watershed.

Piles of buho, a type of bamboo, were also found, ready to be sold to buyers. It's heartbreaking to see that while the area is being restored on one side, deforestation happens in another. We have reported this to DENR-Rizal partners for confiscation, investigation, and filing of appropriate charges. We also continue to enhance monitoring and secure reforestation areas to prevent further damage and illegal activities, which have been on the rise since the pandemic.

This Saturday, we will host the Conservation and Enforcement Forum, where we will talk with various stakeholders and experts on the state of our forests, as well as the challenges and solutions in effectively enforcing our environmental laws on illegal logging, wildlife crime, and other forest violations. While these images can be depressing, we must never lose hope and fight for our future. 🙏 #SaveMasungi



👍👎👍 695

8 Comments 112 Shares



COA questions technicalities in Kaliwa Dam project

Published September 9, 2020, 4:44 PM

by [Ben Rosario](#)

Various technicalities, including the questionable validity of consent from tribal communities and indigenous people in Quezon province, have been raised by the Commission on Audit on the construction of a new potable water project called the New Centennial Water Source- Kaliwa Dam Project.

In the recently-released 2019 annual audit report for MWSS, COA questioned the issuance by the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System of the notice to proceed (NTP) for the detailed engineering, design and construction of the project awarded to the China Energy Engineer Company Inc..

“The expropriation of lots particularly for the right of way affected by Kaliwa Dam Project is still pending, hence considered a ground for the termination of the contract under Section 17.6 of the Revised Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Republic Act 9184 also known as the Government Procurement Reform Law,” COA said.

Auditors noted that since the contract between the MWSS and CEEC is not covered by any treaty, international or executive agreement, the provisions of RA 9184 must apply.

In accordance with RA 9184, the NTP was supposed to be issued seven calendar days from the date of approval of the contract and that upon its receipt by the contractor which is deemed to have already complied with all the requirements uprovided under the loan agreement.

Since there remains no compliance to the said requirement, the Commercial contract is considered to have not been in effect.

On the other hand, conditions for the issuance of an Environmental Compliance Certificate have yet to be complied with, thus, preventing the MWSS and CEEC to implement the project.

Among the ECC conditions is the issuance of Certificate of Precondition after the Free and prior Informed Consent that should have been obtained from cultural communities and indigenous people who will be displaced ar adversely affected by the project in the provinces of Rizal and Quezon.

“The Resolution ng Pagpayag (RP), allegedly executed by the members of the tribal groups/indigenous people’s (Ips) living within the MWSS Kaliwa Dam project site, is a requirement for the Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) and a condition precedent to the issuance of the ECC, is not compliant with the guidelines under NCIP Adminsitrative Order No. 3, s, 2012,” COA said.

The auditors stated: “Hence, (this) renders the project proponent non-compliant with the CC, and thus affects the effectivity of the Loan Agreement and the Commercial Contract.”

Audit examiners noted that the RP issued by Dumagat/Remontado tribe of General Nakar, Quezon failed to mention the names of the tribal leaders and elders who will attest to the identity of the IP members who signed the resolutoin.

Auditors also questioned discrepancies in the dates the documents were signed and the lack of notarial notice of the document.

The auditors also stressed that the “dubious/questionable character of the consent of the IP members “was bolstered during a Senate hearing on January 22, 2020, when several stakeholders and tribal groups questioned the legitimacy of the leaders who supposedly represented them in the document.

“Within these groups include residents who argued that they were neither consulted nor informed on the implementation of the project,”:COA said.



The audit agency asked MWSS to “craft a valid and proper” resolution of consent that will comply with the requirements of the National Commission for Indigenous Peoples.

In reaction, the MWSS said the issuance FPIC from affected people has been prevented by protests staged by “differing interest groups>

However, a draft MOA is already being worked out with the NCIP, the state owned water agency said.

Auditors said the failure of the MWSS to expropriate lots for the right of way is considered a ground for the termination of the contract under the law.

“The pending status of the right of way acquisitions and court proceedings for the expropriation of lots to be utilized for the dam site, treatment plants, tunnel conveyance outlet, access roads and other permanent structures can adversely affect the duration of the project,” COA said.

Reacting to the audit observation, the MWSS said the community quarantine situation triggered by the COVID 19 pandemic has caused the delay in the expropriation proceedings.

Further, MWSS officials disagreed with the audit findings, saying that being a design and Build Contract, it is exempted from the provisions of RA 9184.



In bid to protect a Philippine pangolin stronghold, little talk of enforcement

by **Keith Anthony Fabro** on 9 September 2020



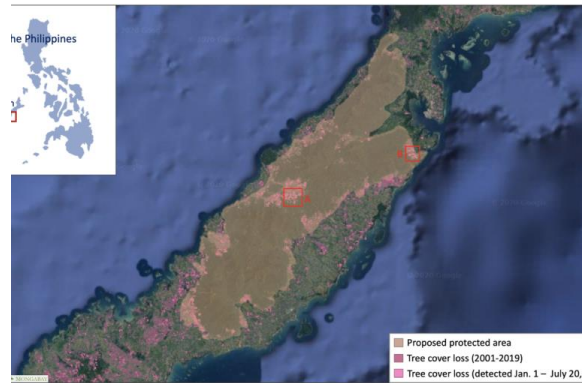
- Provincial and municipal authorities on the Philippine island of Palawan are drawing up management plans aimed at boosting protection for the Victoria-Anepahan Mountain Range, a key habitat of the Philippine pangolin.
- The 165,000-hectare (408,000-acre) is not a formally protected area, and suffers from deforestation driven by illegal logging, as well as massive poaching and illegal trade of its wildlife, including pangolins.
- The critically endangered Philippine pangolin (*Manis culionensis*), found only in Palawan, is one of the most trafficked animals on Earth, with its population declining by up to 95% between 1980 and 2018.
- Critics of the management plan say it will be a bureaucratic waste of resources without efforts to step up enforcement measures to curb the illegal trade of pangolins and other wildlife in the mountain range.

PALAWAN, Philippines — At the heart of the island province of Palawan in the western Philippines, a verdant mountain range larger than Bangkok stands like a natural bulwark. It's a known refuge of the critically endangered Philippine pangolin, but like the docile anteater, this biodiversity haven is under constant threat from deforestation.

Forest loss in the Victoria-Anepahan Mountain Range (VAMR), which spans 165,000 hectares (408,000 acres), is driven primarily by illegal logging and clearing for farmland, according to recent satellite data from Global Forest Watch (GFW). This trend has continued despite the country's pandemic lockdown.

"VAMR remains a de facto open access due to the absence of a coherent and actively operating management plan," Roger Garinga, executive director of the Palawan-based nonprofit IDEAS, which promotes good environmental governance, tells Mongabay. This, he says, is the reason why human activities proliferate in VAMR's natural forests, home to the Philippine pangolin (*Manis culionensis*), known locally as *balintong*.

Illegal logging still occurs in Palawan despite a ban imposed since 1991. Between 2001 and 2019, the province lost 152,000 hectares (375,600 acres) of tree cover, an area nearly the size of London, according to GFW data. The island has lost 13% of its tree cover since 2000, when 74% of the land, or more than a million hectares (2.47 million acres), was covered in natural forest.



The proposed Victoria-Anepahan Mountain Range protected area. Image created through Global Forest Watch.

The link between habitat loss and the survival of the Philippine pangolin is the subject of a report published earlier this year by the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD) and funded by USAID's Protect Wildlife project. "Habitat destruction, degradation and conversion are issues that did not spare VAMR," says lead researcher Sabine Schoppe, also the program director of Palawan Pangolin Conservation Project run by the nonprofit Katala Foundation Inc. (KFI).

[Poaching of pangolins](#) and wildlife in general, as well as mining, quarrying, logging and rattan collection, were identified as "threats that have a directly negative impact on pangolins in VAMR." Production of charcoal, gathering of non-timber forest products, and *kaingin* or slash-and-burn farming, add to the pressure on pangolin and other native wildlife.

"The higher the threat, the lower the pangolin abundance," Schoppe says in an email to Mongabay. A leading expert on the Philippine pangolin and member of the IUCN Species Survival Commission's (IUCN SSC) Pangolin Specialist Group, Schoppe says their correlation analysis shows that "pangolin abundance was lower in the west coast sites as a probable consequence of higher threats compared to the east coast."

The mountain range straddles 31 barangays, or wards, in Puerto Princesa, the Palawan capital, and the southern provincial towns of Aborlan, Narra and Quezon. The mountain range lies between Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park and Mount Mantalingahan Protected Landscape, both conservation areas. But VAMR doesn't enjoy the same level of protection afforded to those neighboring sites.



*A Philippine pangolin (*Manis culionensis*) mother and baby. This species of pangolin, like the Chinese pangolin, is listed as critically endangered on the IUCN Red List. Image by Gregg Yan*

"VAMR is the only remaining area in mainland Palawan that needs cohesive and collaborative action in terms of protection, conservation and management," says John Vincent Fabello, a spokesman for the PCSD.



This lack of protection measures for VAMR has resulted in a decline in the pangolin population, conservationists say. Pangolins, of which there are eight species in Asia and Africa, are the world's most trafficked mammal, with their scales prized for use in traditional Chinese medicine — despite a lack of proven medicinal value — and their meat considered a delicacy in many regions.

The wild population of the Philippine pangolin is estimated to have declined by 85% to 95% between 1980 and 2018 due to this demand from China and Vietnam. Conservationists say the species “is likely less able to sustain exploitation from illegal hunting and poaching” due to its “restricted range and likely small population size compared with other pangolin species,” according to the IUCN pangolin assessment report released last year

The Philippine pangolin has been on the country's protected species list since 2004, and on CITES Appendix I since 2017, along with the seven other pangolin species. Theoretically this means there's a ban on the international trade in the species, but trafficking continues, with around 895,000 pangolins from the various species traded globally in the past two decades.

The IUCN, which lists the Philippine pangolin as critically endangered, has indicated its population could decline by at least 80% over the next two decades, given the current threats.



Frozen Philippine Pangolins intended for the wild meat black market were seized in Palawan on 28th July 2018. Image courtesy of TRAFFIC

“There isn't a lot of data on pangolin populations in the Philippines, and the impact of exploitation of populations, so the assessors took a precautionary approach,” IUCN Pangolin Specialist Group chair Dan Challender tells Mongabay. “This is based on the species being threatened by exploitation, and in particular, overexploitation from hunting and poaching, which evidence indicates is increasingly for illicit, international trade, [in] addition to domestic trade and use.”

Threats to the species are compounded by its limited geographic distribution, human encroachment into its natural habitat, and persistently weak law enforcement. Saving the Philippine pangolin is made extra challenging due to its increasing rarity, and elusive, solitary and nocturnal nature. These roadblocks explain why there's also a dearth of research on its population densities or abundance, a gap that Schoppe and other wildlife scientists are trying to fill in.

PCSD's USAID-funded study covered 2,400 hectares (5,930 acres) of survey areas within VAMR and paints a grim outlook for pangolins: from 2018 to 2019, Schoppe's group spotted only 17 individual pangolin: 11 adults, a mother with her infant, and five juveniles. In all 12 study sites, the chance to see a pangolin was slim: only 0.5 adult specimens per square kilometer. This is lower than the 2.5 adults per square kilometer recorded at six sites that the Katala Foundation surveyed five to six years earlier.



“Whether this implies a decline over time or is related to geographical preferences of the species remains to be assessed,” Schoppe says. The highest number encountered in just one site was five adults. “KFI continues surveys to obtain a better idea of the remaining wild populations.”



Pangolins are widely eaten in many parts of West and Central Africa. Image by Eric Freyssinge via Wikicommons CC BY SA 4.0

What’s most needed now to safeguard the wild pangolin populations is the declaration of protected areas or local conservation areas, conservationists say. But designating ecologically important highland habitats as such isn’t enough without an active forest patrolling system established through a management plan, Schoppe says.

“To implement a functioning wardening scheme, a management scheme needs to be placed and [with] funds available to pay incentives and supplies and materials of the wildlife enforcement officers,” she says. “Law enforcement and awareness raising need to go hand in hand with in-situ [or on-site] conservation measures.”

Multisector collaboration

PCSD, researchers, local governments and nonprofits have been working for nearly five years now on VAMR’s conservation, protection and sustainable management, all with the goal of eventually declaring the area a critical habitat.

They’ve opted for a multijurisdictional approach to coordinate local municipal governments’ “shared responsibility and commitment to protect, conserve and manage the area with corresponding budget allocation,” Fabello says. “This arrangement can migrate to critical habitat or probably PA [protected area] later on, but the process involved in the latter is tedious and the management body is limited only to a national agency.”

Under this arrangement, the local governments responsible will sign a memorandum of agreement on the creation of an independent management and planning council to be chaired by the Palawan governor, Jose Alvarez, and with members including city and town mayors, representatives from PCSD, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), NGOs and researchers.





Images showing forest loss (in pink tiles) within the Victoria-Anepahan Mountain Range (VAMR), the stronghold of the Philippine pangolins in Palawan, Philippines. Image created through Global Forest Watch

The council says it will “institute appropriate plans, policies, programs, and strategies to achieve the desired socio-economic development and environmental protection and restoration of VAMR.” An annual contribution of at least 1 million pesos (\$20,600) from each of the four local governments involved will be pooled together to fund the management center’s operations.

“[This] MOA [seeks] to ensure shared responsibility and accountability because it defines clear responsibilities and obligations even financially,” Fabello says. “Involving [local governments] is very necessary to strengthen governance.”

Ancestral domains, land recognized under the Philippine law as belonging to Indigenous peoples, make up 136,007 hectares (336,081 acres), or 83% of the entire VAMR. “It is but logical to have the tribes as key players in the management of the ecosystem of the VAMR,” says Garinga from IDEAS, whose group promotes sustainable forest livelihoods. In the past, Indigenous communities backed by environmental groups were at loggerheads with the government over development initiatives that took place in tribal areas without consent.

This time around, civil society and Indigenous peoples will play an active role in managing the forested area, Fabello says. Ancestral domain titles and claims “will be respected and included in the management plan as well as other areas within the VAMR with legal instruments,” he says.

Palawan, touted as the Philippines’ last ecological frontier, hosts 38% of the country’s known wildlife species, many of which are found nowhere else on Earth. VAMR alone is home to 20 endemic species, including the Philippine pangolin. “These endemics will receive an extra layer of protection within the purview of VAMR,” Fabello says.



A baby Philippine pangolin (Manis culionensis). Photo by Gregg Yan

New scheme 'not needed'

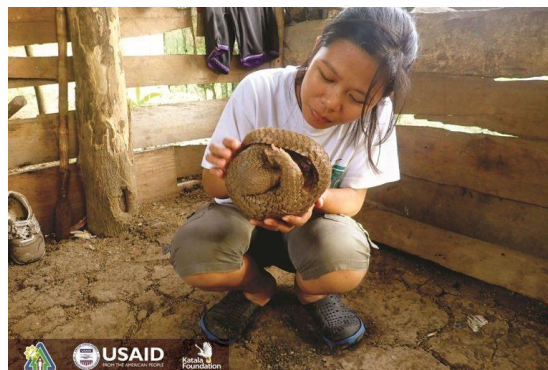
The Palawan NGO Network Inc. (PNNI), while part of the VAMR technical working group, says turning the site into a protected area won't solve an age-old problem: "The problem in VAMR is plain: no one is enforcing," executive director Robert Chan tells Mongabay. "We don't need a new instrument, we don't need a new mechanism, and we don't need a new body to protect our remaining forests."

Chan, an environmental lawyer, says Palawan is already "replete [with] law enforcement" in the form of PCSD, DENR, and the various agencies under the municipal and provincial governments. "We just need all of them to do their job of enforcing forestry laws instead of creating another body to conveniently pass responsibility," he says.

Despite operating on a shoestring budget of donations, Chan's group has long been active in anti-logging campaigns throughout Palawan. Philippine law allows citizen's arrest, and through this PNNI has seized around 30 unregistered chainsaws from loggers in the past three years in VAMR alone.

"If we in civil society can do it independent of any of them and without resorting to any existing MOA, we don't see why they need to spend so much time, effort and funds on a new body that most likely will engage in much talk, meetings and planning with nary an enforcement operation," Chan says.

PCSD's Fabello declined to comment on Chan's remarks, but says the agreement signing that was supposed to have taken place in the first half of 2020 has been put on hold.



A member of the pangolin field research team of the Katala Foundation conducts a ground survey in the Victoria-Anepahen Mountain Range in Palawan Province, an important habitat for biodiversity and endemic Palawan pangolins / Courtesy of the USAID Protect Wildlife project

'Time is running out'

The coronavirus pandemic has left local authorities across the Philippines struggling to shore up health care systems that were straining even before the outbreak.

These include the municipal governments that have committed to the VAMR conservation initiative but have yet to sign the agreement. That's left pangolin conservationists worried. "We cannot continue to allow poachers and traffickers to operate unchallenged in this key biodiversity area" Emerson Sy, a researcher with the wildlife trade monitoring network TRAFFIC, tells Mongabay.

"The pandemic resulted in refocusing of priorities and reallocation of resources," he says. "However, we have to remember that inappropriate exploitation of wildlife is the prime suspect that caused this pandemic."



Even as lockdown measures limit people's movements, poaching and the illegal trade have persisted. From January to March this year, authorities seized 20 Philippine pangolins from an alleged trafficker in Palawan; they made three more seizures of smuggled pangolins in Luzon, according to a [new TRAFFIC study](#) released in August.

From 2000 to 2019, a documented [7,634 Philippine pangolins were seized](#) from traffickers across the country, the study says. The vast majority, 90%, were seized in the period 2018-2019, indicating a surge of trafficking efforts during the past two years. The report doesn't distinguish whether the pangolins originated from VAMR or from other populations in northern Palawan.



Poached pangolins in a trafficker's facility in El Nido, Palawan. Image courtesy of TRAFFIC

Among the greatest challenges in curbing pangolin trafficking is the lack of investigations, few successful arrests and prosecutions, and relatively lenient penalties ranging from two to 12 years in prison and/or 5,000 to 1 million pesos (\$103 to \$20,600) in fines, according to Sy and study co-author Kanitha Krishnasamy.

"If you can choose among saving habitats that are still intact and species where they still occur in viable numbers over habitat rehabilitation and re-introduction, conservation practitioners clearly go for conservation and protection," says Schoppe, who wasn't part of the TRAFFIC study. In fact, Katala Foundation data indicate that actively protected areas have more pangolins. "Therefore, we need to act and protect VAMR resources while they are still in good conditions and pangolins present in the area," Schoppe says.

But as local governments and their various agencies put off institutionalizing VAMR's governance and management structure, Palawan's pangolins are left vulnerable. The largest ever seizure in the Philippines involved 1,154 kilograms (2,545 pounds) of pangolin scales, or the equivalent of at least 3,900 pangolins, and took place in Palawan's capital, Puerto Princesa, in September last year.

"Time is running out for the endemic and critically endangered Philippine pangolin," Sy says, echoing calls by local conservationists to safeguard VAMR. "The first critical step is to provide on-site protection by putting in place a management plan. Unless we get our acts together, we might witness its extinction in this century."

Banner image of a Philippine pangolin (Manis culionensis). Photo courtesy of Katala Foundation.

Source: <https://news.mongabay.com/2020/09/in-bid-to-protect-a-philippine-pangolin-stronghold-little-talk-of-enforcement/>



Nestlé PH recovers plastic waste equivalent to plastic in its packaging in August

Nestlé

Posted at Sep 09 2020 04:02 PM

In January 2019, Nestlé globally articulated its broader vision for a waste-free future - so that none of its packaging, including plastics, ends up in landfills and oceans, or as litter.

Just over a year and a half later, Nestlé Philippines Chairman and CEO Kais Marzouki announced that the company has reached its latest milestone in pursuit of that vision by achieving plastic neutrality for August 2020.

"As an urgent initiative, Nestlé Philippines has succeeded in collecting and diverting from landfills and oceans the amount of plastic equivalent to what we generated from our packaging last August, thus making us plastic neutral," Marzouki said. The company recovered 2,400 metric tons of plastic waste in that month.

"Nestlé Philippines is the first multinational fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) company in the country to attain plastic neutrality as of August, and we commit to doing so every month," said Marzouki. The company manufactures brands including BEAR BRAND, MILO, NESCAFÉ, COFFEE MATE, MAGGI, NIDO, and CHUCKIE.

The leakage of plastics into the oceans has become a pressing issue and in a major measure to address it, Nestlé Philippines aims to recover the same amount of plastic that it generates in its packaging every month.

Nestlé Philippines has expanded its collaboration with other stakeholders, applied key lessons learned from its pilot programs, and allocated appropriate resources. With the help of partners who share its vision of a waste-free future, such as Republic Cement, CEMEX Holdings Philippines, Plastic Credit Exchange, and Pure Oceans, the company commits to maintaining neutrality.

Accelerating the journey with its firsts

Globally, Nestlé is committed to making its packaging, including plastics, 100% recyclable or reusable by 2025. In pursuing this commitment, the company is taking a holistic approach to address the complex and urgent issue of plastic waste.

The plastic waste collected is co-processed in cement kilns. Co-processing is a waste management method by which waste materials are processed at a very high temperature and used as an alternative fuel. It is authorized by local environmental laws and regulations.

Nestlé is accelerating its initiatives across three focus areas: (1) developing the packaging for the future, through packaging and delivery innovation and plastic reduction; (2) helping to shape a waste-free future through increased collection and recycling; and (3) driving new behaviors and understanding through solid waste management education.

Under the three focus areas, Marzouki cited the first-ever accomplishments of Nestlé Philippines in tackling plastic waste:

1. The country's first food and beverage company to shift to paper straws.

Nestlé Philippines is identifying alternative materials to make its packaging more sustainable. An equally important milestone is its full transition to the use of paper straws in its locally manufactured ready-to-drink or RTD products that will eliminate the use of 130 metric tons of plastic straws by the end of the year.

2. The country's first citywide soft plastic waste collection project.

In June 2019, Nestlé Philippines piloted *May Balik! Sa Plastik! (MBSP)* that recovered post-consumer sachets, used beverage cartons, and other soft plastics, in partnership with Valenzuela City. In a significant achievement, the project successfully put a tangible value to soft plastic waste, which previously had no worth;



3. The country's first solid waste management (SWM) education modules to be rolled out in over 10,000 public schools nationwide.

Information, education, and communication on solid waste management are important in achieving the goal of a waste-free future. Thus, Nestlé Philippines has developed SWM modules integrated into its Nestlé Wellness Campus program. The modules can be used by Grades 1 to 10 students.

Nestlé Philippines Chairman and CEO Kais Marzouki (left) and Republic Cement President and CEO Nabil Francis (right) at the Republic Cement plant in Norzagaray, Bulacan, a site where plastic waste is co-processed.

In other initiatives, Nestlé Philippines has started to shift its plastic packaging to materials designed for recycling, piloted refilling stations, and is upcycling waste plastic laminates into school chairs.

Supporting effective EPR mechanisms

"Achieving plastic neutrality is only one step and only one part of our journey to achieve a waste-free future. We believe that to build a system that seeks to eliminate waste and enable continuous use of resources, all plastic producers and importers must assume responsibility for post-consumer waste within the comprehensive framework of a mandatory Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme," said Marzouki.

EPR is the environmental policy approach in which a producer's responsibility for a product is extended to the post-consumer stage of a product's life cycle. Nestlé Philippines supports the design and implementation of affordable and effective EPR mechanisms.

"Together with other stakeholders, we continue to accelerate our journey to a waste-free future as we tackle the plastic waste challenge, mindful of its urgency," he concluded.

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FACEBOOK 8 BESES NA MAS MAYAMAN SA PHIL. GOV'T



September 9, 2020 @ 4:03 PM 15 hours ago

ANG daming kwento sa buong mundo nang dumating ang pandemyang nilikha ng coronavirus disease-19.

Very bad news ang pagkakaroon na ng mahigit 901,000 patay sa COVID-19 at halos 28 milyong may impeksyon na may 7 milyong aktibong kaso rito.

Very bad news din ang pagbagsak ng ekonomiya ng halos lahat ng bansa, kasama na ang Singapore at Estados Unidos na kabilang sa pinakamayayamang bansa sa mundo.

At siyempre pa, damay rin ang mahal kong Pinas gaya ng alam na nating lahat.

Pero may mga hindi nadamay sa krisis dulot ng pandemya at sa halip, kumita at kumikita pa ng limpak-limpak na salapi o kayamanan.

Walang iba kundi ang technology companies gaya ng Microsoft, Apple, Facebook, Google at Amazon na tinatawag na Big 5 sa technology companies sa buong mundo.

P5 TRILYON NA ANG HALAGA

Batay sa mga ulat sa mga araw na ito, ang Big 5 tech company na ito ay may kabuuan nang market value na \$5 trilyon mula sa mahigit lang na \$4 trilyon nitong nakaraang taon.

Silipin natin ang rekord ng Statista noong 2019.

Nanguna ang Microsoft sa halagang 1.007T; sumunod ang Amazon – \$888 bilyon; Apple – \$875B; Alphabet na mother company ng Google – \$741B at Facebook – \$495B.

Nitong Hulyo lang na ika-7 buwan ng 2020, kumamada ang Apple ng \$1.6T na market value; Microsoft – \$1.5T; Amazon – \$1.4T; Alphabet – \$1T at Facebook – \$690B.

Nitong Agosto-Setyembre, umabot na sa \$2T ang market value ng Apple.

Ayon sa mga sumusubaybay sa mga ito, ang halaga ng limang kompanya ay mas malaki na sa halaga ng buong stock market ng Japan.



Kaugnay nito, ang pambansang badyet ng Pinas, mahigit lang sa P4.1T ang para sa 2020.

Kung kukwentahin natin ito laban sa market value na P34.5T ng Facebook na pinakamaliit sa Big 5, alam ba ninyo na mahigit 8 beses na mas mayaman ito sa gobyerno ng Pinas?

Ganyan kalalaki ang mga kompanyang ito na may kontrol sa teknolohiya sa buong mundo.

At pawang pag-aari ng mga Kano ang mga kompanyang ito.

KUMITA SILA SA PANDEMYA

Simple lang naman ang paliwanag kung bakit lumundag ang kayamanan ng mga ito.

Nang umatake ang pandemya at pinairal ang mga lockdown, naparalisa ang mga gobyerno at tumigil ang ekonomiya ng mundo at galaw ng tao.

Ang paggamit ng teknolohiya ang kinapitan ng mga gobyerno, negosyante at tao para makapagpatuloy sila ng operasyon at makagalaw.

‘Yun bang === gumamit ang mga gobyerno, negosyante at tao ng mga cellphone, kompyuter, tablet, laptop at iba pang gadget, internet at kauri ng mga ito.

Maging ang Department of Education natin na pinakikilos ang nasa 25 milyong titser at estudyante ngayon, nakadepende rin sa teknolohiya na negosyo ng tech companies na ito.

At ang Big 5 ay halos may monopolyo sa mga produkto at serbisyong teknolohiya.

Dito sila kumita at kumikita pa hanggang ngayon.

Kumikita sila sa lahat ng bansa na sila ang mga hari sa teknolohiya, maging sa mahal kong Pinas.

BINUBUWISAN SILA NGAYON

Dahil kumikita sila sa lahat ng bansang doon sila nag-o-operate, naisipan na ng iba’t ibang bansa ang magpataw na buwis sa kanilang kita sa produkto at serbisyo.

May nagpataw ng 9 hanggang 20 porsyentong value added tax o iba pang uri ng pambubuwis.

Sa Southeast Asia, ang bansang Indonesia ang nagpataw na ng buwis sa lahat ng tech company na nag-o-operate roon.

Noong una, binuwisan na ang Google Asia Pacific, Netflix at Facebook.

Ngayon, isinama na ang Skype Communications, Zoom Video Communications, antivirus provider McAfee Ireland, Microsoft Ireland Operations, LinkedIn Singapore, Twitter, Shopee International Indonesia, Jingdong Indonesia Pertama na katulad ng Shoppee, streaming platforms na Novi Digital Entertainment at PCCW Vuclip (Singapore) at game developer na Mojang AB.

Ang mga bansang Turkey, France, Italy, United Kingdom, Austria at iba pang bansang Europeo ay nagpataw na rin ng buwis.



Pinagbubuwis ang mga tech company para naman magkaroon ng karagdang pondo ang mga pamahalaan lalo ngayong halos bagsak ang lahat ng pamahalaan at klaro namang kumikita ang mga nasabing kompanya.

PUMAPALAG

Hangga't maaari, ayaw pumayag ang mga tech company na magbuwis dahil higit umanong napakikinabangan ng lahat ang kanilang mga produkto at serbisyo kaysa sa pakinabangan nila rito.

Pero malinaw na malinaw na kumikita sila ng limpak-limpak na salapi sa kanilang negosyo.

At inaagaw pa ng mga tech company ang pinagkakakitaan ng mga diaryo na advertisement.

Simula nang umiral ang internet, marami nang kompanya ang nagpapa-advertise sa mga gumagamit ng tekono-lohiya gaya halimbawa Facebook, Google, Instagram, Twitter at iba pa at dito nagkakandalugi na rin ang mga diaryo, radio at telebisyon.

Isang tanong, mga Bro, ano naman kaya ang ginagawa ng ating pamahalaan ukol sa pambubuwis sa mga tech company?



Cynthia Villar and land conversion

By Antonio Contreras

September 10, 2020

SEN. Cynthia Villar has categorically refuted claims made by many that converting agricultural land into subdivisions and malls has negative impacts. She boldly stated that such claims are patently wrong.

Villar is the chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture. But it is also a fact that she is the matriarch of a family that has made a fortune from converting lands, many of which are agricultural, to subdivisions and malls.

At the outset, indeed it can be claimed that land conversion is not necessarily bad, more so if the current land is unproductive, and its proposed use will optimize its productive contribution to the economy. Certainly, an idle unirrigated land contributes very little to the economy, and there is reason to convert it to a mall or a factory which can generate more income and employment, or to subdivisions to provide homes and support the convenience of productive people.

Anyone familiar with socioeconomic cost benefit analysis would know the principle of opportunity costs, where a certain action or policy is deemed to be beneficial to an economy if it would add to the current supply of real resources in the form either of contributions to employment and income, or savings. The opportunity cost of any given land is its current productivity, and hence if it is shown that the proposed alternative land use will have a higher productivity, then such benefit will outweigh the opportunity cost, which is by definition a cost foregone if the land resource is used differently.

The analysis can also involve savings, particularly if the current land use is in fact drawing more resources away from the economy, and the proposed land use will not only contribute to higher incomes but will also even save the economy from spending resources to sustain its present land use. Using this as the frame of analysis, a piece of agricultural land that is marginal and thus earns very little, and where government spends a lot for social support services in the form of irrigation, would definitely have a lower opportunity cost compared to if the land were to be converted into another land use that would generate more revenues to the economy. In the end, lands devoted to agricultural production where we are spending more resources to sustain, and therefore where we have very little comparative advantage, and where it would be cheaper for us to simply import, would be ripe for land conversion.

This is where Senator Villar is coming from. Theoretically, the science of resource economics appears to be on her side.

However, the calculations of aggregate economic benefits and costs is not just about efficiency, or that where costs are outweighed by benefits measured as reduction and increases in the supply of real resources in the economy, respectively. Resource economics must be balanced by welfare and institutional economics, and efficiency must consider the imperatives of equity and social justice. The bigger issue is that there are gainers and losers in any land conversion.

Land developers and owners of real estate enterprises, like Villar, are gainers, in addition to those who will benefit from the conversion of agricultural lands into malls, factories and subdivisions. This, even as farmers and their families are the losers.



We cannot simply turn the lives of these farmers into a mere entry in the ledger of resources gained and lost by the economy, considering that these are real people's lives. Turning them into construction workers to help Villar and other land developers build their malls and subdivisions may not necessarily be in their best interest. They may not even possess the needed skills and educational attainment to become part of the malls' labor force. And certainly, farmers cannot afford to live in the gated communities that now replace their farmlands. At best, their wives and children end up as domestic helpers, and they become drivers, janitors and utility workers.

Of course, Villar and others will argue that these transformations in the labor economy is also better if it leads to higher income productivity. It can also serve as a push factor that would pressure marginal farmers to become part of a higher-paid labor force, now benefiting from social security and other benefits that agricultural workers usually do not enjoy.

However, what is missed here is the fact that these farmers are being denied their sense of autonomy as economic agents, and they become prey to the global liberalization of economics where we opted to submit to the global forces of commodity supply and demand, instead of modernizing our agriculture. Other countries like Vietnam and Thailand invested in modernizing their agriculture. We, on the other hand, would rather have what Villar is propagating — convert our agricultural lands, transform our agricultural labor into factory workers and OFWs, and feast on cheaper imported agricultural products where apples are cheaper than local fruits.

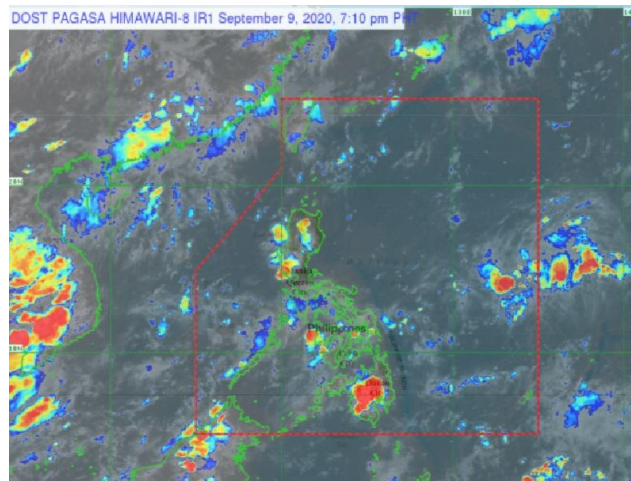
And then there are the environmental costs of land conversion that Villar fails to fully appreciate. It is not just manifested in the loss of biodiversity. The case of the Sta. Rosa basin in Laguna — where there was massive agricultural land conversion over the years — is illustrative of how converting natural landscapes into built environments can lead to a water crisis. Natural aquifers are no longer efficiently recharged by rainfall due to reduced absorptive capacity of the soil. Land development has increased the surface area of cemented and paved landscapes preventing rainwater to seep naturally into the aquifers, thereby increasing surface runoff that even aggravate the flooding of coastal towns and barangay near Laguna de Bay. Meanwhile, the demand for water has dramatically increased not only from malls and subdivisions which people like Villar helped build, but from the water-thirsty factories that have their own deep wells. The specter of a water crisis is looming.

Clearly, Cynthia Villar should really conduct more research before she calls out as wrong those who oppose agricultural land conversion.



Isang LPA, namataan sa loob ng bansa – PAGASA

By Angellic Jordan September 09, 2020 - 07:29 PM



Binabantayan na ng PAGASA ang isang namataang low pressure area (LPA) sa loob ng Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR).

Ayon kay PAGASA weather specialist Chris Perez, huling namataan ang LPA sa layong 895 kilometers Silangang bahagi ng Southern Luzon.

Wala pa aniyang direktang epekto ang LPA sa anumang parte ng bansa.

Sinabi pa nito na maliit pa ang tsansa na lumakas ito at maging isang bagyo.

Samantala, Intertropical Convergence Zone o ITCZ naman aniya ang magdudulot ng posibleng isolated thunderstorm sa buong Palawan, Visayas at Mindanao.

Miyerkules ng gabi, sinabi ng weather bureau na asahan ang maulap na kalangitan na may pulo-pulong pag-ulan, pagkidlat at pagkulog sa Bicol region at Eastern Visayas.



CO2 makes trees live fast and die young: study

Published September 9, 2020, 6:48 AM

by [Agence France-Presse](#)

Trees that grow quickly die younger, risking a release of carbon dioxide that challenges forecasts that forests will continue to be a “sink” for planet-warming emissions, scientists said Tuesday.

Tree cover absorbs a significant proportion of carbon dioxide emitted by burning fossil fuels and plays a crucial role in projections for our ability to wrestle down CO2 levels.

Researchers said current climate models expect forests to continue to act as a carbon sink through this century, with high temperatures and concentrations of CO2 thought to stimulate tree growth and so help them absorb more carbon as they mature quicker.

But in the study, led by England’s Leeds University and published in the journal Nature Communications, they warned that this faster growth was also linked to trees dying younger — suggesting increases in the role of forests as carbon storage may be “short lived”.

The researchers examined more than 200,000 tree-ring records from tree species across the globe and found that trade-offs between growth and lifespans occurred in almost all of them, including tropical trees.

Society has benefitted from the increasing ability of forests to soak up carbon in recent decades, said co-author Steve Voelker, from the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry, in a Leeds University statement.

But these CO2 uptake rates are “likely to be on the wane as slow-growing and persistent trees are supplanted by fast-growing but vulnerable trees”, he added.

“Our findings, very much like the story of the tortoise and the hare, indicate that there are traits within the fastest growing trees that make them vulnerable, whereas slower growing trees have traits that allow them to persist,” he said.

The researchers said the findings suggest that the chances of dying increase dramatically as trees reach their maximum potential size.

But they said it might also be that fast-growing trees invest less in defences against diseases or insect attacks, or are more vulnerable to drought.

Earth’s average surface temperature has risen just over one degree Celsius above pre-industrial levels, enough to boost the severity of droughts, heatwaves and superstorms made more destructive by rising seas.

– Sink or source? –

Commenting on the study David Lee, professor of atmospheric Science, at England’s Manchester Metropolitan University, said Earth system climate models currently predict the carbon storage of forests to continue or increase.

“This study shows the opposite, that increased CO2 compromises forests as a carbon sink,” he said.

That suggests the idea that “fossil-fuel based emissions can be ‘offset’ by planting trees (or avoiding deforestation) really does not stand up to scientific scrutiny”, he added.



But Keith Kirby, woodland ecologist at the University of Oxford, said it was not necessarily the case that forests would reverse their carbon role.

“We cannot rely as much on increased growth per unit area to maintain and enhance the forest carbon sink potential, but this might be offset by slowing deforestation and increasing the expansion of the extent of forests where this can be done in a sustainable way,” he said.

Global forests — and especially the tropics — soak up 25 to 30 percent of the planet-warming CO₂ humanity spews into the atmosphere.

Last year, a football pitch of primary, old-growth trees was destroyed every six seconds, about 38,000 square kilometres (14,500 square miles) in all, according to Global Forest Watch.