

14 SEPTEMBER 2020, MONDAY



**DENR**

# **NEWS ALERTS**

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**



# Cimatu answered the issues on dolomites

By [Valeriano Avila](#)(The Freeman) - September 14, 2020 - 12:00am

For our special presentation on our talk show "Straight from the Sky" we bring you updates of the Cebu-Cordova Link Expressway (CCLEX) a project of the Metro Pacific Tollways Development Corp. which started construction last March 2017. With us tonight is project manager Engr. Allan Alfon. This is the second time we have featured CCLEX, the first time was last year when we went on site.

However, for this particular interview we are doing it via Zoom with Alfon and since we cannot go to the construction site like last year, Alfon just sent me drone shots of the construction area so our televiewers can see how far the construction has gone. This project is expected to be finished by 2021. One special feature that would make this bridge a special icon/tourism site for Cebu is that its spires will feature four lighted crosses to signify Cebu's role in the Christianity in this part of the world. This will be seen as far away as Bohol Island.

So watch this update of CCLEX with Engr. Allan Alfon on SkyCable's channel 53 at 8 p.m. with replays on Wednesday and Saturday same time and channel. We also have replays on MyTV's channel 30 at 9 p.m. Monday and at 7 a.m. and 9 p.m. on Wednesday and Friday.

\* \* \*

Whenever our bike group would ride to the south of Cebu, we always pass by that dolomite mining firm that has been there for more than 20 years now. Then out of the blue, thanks to the project that I also supported, the cleanup of Manila Bay, they apparently used dolomite sand so that the people of Manila can take a swim in the much-cleaner Manila Bay. Then suddenly those so-called environmentalists declared that dolomite is not good for use in Manila Bay due to the litany of problems that people could get with the dolomite sand that came from Barangay Pugalo, Alcoy.

Over the weekend, I saw on YouTube the congressional interview of Department of Environment and Natural Resources Sec. Roy Cimatu who answered the questions by congressmen (I couldn't identify them as they were wearing face masks) and Cimatu answered all the questions very well. Another YouTube interview that I saw was with Manila Mayor Isko Moreno by former ABS-CBN's Karen Davila who obviously acted like one of the environmentalists. But when Mayor Isko asked her where she was when people complained about how dirty Manila Bay had become she could not give a proper reply!





What I didn't like was that the group that calls itself the Philippine Movement for Climate Justice, which has condemned the extraction of dolomite rocks insist "Manila Bay waterfront was declared a national historical landmark by the National Historical Commission of the Philippines in 2012. It is protected by the National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009. The act mandates that the bay 'shall be maintained as close to their appearance at the time the area was most of importance to Philippine history as determined by the National Historical Institute'." This has nothing to do with dolomite!

These so-called environmentalist groups are only there to make noise so they can inform their financial supporters that they are doing something that has made national headlines, and get additional funding in the process.

Incidentally, I just read a news report that the Cebu Provincial government will no longer investigate the extraction of dolomite rocks by a mining firm in Alcoy that are being used to beautify the Manila Bay as pointed out by 3rd District Provincial Board Member John Ismael Borgonia, chairman of the committee on environmental conservation and natural resources.

Borgonia said the investigation is no longer needed since the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) has already issued a statement regarding the crushed dolomite used as raw materials in filling the stretch of Manila Bay.

The MGB earlier said that a mining firm in Barangay Pugalo was issued a permit to transport the minerals to Manila Bay and that they were "extracted, produced, and shipped out to various buyers following proper regulatory laws and procedures."

Anyway, we Cebuanos know enough that many of our high-end resorts here have been using dolomite sand on their beaches. I remember the time when these resorts in Cebu was accused of hauling sand from islands in Bohol in order to have white beaches. But since the Dolomite plant in Alcoy became operational those rumors have stopped!



# DENR mulls police station at Baywalk

Published 2 hours ago on September 14, 2020 03:10 AM

By [Francis Wakefield](#)



The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is eyeing to set up a police station to protect the Roxas Boulevard baywalk from all forms of littering and maintain its cleanliness after the completion of the beach enhancement project.

In the Sunday Balitaan sa Tinapayan virtual press forum, DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said they are thinking of setting a mini police outpost that will keep a tight guard on the bay, apart from installing a metal fence to prevent people from committing illegal activities on the beachfront.

This came following Antiporda's visit last Saturday when he actually accosted a man who was discharging his bodily waste at the bay's shore and ordered his arrest.

The DENR official said he will be suggesting in their next inter-agency meeting the need for putting such an installation as a deterrent to promenaders who might indiscriminately throw their litter into the sea.

"The idea is to set up a bay patrol or environmental police, complete with an outpost or detachment, that know all the laws. Most people unintentionally are not aware they are committing violations of environment laws and they can easily be arrested and charged for polluting the baywalk" Antiporda said.

Meanwhile, a volunteer-driven, community-based coastal monitoring initiative was launched by two environment groups over the weekend to check the status of garbage pollution in the Manila Bay areas of Metro Manila.

Dubbed Dampa Alert, the one-week monitoring organized by environment groups Nilad and Earth Island Institute-Asia Pacific will end on Saturday, 19 September, in time for International Coastal Cleanup Day.

The project aims to inform the public and remind authorities that the Manila Bay cleanup should not be restricted to the baywalk area in Manila alone.

The Manila Bay coastal areas in the National Capital Region comprise several cities, and even the non-coastal cities have a crucial role in the cleanup campaign.

"There should be a comprehensive plan to restore and rehabilitate the waters of Manila Bay. Instead of using limited resources for shallow beautification, local and national agencies are advised to mobilize cleanup operations," the two groups said.



Antiporda belied reports the DENR did not plan the move and hastily dumped dolomite sand at the bay.

He said the DENR has experts when it comes to all the moves they have taken.

He added they need not consult the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources and the Department of Agriculture because the Manila Bay rehabilitation project involves a number of government agencies that are all part of the planning.

“They are part of the plan, and whatever we do, we discuss it in every meeting, including all the local government units covered by the Manila Bay shorelines,” he explained.

**with PAT C. SANTOS**

# DENR wants Manila gov't to declare Manila Baywalk area a discipline zone

By [Xianne Arcangel, CNN Philippines](#)

Published Sep 13, 2020 8:50:19 PM



(FILE POTO)

Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, September 13) — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) will ask the city government of Manila to pass an ordinance declaring the entire stretch of Manila Bay's Baywalk area a discipline zone to ensure it remains clean.

DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said Sunday the agency will be sending a formal request to the office of Manila Mayor Francisco "Isko Moreno" Domagoso regarding the proposed ordinance.

Antiporda mentioned the DENR's proposal a day after he and members of the media spotted a man defecating along the Baywalk area during an inspection of the artificial white sand being dumped on the shoreline.

"We will be sending a request to the Manila City government informing the mayor of what transpired, first. Second, seeking for his assistance in coming up with an ordinance that will declare the whole stretch of Manila Baywalk area as a discipline zone. And of course, necessary fines and penalties should be indicated also in the said ordinance," the DENR official said in a virtual press conference.

Aside from passing an ordinance, Antiporda said DENR would also seek the public's help in reporting violations of environmental laws within Manila Bay's vicinity.

Meanwhile, Antiporda said there has been a slowdown in filling Manila Bay's shoreline with artificial white sand.

"*Medyo nade-delay* yung proyekto dahil dumami po yung tao doon. Dumami po yung nakiki-usyoso. Bumabagal po yung galaw, yung pasok-labas ng mga sasakyan, nahhirapan po," he said.

[Translation: The project is getting a bit delayed because people are visiting the area to see what's been happening. Work is slowing down, vehicles are going in and out, it's becoming a bit difficult.]

Antiporda said the project has also been set back by delays in the delivery of the artificial white sand made from dolomite coming from Cebu.

Cebu Governor Gwendolyn Garcia earlier ordered a halt in the domestic sales of dolomite from Alcoy town amid the controversy over DENR's Manila Bay rehabilitation project.

DENR has insisted that dolomite is safe and that there are safeguards to ensure the artificial white sand will not be washed away by waves.

Source: <https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/9/13/denr-manil-bay-baywalk-discipline-zone.html>



## **Bobo si Ridon–Usec. Antiporda**



September 13, 2020 @ 7:16 PM 10 hours ago

Manila, Philippines–“Bobo si Terry Ridon.”

Ito ang tahasang sinabi ni Department of Environment and Natural Resources Undersecretary Benny Antiporda laban kay dating Bayan Rep. Ridon kaugnay sa umano’y ‘di tamang pagsusukat nito sa gastos ng DENR sa white sand sa Manila bay.

Sa isang online forum ng Balitaan sa Maynila, sinabi ni Antiporda na hindi lamang isang beses nagpakita si Ridon ng kanyang kabobohan sa Math.

Ang una aniya ay noong tinanggal ito sa PCUP ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte dahil sa kanyang kabibiyahen na hindi na niya nabilang.

At ang pangalawa naman ay ang pagtanya o pagkalkula sa naging gastos sa Manila Bay na binubuhay muli o nire-rehabilitate ng DENR.

Ayon kay Ridon, nasa P200 milyon lang ang dapat na halaga at hindi P380M.

Paliwanag ni Antiporda, ang ginawa ni Ridon ay hinati-hati ang P389 milyong pondo para sa rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay sa linear meter o ‘yung haba na 500 meters at hindi sa square meter nito.

Kaya, aniya, nang marinig ng tao na P799 thousand ang per meter ay nagalit ang mga tao at sinabihan siyang “korap” na labis naman nitong ikinasama ng loob.

Aniya, gumamit ito ng calculator upang malaman ang totoong komputasyon kung saan sa 500 meters times 60 meters ang kapal ay 30 thousand square meters.

Sa 30,000 square meters, kung idi-divide sa P389 milyon, lumalabas na P12,966,66 para sa malapad at pahaba pa lamang at hindi pa kinukwenta ang palalim.

Nangangahulugan na nakamura pa ang gobyerno sa nasabing proyekto per square meter kung saan naparatangan na ang opisyal nang hindi maganda.

Hinalimbawa naman ni Usec Antiporda ang Makabayan Bloc kung saan pagdating sa budget hearing ay binabatikos din ang DENR pero ito aniya’y unti-unti nilang ipinaliliwanag at hindi tulad kay Ridon na iniligaw niya ang taumbayan.

“Pagkatapos niyang magparatang ng korapsyon, ngayon hindi siya makasagot!





“Overpriced daw? Ngayon hindi siya makasagot.”

Kung hindi umano makasagot si Ridon sa kanyang mga pahayag, paano umano ang pagkasira ng ngalan DENR.

“Isa lang naman ang tanong ko sa mga bumabatikos saan sila noong kasalukuyang naglutangan ang dumi riyan.

“Buong buhay ko po hindi ako nakapaglinis ng dumi ng aking mga anak, ngayon dumi ng may dumi nililinis ko,” pahayag pa ni Antiporda.

Ayon pa kay Antiporda, kapag hindi naman tama ang kanyang prinsipyo ay puwede naman aniya siyang mawala o bumaba sa kanyang pwesto dahil may babalikan siya bilang matagal na ring naglilingkod sa bayan at bilang mamamahayag. **Jocelyn Tabangcura-Domenden**





## Manila Bay Clean-up & Rehabilitation idinepensa ng DILG



September 13, 2020 @ 12:02 PM 18 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Idinepensa ng Department of the Interior and Local Government ang pagpapaganda at rehabilitasyon ng Department of the Environment and Natural Resources sa Manila Bay sa pamamagitan ng paglalagay ng dinurog na dolomite.

Ginawa ni DILG Secretary Eduardo M. Año, vice chair ng Manila Bay Task Force, ang pahayag bunsod ng alegasyon ng opposition groups na delikado ang dolomite sa kalusugan ng tao.

Ayon kay Año, ang dolomite ay pangkaraniwang materyal na ginagamit sa pagpapatibay at pagpapalusog ng mga beach sa maraming bahagi ng bansa at ng mundo.

Sinabi ni Año na nauna nang inihayag ng Department of Health na ang dolomite na ginamit sa Baywalk ay mas malaki kaysa sa alikabok, kaya't 'di ito humahalo sa hangin at hindi rin delikado sa sinomang indibidwal.

Sa sandali umanong matapos ang proyekto, iimbitahan nila ang publiko na i-enjoy ang pinaganda at pinalusog na beach para mapatunayan nilang 'di ito delikado.

Ayon sa DOH, tanging ang dolomite sa porma ng alikabok ang nakaiirita at ang size ng dolomite sands sa Manila Bay project ay 2mm hanggang 5mm na 100 beses na mas malaki kaysa sa alikabok.

Idinagdag pa ng DOH na ang bultuhang dolomite ay hindi delikado sa kalusugan.

Sinabi naman ni DILG Undersecretary at Spokesperson Jonathan Malaya na taliwas sa pahayag ng ilang kritiko, tanging P28M mula sa P389M alokasyon ang ginamit sa dinurog na dolomite rocks.

“That already covers the price of dolomite sand, transportation cost, taxes, and other fees. That’s the package of the cost including delivery from Cebu to Manila Bay. It’s not P389M but P28 million,” ayon kay Malaya.

Sinabi ng DENR na ang kanilang pondo ay mula sa isang special purpose fund sa ilalim ng 2019 General Appropriations Act na inilaan para sa rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay.



“The project was approved by Congress under the 2019 General Appropriations Act, it underwent competitive bidding under RA 9184 and was awarded prior to the global pandemic. The government cannot simply stop a project when it is already under contractual obligation to proceed. We also have a responsibility to clean up and rehabilitate Manila Bay for ourselves and future generations,” paliwanag ni Malaya.

Bukod dito, ang halagang inilaan ng Kongreso para sa proyektong ito ay hindi kinuha sa pondong nakalaan sa COVID-19 response ng gobyerno.

“This was sourced from the 2019 GAA, the funds for COVID are in the 2020 GAA, Bayanihan I and now Bayanihan II; hence, this project has no effect whatsoever on government’s COVID response,” aniya pa.

Hinikayat ni Malaya ang mga kritiko na pag-aralan ang isyu bago gumawa ng mga walang basehang alegasyon laban sa naturang proyekto ng gobyerno.

Handa umano sila sa anomang imbestigasyon sa naturang proyekto, maging sa court of justice o sa court of public opinion lalo na’t lahat ng mga kritisismo ay wala sa lugar.

Nakikipag-ugnayan umano ang DILG sa DENR at DOT bilang bahagi ng 13 Mandamus agencies na inatasan ng Korte Suprema na magsagawa ng clean-up, water quality improvement at over-all rehabilitation sa Manila Bay.

Sa ilalim ng Mandamus na inisyu ng Korte Suprema noong Disyembre 18, 2008, inatasan ang DILG, DENR at 11 pang ahensya ng pamahalaan na i-rehabilitate at i-preserve ang Manila Bay para maging kaaya-aya ito para sa swimming, skin diving at iba pang uri ng contact recreation sa katubigan.

Inatasan umano ng SC ang DILG na pakilusin ang local governments units sa Region III, IV-A at NCR na nasa paligid ng Manila Bay watershed na magsagawa ng mga programa at aktibidad para sa rehabilitation, information and education campaigns para magkaron ng kabatiran ang publiko at maging kabahagi ng proyekto.

Noong Pebrero 2019, nag-isyu ang Pangulo ng Administrative Order No. 16 na nag-aatas na bilisan ang clean-up at rehabilitation ng Manila Bay at bumuo ng Manila Bay Task Force sa pamumuno ng DENR kasama ang DILG at DOT bilang vice chairs.

Bago ang global pandemic, linggo-linggong nagsasagawa ng clean-ups ang DILG at iba pang ahensiya sa dalampasigan ng Manila Bay sa tulong ng LGUs, barangays at Civil Society Organizations. *RNT*



Pilipinas News Online

17h · 🌐

"Well yung Agency may..a nagprovide kami ng technical assistance sa project. It's a project naman of DENR. And kami naman bilang Engineering arm ng govt. normal naman na nagbibigay kami ng technical assistance, pero pagdating sa project kaya naman sagutin ng DENR. I'm sure sila naman ang expert sa mga minerals na ginamit and a..sa tingin ko naman maganda yung layunin nila na linisin ang Manila Bay at I'm sure kayang-kaya nilang iexplain lahat ng mga technical questions tungkol sa mga materyales na ginamit." ani ni Villar

Sa isang panayam sa DZRH ng programang DOS POR DOS nina Anthony Taberna at Gerry Baja nitong Biyernes (Sept. 11), kay Secretary Mark Villar ng Department of Public Works and Highways, narito ang kanyang pahayag ukol sa partisipasyon ng nasabing ahensya sa Proyekto ng DENR sa Manila Bay na kung saan kasalukuyan itong nilalagyan ng White Sand.

#DPWH  
#MarkVillar



**Pagdating sa project kaya naman sagutin ng DENR. I'm sure sila naman ang expert sa mga minerals na ginamit and a..sa tingin ko naman maganda yung layunin nila na linisin ang Manila Bay at I'm sure kayang-kaya nilang i-explain lahat ng mga technical questions tungkol sa mga materyales na ginamit.**



**MARK VILLAR**  
**SECRETARY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS**

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## Manila Bay kinasasabikan, dinarayo na kahit 'di pa bukas



September 13, 2020 @ 7:06 PM 10 hours ago

Manila, Philippines-Nasaksihan mismo ng Remate Online ang kasabikan ng mamamayan na matunghayan ang bahagi ng Manila Bay bilang isang mala-Boracay sa linis at ganda kahit ginagawa pa lamang ito at hindi pa binubuksan sa publiko.

Matatagpuan ang lugar sa kahabaan ng Roxas Boulevard mula sa kinatatayuan ng US Embassy hanggang sa Manila Yatch Club.



Kumpol-kumpol ang mga tao na umaakyat at pumapanaog sa footbridge upang makapagsagawa lamang ng mga selfie at groupie at nakalilikha na tuloy ng mabagal na pag-usad ng mga tao na gumagamit ng foot bridge.

Marami rin ang mga sumisilip sa mga pwede nilang pagsilipan sa buong lugar gaya ng mga pasukan at labasan ng mga makinarya na gamit sa pagpapaunlad at pagbuhay sa lugar.

Ginagawa ang pagbabago upang matiyak ng pamahalaan, sa pamumuno ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources, na hindi magiging tambakan ng dumi ng tao, basura at nakalalason na kemikal ang lugar sa mga susunod na buwan.

Sa pakikipanayam ng Remate Online sa mga naglalakad at nagsasagawa ng mga selfie at groupie, sabik na umano nilang matunghayan ang tinatawag ngayong mini-Boracay na nasa pusod mismo ng Maynila at hindi nila kailangan pang gumastos ng malaki palayo para lang makakita at makaranas ng malinis at magandang pasyalan.

Sinabi naman ng iba na sadyang wala lang magawa ang iba kundi bumatikos at gusto lang sirain mismo ang pamahalaan na nagsisikap na magkaroon ng magagandang pagbabago sa bansa.

Para naman sa iba, ang mga nagpipilit na bumatikos ay galing umano sa mga dating nasa poder ngunit wala umano ni anomang nagawa ang mga ito para linisin, pagandahin at baguhin ang lugar na laging binababoy ng mga walang pakialam sa kapaligiran at pinagkakaperahan lang din ng mga gusto lang kumita sa kabila ng hindi kaaya-ayang sitwasyon ng lugar. RNT/Rico Navarro

Source: <https://www.remate.ph/manila-bay-kinasasabikan-dinarayo-na-kahit-di-pa-bukas/>



# Rehashed materials used for Baseco beach park dev't: Isko

By Marita Moaje September 13, 2020, 12:26 pm



The Baseco Beach Park currently being developed by the Manila City government. (Photo grabbed from Isko Moreno Domagoso FB page)

MANILA – The city government of Manila has used mostly rehashed materials for the development of a park at the Baseco Beach.

Manila Mayor Francisco ‘Isko Moreno’ Domagoso made this comment during his weekly Capital Report on Friday, saying this is to provide "some dignity" for those residing in Baseco, which is a depressed area.

“Meron pong isang kalsada sa Baseco na ninanais ko na bigyan naman sila ng maaliwalas na pasyalan sa loob mismo ng Baseco. Iisipin nyo bang Baseco yan? Yan ay squatter area, sab nga ng iba kinatatakutan. Hindi dapat tayong katakutan kahit squatter tayo may dignidad naman sa pagiging squatter (There is a road in Baseco that I wanted to develop to give the residents, there a park right inside Baseco. People should not be afraid of us even if we live in a depressed area, we can also have dignity),” he said.

From a “filthy” area, Domagoso said the Baseco Park is slowly turning into a decent park.

He said these efforts are for the residents, most especially children and senior citizens, so that they do not need to go far if they need to take a casual walk outside their houses.

Domagoso said from Manila Zoo's rehabilitation several months ago, he ordered the city engineering to collect the block or “tisa” used for the pavement or walkway.

These old “tisa” were cleaned and are now being carefully installed in Baseco Park.

Meanwhile, the city government also lighted the stretch of España Boulevard and Taft Avenue recently and replaced the old lampposts with simple new ones.

Domagoso also had these old lamp posts from España and Taft Avenue cleaned, fixed, and installed them at the Baseco Park.

“We’re done lighting the Taft Avenue and the Espana Avenue as well, but I find it a waste of money if we will just throw away the old lamp posts, so I had them collected and placed in Baseco, but before installing it there, I asked the Manila City Engineering Office and the DPS and the city electricians to fix them, paint it with black while the gold part painted with gold, replace the broken parts with glass and put new wires,” Domagoso said. (PNA)



## Enjoying Manila Bay's water

Mark Demayo, ABS-CBN News

Posted at Sep 13 2020 05:48 PM



Children play along containment booms installed in Manila Bay on September 13, 2020, as the Department of Environment and Natural Resources resumes with laying crushed dolomite on one side of the bay. DENR has defended the project which was criticized by environmental groups.

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/multimedia/photo/09/13/20/enjoying-manila-bays-water>





# Atienza says dolomite beach good only for ‘superficial whitening’

Published September 13, 2020, 5:57 PM

by [Ellson Quismorio](#)

A mere “superficial whitening” of Manila Bay.

That’s how Buhay Party-List Representative and former three-term Manila mayor Lito Atienza described Sunday the Department of Environment and Natural Resources’ (DENR) “white sand project” in Manila Bay.



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

Atienza, also former DENR secretary, further said that the project, which makes use of sand from crushed dolomite, is “worthless” and a “complete waste of public funds.”

“The white sand being dumped there is just a storm surge away from getting washed out,” Atienza said.

By saying this, the congressman expressed that he didn’t believe DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu’s remarks before the House Committee on Appropriations last week that the dolomite sand they procured wasn’t prone to washing out since it was heavier than grains of normal sand.

Atienza further said that the ecological problem besetting Manila Bay is so severe that no amount of “pretentious face-lifting” can reverse it.

“Its waters have been overwhelmed by fecal coliform...Anybody who swims in the bay’s heavily contaminated waters risks exposure to waterborne pathogenic diseases, including viral and bacterial gastroenteritis, hepatitis A, dysentery, typhoid fever and all sorts of infections,” he warned.

He said a large portion of Metro Manila’s raw human sewage from households continues to drain into the Pasig River and other waterways, which all empty out into Manila Bay every day.

The use of white-colored dolomite sand in the Baywalk area—termed as “beach nourishment” by the DENR—is just one part of the broader Manila Bay rehabilitation effort, which has a price tag of P389 million. Some P28 million were spent for the dolomite, the DENR told the House panel.

Atienza said the strategy is bound to fail due to the negligence of Manila Water Co. Inc. and Maynilad Water Services Inc. in performing their obligations to capture all sewage and provide adequate wastewater treatment facilities in their service areas.



In August last year, the Supreme Court (SC) unanimously upheld a 2009 order issued by Atienza, who was then Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources, penalizing the two private water suppliers for violating Section 8 of the Clean Water Act of 2004.

The two water concessionaires, along with the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), were slapped a combined initial fine of almost P2 billion.

Until they fully comply with the Clean Water Act, the SC ordered Manila Water, Maynilad and the MWSS to continue to pay a daily fine of P322,102 – an amount that escalates by 10 percent in two years – plus legal interest of six percent per annum, the solon said.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/09/13/atienza-says-dolomite-beach-good-only-for-superficial-whitening/?fbclid=IwAR17jkB11wOS5LWgKL1lwFZOVCMgDSQrxgZquHxY5dal14y08Kptznp7dVs>



## Dumi sa Manila Bay `di mabubura ng `white sand'

By Abante Tonite — Last updated Sep 13, 2020

NEWS



Sayang ang pondo mula sa kaban ng bayan at pakitang-tao lamang umano ang pagpapaganda sa Manila Bay kung hindi naman aaksyonan ang ugat ng problema hinggil sa polusyon dito.

Ad Asia Banner – below 1st paragraph

Inihayag ito ni Buhay party-list Rep. Lito Atienza na tutol din sa ginagawa umanong “superficial whitening” ng Manila Bay na pinatambakan ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ng mga dinurog na dolomite galing Cebu para magmukhang white sand ang dalampasigan nito.

Sabi ni Atienza, isang storm surge lang ay siguradong mawawalis ang mga tinambak na `white sand' sa dalampasigan ng Manila Bay.

“No amount of pretentious face-lifting can change the fact that Manila Bay’s marine and coastal ecosystems are practically dead – because its waters have been overwhelmed by fecal coliform,” giit ng mambabatas.

Ang polusyon sa Manila Bay ay galing umano sa `human sewage' ng mga kabahayan sa Metro Manila na umaagos patungo sa Pasig River na dumadaloy naman direktso sa Manila Bay kada araw.

Kaya’t delikado aniyang maligo sa Manila Bay dahil maaaring ma-expose ang isang tao sa mga sakit na dulot ng polusyon sa katubigan nito katulad ng gastroenteritis, hepatitis A, disinterya, typhoid fever at iba pang uri ng mga impeksyon.





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# Manila Bay white-sand project worthless, waste of funds –Atienza

**Published** September 13, 2020 5:03pm

By ERWIN COLCOL, GMA News

Buhay party-list Representative Lito Atienza on Sunday opposed the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' (DENR's) initiative to decorate the Manila Bay shoreline with white sand using crushed dolomite rocks from Cebu province.

In a statement, Atienza, who also previously served as Environment Secretary and mayor of Manila for three terms, described the DENR's move as “worthless” and “a complete waste of public funds.”

“The white sand being dumped there is just a storm surge away from getting washed out,” he said.

“No amount of pretentious face-lifting can change the fact that Manila Bay’s marine and coastal ecosystems are practically dead – because its waters have been overwhelmed by fecal coliform,” he added.

Atienza stressed a large portion of raw human sewage from households in Metro Manila still drain into the Pasig River and other waterways going to Manila Bay every day.

“Anybody who swims in the bay’s heavily contaminated waters risks exposure to waterborne pathogenic diseases, including viral and bacterial gastroenteritis, hepatitis A, dysentery, typhoid fever and all sorts of infections,” he said.

The “white sand project” is part of the operational plan for the Manila Bay Coastal Management Strategy, but Atienza said the latter is “bound to fail” because of the negligence of Manila Water and Maynilad to fulfill its obligations to catch all sewage and install wastewater treatment facilities in the areas they cover.

In 2009, as DENR chief, Atienza [issued an order penalizing the two water concessionaires](#) for violating Section 8 of the Clean Water Act of 2004 on domestic sewage collection, treatment, and disposal.

Ten years later, in August 2019, [the Supreme Court imposed massive fines](#) on Manila Water, Maynilad, and the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System for their non-compliance with the Clean Water Act, stemming from the 2009 DENR order.

Last week, 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 argued. — **DVM, GMA News**

Source: [https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/755411/manila-bay-white-sand-project-worthless-waste-of-funds-atienza/story/?fbclid=IwAR31wNUwOMUjSMs2cI5Z1eXZDZs1pQWxGzRI\\_EP6fYoY0MlyS9tzu\\_mIxRY](https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/755411/manila-bay-white-sand-project-worthless-waste-of-funds-atienza/story/?fbclid=IwAR31wNUwOMUjSMs2cI5Z1eXZDZs1pQWxGzRI_EP6fYoY0MlyS9tzu_mIxRY)





# Cleanup of Manila Bay should not be restricted to the bay walk area – groups

Published September 13, 2020, 12:18 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

Environment groups on Sunday initiated a community-based coastal monitoring to check on the status of garbage pollution in areas surrounding Manila Bay.



(Photo via Ellalyn de Vera-Ruiz)

Nilad and Earth Island Institute-Asia Pacific will conduct the week-long monitoring dubbed “Dampa Alert” that will end on Sept. 19, in time for the International Coastal Cleanup Day.

On Day 1 of Dampa Alert, volunteers took photos, videos, and recorded their observations of the status of Manila Bay in Mall of Asia Pasay, Manila Yacht Club at Roxas Boulevard, Quirino in Manila, Baseco also in Manila, and Navotas Freedom Park.

The groups said there are consistent reports of garbage pile up in the coastline of Manila Bay.

“We want to highlight the estero pollution near Quirino, Manila which is just several meters away from the controversial white sand/dolomite dumping site. It underscores the futility of white sand dumping when an estero in the same area continues to pollute the waters of Manila Bay,” they said.

Volunteers from Baseco also shared photos and videos exposing the continuing trash problem in the community.

In Navotas, the “black water” of Manila Bay is evident as well as the garbage dump excavated by backhoe operators, Nilad and Earth Island Institute-Asia Pacific said, noting the urgency of cleaning up coastal areas should never subside even during the pandemic.



“Our Day 1 Dampa Alert has confirmed the worsening levels of pollution in Manila Bay which necessitates a holistic response from the government. We are sharing our data from our Dampa Alert to underscore the alarming pollution crisis. As stakeholders, we are prepared to organize cleanup operations. Our community volunteers are preparing to do this on September 19,” they said.

Dampa Alert aims to inform the public and remind authorities that the cleanup of Manila Bay should not be restricted to the bay walk area in Manila, the groups said.

The Manila Bay coastal areas in the National Capital Region comprise several cities and even the non-coastal cities have a crucial role in the cleanup campaign, they added.

The environment groups also called for a comprehensive plan to restore and rehabilitate the waters of Manila Bay. Instead of using limited resources for shallow beautification, local and national agencies were advised to mobilize cleanup operations, they pointed out.



# Alcoy mayor: We knew dolomite is sold locally

By [Le Phyllis F. Antojado](#)(The Freeman)

- September 13, 2020 - 12:00am

CEBU, Philippines — Alcoy, Cebu Mayor Michael Angelo Sestoso yesterday said that his town has been aware for 20 years now that Philippine Mining Service Corp. (PMSC) has been locally selling extracted dolomite but has never bothered to ask for its share in the revenues thinking such activity is duly covered by an agreement.

Sestoso said that all the while, he was thinking that the local sale was already part of the permit PMSC secured from the government and in the Mineral Production Sharing Agreement (MPSA).

“Nagtuo lang pud mi apil na na sila kay dugay naman na sila namaligya ana, nagtuo man mi diri sa Alcoy nga apil na sila pareho sa local ug international. Wala man ta kahibalo nga naa may ordinansa ang province ana,” Sestoso said.

Governor Gwendolyn Garcia earlier issued a cease and desist order against Dolomite Mining Corp. and PMSC’s further extraction, processing and selling dolomites to the Manila Bay. This after the governor learned that the companies did not get a waste disposal permit from the Capitol.

Sestoso is set to meet with officials from DMC and PMSC next week.

“Atong hangyon nga siguro nga motoo lang ta sa ordinansa sa probinsya para wala tay problema ug dili mabalda ang inyong pagbaligya sa local,” Sestoso said.

The mayor also confirmed that they did not get any share from the domestic sale of dolomites from the mining firms.

Garcia earlier urged Alcoy to speak up regarding the issue since the two firms are operating in the town.

The governor said she does not want another Naga landslide to happen in the province.

‘Immoral’ project

Meanwhile, two Cebu youth groups are calling for the stoppage of Manila Bay project by starting an online petition for it.





Youth Claim, a youth environmental organization in Cebu, slammed the mining of dolomite here and shipping it to beautify the Manila Bay.

“The white sand project in Manila Bay is a white elephant. Most Filipinos are currently struggling financially, their health at risk and many were left jobless. Thus the P389 million budget allocated for Manila Bay beautification is not just impractical but also immoral,” said Youth Claim spokesperson Crisell Añabeza.

Youth Claim’s members include college students and community youth in Cebu and advocates for climate justice.

Añabeza, a college student, said in a statement that such project entails risk not just to the public health but also to the environment.

“I am just concerned about the damage it will cause to the terrestrial environment of Alcoy after extracting all those dolomite and to Manila Bay once it’s been filled up with crushed dolomite,” she said.

The Cebu chapter of Partido Manggagawa-Kabataan (PM-Kabataan), the youth wing of the militant labor group Partido Manggagawa, also criticized the use of dolomite for the project.

“The budget for the Manila Bay beautification could have benefited some 78,000 families had it been distributed as ayuda of P5,000 per newly unemployed worker. Or could have been use in purchasing of gadgets, printing learning modules, providing internet connections which are essential in this new setup of learning,” said Jonel Labrador of PM-Kabataan in Cebu.

Both groups said that they are concerned that the white beach project is environmentally destructive to Manila Bay and Alcoy, where the dolomite is being sourced. — **Mitchelle L. Palaubsanon/KQD (FREEMAN)**



# Use papaya whitening soap on Manila Bay

By: [Joel Ruiz Butuyan](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 04:05 AM September 14, 2020

I have a stinking suspicion that the government officials who planned and implemented the dumping of “white sand” along Manila Bay are people who are addicted to papaya skin whitening soap and glutathione skin lightening pills. They want everything white, because they have this insane belief that anything gray, black, or brown is dirty and ugly. This can be the only plausible reason for what they have done, because all their other explanations are plain dumb.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) says the project was actually conceptualized and funded last year before the pandemic happened. Whether it was planned before or after the pandemic, it makes no difference because the project is just plain dumb. It was dumb for it to have been planned before the pandemic, and it has become dumber for it to still be implemented even during the pandemic.

The DENR gives the justification that the “white sand,” consisting of crushed dolomite rocks, is actually for a “beach nourishment” project in furtherance of efforts to rehabilitate Manila Bay. DENR officials should be made to watch a video presentation made especially for them—a running clip of a swimming pool installed with the whitest tiles, but the water flowing into it coming from the sewage canal and the septic tank.

The DENR knows what a dangerous cesspool Manila Bay is, because of its involvement in two Supreme Court cases. In 1999, the DENR was a respondent in a Supreme Court case (*Oposa v. Factoran*) that was filed to force the government to clean up Manila Bay. Environmental lawyer Antonio Oposa Jr. revealed then that the amount of bacteria in Manila Bay was already at one million units per cubic meter, compared to the safe water standard of not more than 100 units per cubic meter. After 10 years of litigation, the Supreme Court issued a landmark ruling ordering the DENR, among others, to clean up Manila Bay. In 2019, the DENR was the plaintiff in a case decided by the Supreme Court where Manila Water and Maynilad Water were fined P1 billion because of their failure to build sewage treatment plants in Metro Manila, and despite having collected sewerage fees from their customers since 1997. This case horribly reminded us that virtually all sewage and septic waters in the metropolis end up in Manila Bay. Oposa disclosed that in 2019, bacteria levels in the bay had risen to a whopping 330 million units per cubic meter, prompting him to call Manila Bay an “unflushed toilet bowl.”

With this dangerous level of water pollution, the DENR project of creating a fake white beach along Manila Bay amounts to what is abhorred by our law as an “attractive nuisance.” The attractive nuisance doctrine states that the owner of a property may be held liable for injuries to children if the injury is caused by an object on the property that is likely to attract children. Not only does the bogus white beach invite children to contract all forms of diseases lurking in the polluted waters, it likewise exposes the government to substantial liability because it has created an attractive nuisance along Manila Bay.

During a House of Representatives hearing, DENR officials revealed that the P389 million funding for the project came from the “contingency fund” of President Duterte. The President bears responsibility for allowing this waste of funds at a time when he has repeatedly told the country that the government has no more money to fund the pandemic needs of his people. There should be a glut of papaya whitening soap in the market nowadays because people are naturally getting lighter skin due to their prolonged home confinement. The P389 million could have bought a tremendous stock of papaya soap, and the sight of DENR officials washing black sand along Manila Bay would have brought laughter-inducing entertainment to the people, which is so much needed in this time of fear and tribulation. That could have been a much better use of public funds instead of the blood-curdling spectacle of bogus white sand dumped in Manila Bay.

*Comments to [fleamarketofideas@gmail.com](mailto:fleamarketofideas@gmail.com)*

Source: <https://opinion.inquirer.net/133555/use-papaya-whitening-soap-on-manila-bay>



## A chance for the environment

September 13, 2020 | 6:31 pm

### Corporate Watch

By Amelia HC Ylagan

“No, it is not white sand that is being used to fill up the Manila Bay shoreline,” Presidential Spokesman Harry Roque said when news photos flashed images of heavy machinery on the baywalk dumping what indeed looked like glistening white sand over the stony black murk of muddy sand.

“Citing information from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Presidential Spokesman Harry Roque said crushed ‘dolomite boulders’ are actually being used in... the Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program with an allocated budget, which began even before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic,” newspapers reported on Friday (*mb.com.ph* Sept. 4).

“The Palace apparently found nothing wrong with the use of these materials for the Manila Bay,” the news report continued. But on the Monday immediately following the debut of “dolomite” in the lingua franca of the concerned Filipino, Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire, she who gives daily official updates on the raging COVID-19 pandemic, said crushed dolomite rocks may lead to “adverse” effects, mainly on the respiratory system, once inhaled. Dolomite particles could also cause eye irritation and gastro-intestinal discomfort such as stomach pain and diarrhea if ingested, she candidly said in a news briefing reported in *The Philippine Star* on Sept. 7.

Dr. Vergeire hedged her comment saying that the DENR “would not push through with the project if its study found that pulverized dolomite rocks would cause harm to the environment and the people” (*Ibid.*). Crushed dolomite rocks, which will be used to beautify the Manila Bay, are not toxic even though their physical properties may pose respiratory risks, the chief science research specialist of the Mines and Geoscience Bureau (MGB)-Region 7 Chief Armando Malicse told *Dobol B sa News TV*. “It’s not because it is dolomite but it is because of the dust,” he said. The DENR, which oversees the MGB simply said that the P389-million project will not affect Manila Bay’s ecosystem (GMA News online, Sept. 7).

But Cebu Governor Gwendolyn Garcia cried out that the mining of dolomite certainly harms the environment, particularly the small town of Alcoy, from where the 3,500 wet metric tons of crushed dolomite rocks have already been partially quarried for the P389-million aesthetic project on a 500-meter stretch of Manila Bay’s shore. Garcia said the cease-and-desist order she issued against Dolomite Mining Corp. (DMC) and that of the Philippine Mining Services Corp. (PMSC) were to stop the shipment of the synthetic fine sand to Manila because these were not covered by the 25-year Mineral Production Sharing Agreement (MPSA) with the government for the export of the dolomite to Japan and South Korea with specific years and volume of minerals to be extracted from Alcoy.

Environmental and human rights groups vocally protested against the dolomite project of the DENR for the mining of natural resources and the damage to the ecosystem, especially since the quarries destroyed the cliffs and caves which were the natural habitat of endangered species. Gov. Garcia threatened to sue all those involved in the mining of dolomite rocks in Alcoy, saying she had issued a memorandum when she assumed office in August 2019 to stop all quarrying activities in the entire island of Cebu.





Health advocates are angry for the belittling of so-called dust pollution from powdered dolomite and the seeming dismissal of substance toxicity, particularly that respiratory weakness and eyes, nose, and throat afflictions been identified by epidemiologists as critical vulnerabilities to the present still-vicious COVID-19 pandemic. The Philippine Star of Sept. 7 cited a safety report of US cement company Lehigh Hanson in 2012 that inhaling dolomite dust may “cause discomfort in the chest, shortness of breath and coughing” and may even cause cancer. Another company from the US, Lhoist North America, said that dolomite “causes damage to lungs through prolonged or repeated exposure when inhaled.”

The common tao (person) is surely perplexed that the government has so thoughtlessly inflicted one more critical concern to add to the anxieties of the protracted coronavirus — when the only parting words now, in any virtual and/or limited socialization and communication, is “Stay Safe.” And why insist on doing that P389-million Manila Bay beautification project when the money could be used for the health of the people — more medicines, research for a vaccine, testing and treatments, facilities, incentives for frontliners — or at least partially fund the P165.5-billion (\$3.4 billion) emergency relief fund signed by President Rodrigo Duterte on Friday, Sept.

11? “Bayanihan II” will expand healthcare and help businesses after the coronavirus pandemic plunged the economy into a deep recession. BusinessWorld on Sept. 9 says the Philippines may see the worst (economic) slump in Asia. The question begging to be asked: Do we need any beautification project at this time?

The environment has already been slowly regaining its beauty in the forced slowdown of human activity in the quarantines and lockdowns of the coronavirus pandemic. Pollution has dropped dramatically all over the world from the standstill of carbon-breathing factories and practically no land, air, and sea travel emissions. The European Space Agency (ESA), through satellite imaging, saw a 45-50% drop in nitrogen dioxide levels across Europe at the end of March, from 2019 levels (and that was only early in the lockdowns). In China, up to a 90% reduction of certain emissions during the city-lockdown period were identified from satellite and ground-based observation. Here in the Philippines, the skies are now dramatically an azure blue, from when only a gray cloud could be seen over Makati from the hills of Antipolo.

Now is the perfect chance to help our environment recover its glory, and for us humans to make amends for the damage we have done to Nature in our greedy pursuits for wealth and comfort. Note that the Philippines is a poor number-111 among 180 countries ranked in the 2020 Environmental Performance Index (EPI) by the Yale University Center for Environmental Law and Policy. The study shows a decline of the Philippine performance of 4.1% over 10 years

in metrics that gauge waste management, carbon dioxide emissions from land cover change, and black carbon emissions — all important drivers of climate change.

A decline in our EPI means our country has failed dismally in efforts to preserve and respect our environment. But we have some 50+ laws specifically on the environment, listed in the Chan Robles virtual law library. It seems the problem is in the implementation of these laws.

Why are our skies now blue, in time of the coronavirus, when there is now minimal traffic on the roads? Why were our skies gray before? We have Republic Act No. 8749, “The Clean Air Act of 1999,” which ensures that “the State shall protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature.” Smoke belching vehicles on the road, carbon emitting sea and air vehicles, and noxious factory exhausts were perhaps not strictly monitored and sanctioned.



Why do our own environment functionaries seem clueless (or in denial) as to the possible health hazards, the social costs, and degradation of natural resources in quarrying and mining our patrimony and future reserves? We have Executive Order No. 79 signed by President Benigno Simeon Aquino III on July 6, 2012: “Institutionalizing and implementing reforms in the Philippine mining sector providing policies and guidelines to ensure environmental protection and responsible mining in the utilization of mineral resources” that quotes the same Section 16, Article II of the 1987 Constitution as in the Clean Air Act.

If only those two environmental laws were adhered to, and strictly implemented, the Philippines would be happier and safer with Nature, and with its conscience.

Let’s give the environment a chance.

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## Nalzaro: Alcoy mining: 'Johnny-come-lately'



### **BOBBY NALZARO**

Saksi

September 13, 2020

I WILL not dwell on the legal aspect on the extraction of dolomite minerals by a big mining firm in Pugalo, Alcoy, Cebu and the “nourishment project” on Manila Bay where the materials used to artificially beautify the baywalk area come from Alcoy’s natural resources. I presumed that everything is aboveboard because, first and foremost, the two mining firms have been allowed to operate for the last 40 years.

While on the rehabilitation of Manila Bay, no less than the Supreme Court (SC) had given it a go signal. On Dec. 18, 2016, the SC issued a mandamus on Manila Bay (GR 171947) directing 13 government agencies to clean up and rehabilitate, preserve, restore and maintain its waters to SB level (Class B seawaters per Water Classification Tables under DENR Administrative Order 34 (1990) to make them fit for swimming, skin diving and other forms of contact recreation.

Now, there is legal matter that would probably crop up as a group of environmentalists claimed that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) violated Presidential Decree 1586, or the Environmental Impact Statement System Law, and DENR Administrative Order 2003-30, the agency’s own implementing rules for environmental compliance certificate (ECC).

But DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said the project is a “nourishment project,” which is not covered by the Environmental Impact Statement System. But the group insists that under the said regulations, a project like the baywalk, located in an environmentally critical area, requires an ECC. This is a legal matter that the court has to resolve.

On the safety of the mineral, even the DENR and the Department of Health (DOH) seem unable to agree on the matter. The DOH claims that dolomite is a hazardous mineral, while the DENR said it’s not harmful to human beings. Which is which? Dolomite is an anhydrous (no water content, but can absorb water.--OpEd) carbonate mineral composed of calcium magnesium carbonate. The term is also used for sedimentary carbonate rock composed mostly of the mineral dolomite. Its alternative name is dolostone.

But may I ask this question. Why is it only now that our environmental agencies and provincial officials are acting on the matter? Had the “nourishment project” on Manila Bay not been exposed in the media, this issue would not become controversial when, as I said, that mining operations undertaken by Dolomite Mining Corp. (DMC) and the Philippine Mining Service Corp. (PMSC) have been there for the last 40 years. Mahulog man ni sa akong paboritong kanta nga “Bakit Ngayon Ka Lang.”

Now, since this has become a national issue, everybody, especially the kibitzers, have joined in the fray. This also includes the so-called “environmentalists.” Gov. Gwen Garcia issued a cease and desist order (CDO) for the transport of dolomite, but not for the operations of the mining firm. But where were these people before this issue became a national headline? What about past administrations? Everybody is now worried about the people of Alcoy. They are afraid that another City of Naga incident is in the offing because of the continued mining operations. A few years ago, a huge landslide claimed several lives in a mountain barangay in the City of Naga because of massive mining.





Are these concerned people aware of the provisions of Republic Act 7942, or the Philippine Mining Act of 1995, which sets the guidelines for mining operations in the country? Mining has contributed so much to the national coffers, boosting the country's economy and creating more job opportunities, especially in the countryside.

Alcoy Mayor Michael Angelo Sestoso said that his local government unit and even the Province of Cebu did not receive any share from the mining operations. Are they not aware of the provision of the 1987 Constitution? Section 7, Article 10 (Local Government) states: "That the local government units (LGUs) are entitled to an equitable share in the proceeds of the utilization and development of the national wealth within their jurisdiction and the Local Government Code of 1991 provides that LGUs have the duty and authority to protect and co-manage the environment and enhance the right of the people to a balanced ecology."

This is also properly laid down and stipulated in Executive Order 79, signed by then President Benigno Aquino III in 2012, "institutionalizing and implementing reforms in the Philippine mining sector providing policies and guidelines to ensure environmental protection and responsible mining in the utilization of mineral resources."

For me, those who are showing concern now are Johnny-come-lately.



## The dolomite controversy

By [Marit Stinus-Cabugon](#)

September 14, 2020

SUDDENLY, the word “dolomite” is on everyone’s lips because of the national government’s Manila Bay “beautification” project. When it became known that the crushed dolomite was from Cebu, Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia immediately issued a cease-and-desist order banning further extraction, processing and exportation of the mineral for the Manila Bay project.

The dolomite mine or quarry site in Alcoy, Cebu, from where the crushed dolomite came, is the biggest dolomite quarry site in the Philippines, according to Wikipedia. It has been in operation since the 1980s. The extraction, processing, hauling and transportation of the dolomite are covered by permits issued by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB). The Dolomite Mining Corp. (DMC) has a mineral production sharing agreement while the Philippine Mining Service Corp. (PMSC) has a mineral processing permit. The latter, a subsidiary of JFE Mineral Co. Ltd. of Japan, buys and processes all the mined dolomite. The primary applications of dolomite are “auxiliary materials for iron and steel, plate glass for construction materials, automotive glass, fertilizer and soil conditioner,” according to the JFE website. The particular dolomite from Cebu is used as raw material in the manufacture of steel, glass and fertilizer in Japan and Southeast Asia.

Arturo Barrit, an official of the Associated Labor Unions and someone very familiar with the mine and its effects on the environment, describes the dolomite that is being shipped to Manila as “a byproduct of the high-grade dolomite,” which “is used for beach rehabilitation and landscaping to add aesthetic value” to a property (Facebook post, September 5). This byproduct — or “synthetic white sand” — from the Alcoy dolomite quarry site has been used as “soil catalyst” or soil conditioner in banana and pineapple plantations in Mindanao for years. This once useless material which was given away for free to local government units and private individuals now has great commercial value, Barrit writes in his Facebook post.

While PMSC’s and DMC’s operations are covered with permits from the MGB these permits do not cover the mining, processing and transportation of the dolomite “byproduct” to the local market, Manila Bay included, according to Garcia. A permit from the provincial government is required. The governor accused the mining firms of not only not having secured such permit but of “continuing to refuse to pay the province,” referring to the “10 percent of proceeds [to be remitted] to the barangay (village), local government unit and the provincial government” (SunStar Cebu, Sept. 11, 2020), for a total of 30 percent.

Alcoy and neighboring Dalaguete, which is also affected by the dolomite quarry activities, do receive some benefits — direct and indirect employment, and recipient of various livelihood programs, among others — from the mine, but are these benefits commensurate to the destruction caused by the operations? Governor Garcia thinks not.

Alcoy is a fifth-class municipality with a population of 16,979 in the 2015 census, which makes it No. 39 out of Cebu’s 44 in terms of population. Other than the dolomite mine, there seems little other economic activity in the town, with subsistence farming and fishing being the main sources of livelihood (Wikipedia).

Alcoy Mayor Michael Angelo Sestoso only recently recovered from the coronavirus and may have been forced to return to his official duties earlier than he had wanted due to the governor’s cease-and-desist order. The official Facebook account of the town announced that he would resume his duties as mayor effective September 10, 19 days after he was confirmed positive and two days after Governor Garcia issued her order. Sestoso expressed the hope that the matter would be settled soon.



While the dolomite byproduct is increasingly being used for beach rehabilitation and landscaping, is it the right priority for the national government, pandemic or not, to spend millions of pesos on a beautification project? The project does not address the underlying causes of the degradation of the Manila Bay, such as the continued dumping of humongous volumes of single-use plastics and industrial and household effluents into the National Capital Region's water bodies. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has acknowledged that the beautification project is not part of the Manila Bay Sustainable Development Master Plan.

Barrit has pointed to the destruction caused by the dolomite to the seabed off Alcoy and Dalaguete. As the dolomite — high grade and byproduct alike — is transferred to the ships and barges, “the particles or fragments hauled via the open belt conveyor are carried by the wind flow” and find their way to the seabed. Barrit, a diver himself, said he has seen seagrasses, corals and even turtle shells covered with hardened dolomitic particles, several kilometers from where the hauling takes place. Local fisherfolk have been complaining, writes Barrit. So, is this material really suitable for a bay walk?



## Mangroves, wetlands laban sa polusyon

Sunday, September 13, 2020 [Magi Gunigundo](#)

ANG look ng Maynila ay isang bahagyang nakukulong na wawa na nakaharap sa West Philippine Sea, at isa ito sa pinakamainam na natural na pangalungan ng mga bapor sa buong mundo. Ang look ay napapasok ng mga bapor sa pamamagitan ng isang 18 km lapad na channel sa pagitan ng dalawang pulo: ang Corregidor at Caballo. Dito ginapi ng hukbong dagat ng mga Amerikano na pinamumunuan ni Admiral George Dewey, ang puwersa ng hukbong dagat ng mga Kastila.

Sa pagtawid sa ika 20 siglo, ang mga mangrove sa Manila Bay ay nasa 54,000 hektarya. Naging 2,000 hektarya na lang ito noon 1990 at ngayong 2020, lalong bumaba ito sa 500 hektarya. Ang mga mangrove ay pinagkukublihan ng mga isda, mabisang panlaban sa polusyon at nagpapatibay sa baybayin laban sa baha at pag-uho ng lupa. Ganyan din ang silbi ng mga wetlands na kasalukuyang pinaparami ng ibang bansa tulad ng China at Estados Unidos upang labanan ang polusyon sa tubig.

Sa paglipas ng panahon, nagpabaya ang tao at pamahalaan na hanggang bukung bibig lang ang pagpapahalaga sa kalikasan. Malinis sa katawan ang mga Pilipino ngunit hindi nakatanim bilang ugaling Pilipino ang pangangalaga sa ating kapaligiran. At isa sa mga naging bunga nito ay ang walang puknat na pagtatapon ng basura at dumi sa mga saluysoy na lumulusot sa pitong ilog tulad ng Pasig at Pampanga na ang labas ay sa look ng Maynila. Naging isang inodoro ang look ng Maynila.

Ito ang nagtulak sa ilang mga residente ng look ng Maynila noon Enero 1999 na magsampa ng kaso sa RTC Imus, Cavite upang hilingin sa hukuman na maglabas ng MANDAMUS o Utos na tumupad sa tungkulin ang MMDA, DENR, DEP ED, DOH, DA, DPWH, DBM, Phil Coast Guard, PNP Maritime Group at DILG na inuutos sa kanila ng mga sumusunod na batas: Environment Code[PD1152], Pollution Control Law[PD984], Water Code[PD1067], Illegal Disposal of Waste law[PD825], Sanitation Code[PD856], Marine Pollution Law[ PD 979], Toxic and Hazardous Waste Act[RA 6969], Civil Code, International Law, at Trust doctrine at Principle of Guardianship. Naglabas ng mandamus ang RTC. Umapela ang mga ahensiyang ito sa Court of Appeals. Natalo na naman sila kaya inakyat ang usapin sa Korte Suprema.

Noon Disyembre 18, 2008, pinaboran pa rin ng Mataas na Hukuman ang mga residente ng look ng Maynila. At imbes na mandamus lang, isang "continuing mandamus" ang ipinalabas laban sa mga ahensiyang nabanggit. At dahil "continuing mandamus" ito, lahat sila ay obligadong mag-ulat apat na beses sa isang taon sa Korte Suprema sa ginagawa nilang pagsunod sa batas. Hindi nangimi ang Hukuman na kastiguhin at mariing pinagsabihan ang mga ahensiya ng pamahalaan na tapos na ang panahon ng pag-aantala, teka-teka, at pagpapatupad ng panandalian at tapal-tapal na remedyo sa napakalubha at lumalalang problema ng polusyon ng look na isang pusali na ngayon. Ipinamulat ng Korte Suprema sa mga ulo ng ahensiya na hindi sila maaring iwasan sa kanilang tungkulin na ipatupad ang malinaw na mga probisyon ng batas sapagkat ito ay hindi nangangailangan pa na pag-isipan kung ipapatupad o hindi (MMDA et al vs. Residents of Manila Bay, GR #171947-48, Dec 18, 2008).

Habang nililitis ang kasong ito, binuo ang Manila Bay Coastal Strategy noon 2001. Mayroon itong tatlong hibla: ang paglilinis, pagbabalik at pangangalaga upang luminis ang tubig ng look ng Maynila. Naglabas din ang Kongreso ng mga batas na tutulong sa pagsasakatuparan ng Coastal Strategy: RA 9003, Ecological Solid Waste Management Act ng taon 2000, at RA 9275 Clean Water Act ng taon 2004. Sa kabila ng mga batas at ng coastal strategy, inilabas pa rin ng Korte Suprema ang hatol nila noon 2008 laban sa mga ahensiya ng pamahalaan dahil walang sagsay ang mga batas at coastal strategy kung hindi ito ipapatupad at popondohan.

Noon Enero 2019, sinabi ni Jarius Bondoc na ang bacteria level ng tubig para malanguyan ng ligtas ng tao ay dapat nasa 100 units kada cubic meter lang. Noon 1999, ang tubig ng look ng Maynila ay nasa 1 milyon units ng bacteria kada cubic meter ayon kay Tony Oposa. Dahil wala naman naganap na seryosong hakbang upang mapababa ito sa nakalipas na dalawang dekada, tinatayang nasa 330 milyon units ng bacteria kada cubic meter na ito noon 2019.





Pagdating naman sa coliform, ang estero de San Antonio Abad na lumalabas sa Ilog Pasig ay nasa 1.3 bilyon kada litro ng tubig. Tadtad ng mga informal settlers ang esterong ito at dito rin lumalagos ang dumi ng mga hayop na alaga ng Manila Zoo.

Mayroon mga hakbang na ginawa ang mga ahensiya ng pamahalaan upang tumupad sa continuing mandamus ng Korte Suprema.

Bahagi ng Manila Bay Coastal Strategy ang pagpaparami ng mga mangroves at wetlands na makakatulong ng husto sa laban sa polusyon sa tubig.



## DENR National Greening Program sa Davao umaani ng high-value natural rubber latex



September 13, 2020 @ 4:33 PM 13 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Umarangkada na ang programa ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) National Greening Program sa Davao matapos umani ng high-value natural rubber latex mula sa tanim ng mga magsasaka sa Davao de Oro.

Ayon sa DENR isa sa pangunahing pinagkakabuhayan ng mga magsasaka sa naturang lugar mula sa Bollukan Farmers Organization ay ang pagkuha ng katas na latex na galing umano sa puno ng rubber sa loob ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Nabatid pa sa ulat na ang mga tanim na puno ng rubber sa loob ng DENR National Greening Program (NGP) plantation site sa Barangay Bollukan, Laak, Davao de Oro.

Ka-partner ng DENR ang nasabing organisasyon sa pagbubungkal at pagtanim sa 600 ektaryang plantasyon ng rubber at iba't ibang uri ng punong kagubatan kung saan 215.9 ektarya nito ay nakalaan umano sa pagtanim ng rubber.

Ayon sa DENR ngayon taon, ang mga benepisyaryong magsasaka na ang bawat isa ay may 2 ektaryang plantasyon ng puno ng rubber ay nagsimula nang umano ng 130 na kilo ng latex kada labing limang araw at kanila itong naibebenta sa mataas na halaga.

Sinabi pa ng ahensya bukod sa rubber mayroon ding tanim na NGP site ng mga puno ng kape, cacao, indigenous at iba't ibang uri ng punong kahoy.

Ang programang ito ay naipatutupad sa pakikipag-ugnayan ng Community Environment and Natural Resources Office-Maco, Davao sa Region 11. **Santi Celario**

# LLDA issues notice of violation to Mall of Asia

September 13, 2020 9:12 AM by [DZRH News](#)



*Special on Saturday host Henry Uri with guest DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda*

MANILA—For dumping untreated waste water to the Manila Bay, the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) has issued a notice of violation to the Mall of Asia (MOA), an undersecretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) disclosed on Saturday.

Undersecretary Benny Antiporda, in an interview in the DZRH Special On Saturday (SOS) program on September 12, said the MOA faces closure if it cannot prove it has proper water discharge system.

“Yang po SM, MOA, kasama hong inisyuhan last week ng Laguna Lake Development Authority ng notice of violation. Hihintayin na lang po ang technical conference. If in case they cannot prove na meron talaga silang matinong water discharge system, aba’y maari po silang masara,” Antiporda said.

(That SM, MOA, is among those the Laguna Lake Development Authority issued with notice of violation. It is waiting for the technical conference. If in case they cannot prove that they really have sound water discharge system, well, they can be ordered closed.)

He said until now there are still a lot of big establishment violating environmental regulations.

Antiporda said they have also caught individuals using the shores of Manila Bay as their toilets so that they are requesting the establishment of police post there.

He said all the Metro Manila mayors are supporting the clean up drive of the Manila Bay.

Antiporda said the next move they will do is inspect the ships anchored at Manila Bay and determine where they dump their wastes including used oil.



DENR STRESSES NEED TO PROTECT, CONSERVE WILDLIFE SPECIES

## 2 'bayawak' traders nabbed in Pampanga

By: [Carlo Jacob Molina](#) - Social Media Content Lead / [@CarloMolinaINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 01:09 PM September 13, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — Regional environment and wildlife authorities recently apprehended two men selling 11 Luzon monitor lizards, locally known as “bayawak”, in Sasmuan, Pampanga.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)- Pampanga identified the suspects as Ariel Torres and Daniel Sioco who are both residents of Barangay San Nicolas in Lubao town.



Laudemir Salac, Provincial Environment and Natural Resources officer, said the suspects were selling the wild animals, which came from a fishpond in Lubao and in Bataan province, for P400 to P700 apiece.

### Preservation, biodiversity

“Collecting, hunting or possessing and trading of wildlife without necessary permit from the DENR is prohibited under the law,” Salac said.

“We need to protect and conserve our wildlife species instead of selling them. They are important to biodiversity and vital to our ecosystem,” he added.

The monitor lizards, which are endemic to the Philippines, were turned over to an accredited wildlife rescue center in Clark Freeport and Special Economic Zone for rehabilitation.

### It's a crime

Michael Lopez, wildlife officer of DENR- Central Luzon, reminded the public that the collection, hunting, possession, and trading of wildlife is against the law.





Under Republic Act 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Protection and Conservation Act, violators may face a maximum imprisonment of one year and a fine of up to one million pesos.

### **Stay away**

Meanwhile, Paquito Moreno, executive director of the DENR, said people should refrain from interacting with wild and exotic animals to avoid zoonotic diseases.

Moreno also urged the public to report illegal trading of animals and other wildlife crimes to authorities.

gsg



## Laguna cops plant 1.5K seedlings in Tayak Hills

Sunday, September 13, 2020 Gil Aman

**Camp BGen Paciano Rizal** – The Philippine National Police in Laguna planted 1,500 seedlings during the second month of Laguna PPO's "Samahang Pulis Laguna Kapanalig Mo at Makakalikasan held in Tayak hills Bgy. Tala, Rizal , Laguna.



Members of the Laguna PNP pose at the tree planting site in Tayak Hills, Rizal, Laguna. Photo by GIL AMAN

The tree planting project was led by Provincial Director Police Colonel Serafin Petalio II.

It was previously launched on August 26 with 11,000 seedlings planted in Pila, Laguna.

Laguna conducts the project every month in different towns of Laguna.

Vice Mayor Antonio Aurelio recognized PCol. Petalio II's initiative as part of collaborative efforts to aid Rizal in improving its ecotourism development project called "Tayak Adventure, Nature and Wildlife Park (TANAW) de Rizal or TANAW de Rizal."

Joint personnel of the Laguna PNP, DENR Laguna and Rizal towns as well as residents of Bgy. Tala planted 1,500 seedlings in the area.

Aurelio, said they aim for a high percentage of survival of the seedlings to be planted. "These seedlings are one of the living testaments of man's 'fulfillment of the responsibility' for the environment and the future generation." he added.

PCol.Petalio II said he initiated the project to ignite public interest in promoting a safer environment.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed by the Laguna PPO and the DENR represented by For. Nonito M Tamayo, Regional Executive Director DENR 4A, For. Ronilo L Salac, Head PENRO Laguna, . Mayor Vener P Muñoz, of Rizal and Vice Mayor Aurelio.

The tree planting activity was attended by staff officers, chiefs of police and force commanders of the police units of Laguna PPO, personnel of the 2nd Infantry Unifier Brigade, personnel of DENR 4A, DENR Laguna, DENR Rizal, and Bgy. Tala residents.

Source: <https://journal.com.ph/news/provincial/laguna-cops-plant-1-5k-seedlings-in-tayak-hills/>



# Plant thieves scour forests to satisfy foliage-starved Filipinos

September 13, 2020 | 11:46 am



*A mature Monstera deliciosa, or swiss cheese plant, now fetches at least P3,000 (\$62), compared with as little as P800 before.*

The pandemic has set off a wave of theft in the Philippines. The target? Plants.

The government has stepped up monitoring of social media and patrolling of protected natural areas amid reports of traders scouring mountains and forests for plants, including endangered species, to meet a sudden spike in demand from locked-down Filipinos who are craving some greenery in their homes.

“Illegal gatherers and collectors are having a fiesta because the market is bigger and prices are more attractive,” said Rogelio Demallete, an ecosystem specialist at the nation’s Biodiversity Management Bureau. “People are buying and raising plants because of boredom from the quarantine.”

Carnivorous pitcher plants and *bantigue* trees, popular in crafting bonsai, are among those sought after, Demallete said. The bureau’s agents, hampered by quarantine restrictions, are working with the National Bureau of Investigation to catch illegal gatherers and traders of the “vulnerable” and “endangered” species such as *Alocasia zebrina* and *Alocasia sandariana*.

## WHITE LEAVES

Common plants such as caladiums, rubber trees, and ferns are selling in legal nurseries for 35% to 40% more than before COVID, according to Win Marcella, a hobbyist who is spending more time tending his garden. A mature *Monstera deliciosa*, or swiss cheese plant, now fetches at least P3,000 (\$62), compared with as little as P800 before. Other enthusiasts on social media say demand for the rare white-leafed subspecies *Deliciosa albo* is so high that they are valued at P7,000 per leaf.



Even as the government begins easing a lockdown that was reimposed in the capital last month after a spike in new COVID cases, green fever has prompted some entrepreneurs to switch to or add horticulture after their existing businesses fell victim to the effects of the virus.

Marvin Bracerros, the chef behind Philippine restaurant Yum in Milan, had to close his fine-dining outlet in a Manila shopping mall earlier this year as his customers vanished. In a small space offered him by the mall landlord to help recover some of his losses he began selling house plants. Now he has stalls in two malls and plans to open seven more by October.

“I was surprised with the response,” said Mr. Bracerros. “I think it’s driven by the need for positive vibes and a stress reliever. I don’t think this is just a fad. People are more conscious of healthy living.”

The desire to have something living to care for in an apartment has boosted sales of house plants in other cities facing lockdowns. Even before the pandemic there had been a growing trend among millennials to raise “[plant babies](#)” in cities such as [New York](#) and [London](#). But the demand in Manila for greenery is especially striking. One of the most densely populated cities in the world, with more than 27,000 people per square mile, it’s also one of the largest, with an estimated [23 million](#) people sandwiched between the mountains and Manila Bay.

The need for nature is helping established plant wholesalers like [Bulacan Garden Corp.](#) survive a drop in business from their traditional customers that landscape new developments or supply hotels and offices. While sales to bulk buyers have more than halved, a daily stream of individuals who buy three to five pieces each has kept Bulacan Garden’s two Manila shops busy, said store manager Ricky Santiago.

“Many people have nowhere to go and nothing to do during the lockdown so they raise plants to fill the time,” Mr. Santiago said. “Retail buyers are not replacing the volume lost from bulk orders, but they are helping us and many others stay in survival mode.”

Demand from the capital has spread to small operators in the suburbs around Manila’s vast urban sprawl. Jeffrey Cabida, who helps run a backyard nursery 85 kilometers south of the capital, says most of its sales now come from Manila with orders up eight-fold from a year ago. “So many are buying that some plants run out of stock,” he said.

“We’re surprised at the increase,” Mr. Santiago said. “We can’t help but wonder because these aren’t consumables. This isn’t food that you can eat.” — **Bloomberg**





# Recycled materials find new purpose at Baseco's beach park

Published September 13, 2020, 6:15 PM

by [Philippine News Agency](#)

*The city government of Manila used mostly recycled materials in developing a park at Baseco Beach.*



The Baseco Beach Park currently being developed by the Manila City government. (Photo grabbed from Isko Moreno Domagoso FB page)

Manila Mayor Francisco 'Isko Moreno' Domagoso made the revelation during his weekly Capital Report on Friday, to give "some dignity" for those residing in Baseco, a depressed area.

*"Meron pong isang kalsada sa Baseco na ninanais ko na bigyan naman sila ng maaliwalas na pasyalan sa loob mismo ng Baseco. Iisipin nyo bang Baseco yan? Yan ay squatter area, sab nga ng iba kinatatakutan. Hindi dapat tayong katakutan kahit squatter tayo may dignidad naman sa pagiging squatter* (There is a road in Baseco that I want to develop to give the residents a place to stroll. That is where informal settlers live. People should not be afraid of informal settlers even if they live in a depressed area. There is dignity in being an informal settler)," the mayor noted.

From a "filthy" area, Domagoso said Baseco Park is slowly turning into a decent place. He said these efforts are for the residents, most especially children and senior citizens, so that they do not need to go far if they need to take a casual walk outside their homes.

Domagoso said from Manila Zoo's rehabilitation several months ago, he ordered the city engineering to collect the block (tisa) used in the pavement or walkway.

These old "tisa" were cleaned and are now being installed at Baseco Park.

Meanwhile, the city government also lighted the stretch of España Boulevard and Taft Avenue recently and replaced the old lamp posts with new ones.

Domagoso had the old lamp posts from España and Taft Avenue cleaned, fixed, and installed at the Baseco Park.

"We're done lighting the Taft Avenue and the España Avenue as well, but I find it a waste of money if we will just throw away the old lamp posts, so I had them collected and placed in Baseco. But before installing it there, I asked the Manila City Engineering Office and the DPS and the city electricians to fix them, paint it with black while the gold part painted with gold, replaced the broken parts with glass and put new wires," Domagoso said.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/09/13/recycled-materials-find-new-purpose-at-basecos-beach-park/>



## Manila park uses recycled materials

Published 2 hours ago on September 14, 2020 03:50 AM

By [Joseph Cortez](#)



The City of Manila has been repurposing materials from developments around the city for use in many of its rehabilitation projects.

In his weekly Capital Report over the weekend, Mayor Francisco “Isko Moreno” Domagoso said the materials used in developing a park in Baseco, Tondo where taken from other parts of the city.

The open space in Baseco is meant to provide residents “some dignity.”

“There is now a promenade inside Baseco because I wanted to give those living there somewhere pleasant they can go to. Did you imagine something like that rising in Baseco? That is a squatter community. In fact, some people fear the place. They need not be feared just because they are squatters. They also have dignity as individuals,” Domagoso said.

The stones used to pave Baseco Park were collected from the pavements at the Manila Zoo, which is also undergoing renovation.

This way, the park will provide children and senior citizens alike a place where they can unwind and play, without having to go far from their houses.

Meanwhile, the city government has also lighted the stretch of España Boulevard and Taft Avenue recently, replacing the old lamp posts with simple new ones.

The old lamp posts from España and Taft Avenue have already been cleaned, fixed and installed at Baseco Park.



## QC, C40 Cities team up for clean air

*posted* September 13, 2020 at 10:00 pm

by [Rio N. Araja](#)

Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte has partnered with climate leadership network C40 Cities to implement solutions to lessen air pollution and achieve cleaner air.

C40's Air Quality Program directly supports cities to accelerate air quality improvements by facilitating peer-to-peer knowledge sharing, providing technical assistance, capacity building and creating new tools and resources for cities.

Quezon City is one of two cities selected to participate in the 2020-2021 C40 Air Quality Technical Assistance Program after several rounds of evaluation of 31 cities that applied.

C40 shall support Quezon City in conducting an air quality baseline study by evaluating existing air pollution data and deploying a new network of air quality monitoring sensors; developing detailed recommendations and specifications for a permanent air quality monitoring network; running a series of deep capacity building workshops to train staff in air quality management principles, and producing a roadmap to the city's first air quality management plan.

The project is made possible through the generous funding from the Clean Air Fund, a philanthropic initiative with a mission to tackle air pollution around the world.

The Quezon City's Environmental Protection and Waste Management Department is tasked to take the lead in the project delivery.

"Quezon City is very pleased to be in partnership with C40 Cities and the Clean Air Fund on the air quality technical assistance project, which provides integral support towards fulfilling our commitment to better air quality management with the intention of providing cleaner air to our residents," said Mayor Joy Belmonte.



# Groups push for urban gardening to fight hunger, climate change

By Che Palicte September 13, 2020, 7:07 pm



GARDENING. The working group of the free webinar on urban container gardening (UCG). From left to right, moderator Leinard Jan Zaspas; Rossano Luga, president of Rotary Club of East Davao; UCG advocate Perfecto Rom; and Princess Pauline Misa and Kenneth Bryan Estremera (technical support). (Photo courtesy of Ross Luga)

DAVAO CITY – The Rotary Club of East Davao and the Philippine Institute of Certified Public Accountants (PICPA) have seen the urban container gardening (UCG) as one of the best solutions to address hunger and climate change, especially as the country faces a health crisis.

“Urban gardening is a practical and uncomplicated method of growing plant-based food that doesn’t require wide agricultural lands or even a backyard. You simply need to repurpose or upcycle common household containers and utilize the space in your rooms, rooftops, or balconies. This method also ensures you that you’re eating clean, fresh, and organic produce,” Rossano Luga, president of Rotary Club of East Davao, said in an interview Sunday.

UCG is a technology of home farming used to grow food in limited spaces in the urban areas to serve as a nutrition garden of the household.

It is a household activity that utilizes containers in growing fruits, vegetables, and herbs for family consumption; and the cheapest and healthiest way of food production as it utilizes bio-wastes as sources of fertilizers for gardening.

Luga also underscored a need to mitigate the environmental damage that is triggering climate change to overcome the long-term effects of the pandemic.

“Integrating clean and sustainable practices into our daily activities is a crucial step in the right direction as it ensures safe food consumption, promotes a healthy lifestyle, reduces our waste products, and reduces our individual carbon footprints,” he added.

The Rotary Club of East Davao and the PICPA, with other participating organizations like the American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines-Mindanao Chapter, INCOME Davao Credit Cooperative, Rotary Club of Downtown Davao, and Rotary Club of Central Panabo recently conducted a free webinar on UCG.

During the webinar, Perfecto Rom, the resource speaker, said UCG is an advocacy to democratize agriculture empowering families to participate in food production and ecological sanitation (ECOSAN) right in their backyards. (PNA)





# Gov't vows to stay vigilant vs smuggling of foreign wastes

Published September 13, 2020, 11:10 AM

by [Genalyn Kabiling](#)

The government will stay vigilant against the smuggling of foreign wastes following the country's "environmental victory" in sending back the illegal trash shipment to South Korea, Presidential Communications Secretary Martin Andanar said Sunday.



Presidential Communications Secretary Martin Andanar  
(PCOO / FILE PHOTO / MANILA BULLETIN)

According to Andanar, any hazardous wastes shipped into the country could not only harm the environment but also the health of Filipinos if left "unchecked and neglected."

"We, in the Duterte administration, will remain vigilant and in cognizance on matters of global waste smuggling to prevent instances, such as this, that could greatly and negatively impact our country on different levels," he said.

The government recently sent back the remaining containers of illegal imported waste to the country of origin, South Korea, that were dumped in Misamis Oriental two years ago. Custom authorities had earlier seized the 6,500 metric tons of illegal wastes contained in 40-foot container vans that arrived at the Tagoloan port in July and October 2018. The household wastes were mislabeled as synthetic plastic flakes by the importer.

Andanar lauded the return of the illegal waste to South Korea, saying it was a "environmental victory of the Philippines."

He noted that the administration's "commitment and political will" played a crucial role in the "timely and successful re-exportation" of the foreign trash.

"This victory doesn't only represent environmental justice, but also medical and health justice for every Filipino," he said.

"This as hazardous materials may have been included in the exportation which could have affected millions of Filipinos if left unchecked and neglected," he added.

Andanar commended the Bureau of Customs for sending back the foreign trash imports. The South Korean trash was reportedly the largest illegally imported waste reported in the country.

"We also laud the efforts of those in the Bureau of Customs (BoC) Collection District X, who coordinated with the concerned parties and authorities in making the return of the smuggled garbage to South Korea possible," he said.



Last year, President Duterte compelled Canada to retrieve its garbage shipment amid his firm stance against turning the country into a dumping site. He even threatened to declare war on Canada and dump the garbage on its shores if it did not get back their household wastes that were falsely labeled as plastics for recycling in 2013 and 2014.

The government recalled diplomats and ordered temporary bans on official travel and interaction with Canada when it missed a May 15 deadline to retrieve its garbage. The Palace order was eventually lifted when the trash were finally shipped back to Canada.



## ‘Environmental victory’ ng Pilipinas sa pagbabalik ng basura sa South Korea, ikinatuwa ng Palasyo



Ikinatuwa ng Palasyo ng Malakanyang ang environmental victory ng Pilipinas matapos maibalik sa South Korea ang basurang ilegal na ipinasok sa bansa noong July 21 at October 21, 2018.

Ayon kay Presidential Communications Secretary Martin Andanar, dapat din na salduhan ang Bureau of Customs (BOC) Collection District X na nagpursige para maibalik sa South Korea ang mga basura.

“This victory doesn’t only represent environmental justice, but also medical and health justice for every Filipino. This as hazardous materials may have been included in the exportation which could have affected millions of Filipinos if left unchecked and neglected,” pahayag ni Andanar.

Pursigido aniya ang administrasyon ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte na mapaganda ang lagay ng Pilipinas.

“We, in the Duterte administration, will remain vigilant and in cognizance on matters of global waste smuggling to prevent instances, such as this, that could greatly and negatively impact our country on different levels,” pahayag ni Andanar.



# Palasyo ikinatuwa ang pagkabalik ng basura sa SoKor

By [Gemma Garcia](#)(Pang-Masa)

- September 14, 2020 - 12:00am



Ayon kay Presidential Communications Secretary Martin Andanar, dapat din na salduhan ang Bureau of Customs (BOC) Collection District X na nagpursige para maibalik sa South Korea ang mga basura.

Ecowaste Coalition FB Page

MANILA, Philippines — Ikinatuwa ng Palasyo ng Malacañang ang environmental victory ng Pilipinas matapos maibalik sa South Korea ang basurang ilegal na ipinasok sa bansa noong July 21 at October 21, 2018.

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Pursigido aniya ang administrasyon ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte na mapaganda ang lagay ng Pilipinas.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/pang-masa/police-metro/2020/09/14/2042226/palasyo-ikinatuwa-ang-pagkabalik-ng-basura-sa-sokor/amp/>





## Pagbalik ng SoKor basura pinuri

By Abante News Online — Last updated Sep 13, 2020

NEWS



Photo Courtesy of aa.com.ph



IKINAGALAK ng Malakanyang ang pagbabalik ng mga basura mula sa South Korea.

Ayon kay Communications Secretary Martin Andanar, itinuturing ito ng Malakanyang na isang “environment victory”.

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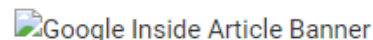


Driver sumalpok sa truck dedo  
Sep 13, 2020

“We also laud the efforts of those in the Bureau of Customs Collection District X, who coordinated with the concerned parties and authorities in making the return of the smuggled garbage to South Korea possible,” ayon kay Andanar.

Matatandaang ang shipment ng tone-toneladang basura ay dumating sa Misamis

Oriental, Northern Mindanao noong 2018.



“This victory doesn’t only represent environmental justice, but also medical and health justice for every Filipino. This as hazardous materials may have been included in the exportation which could have affected millions of Filipinos if left unchecked and neglected,” dagdag pa ni Andanar. (Juliet de Loza-Cudia/Prince Golez)



# Pamumuhunan sa 'coal' wakasan na

(Pilipino Star Ngayon) - September 14, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Kailangan na umanong itigil ang pamumuhunan sa coal at maging responsable sa usapin ng klima.

Ayon kay Rayyan Hassan, executive director ng NGO Forum on ADB, nirerekomenda ng ADB Independent Evaluation Department (IED) sa Energy Policy nito na wakasan na ang coal sa Asia-Pacific.

Aniya, nananawagan ang NGO Forum on ADB na pakinggan ng ADB Board of Directors at Senior Management ang rekomendasyon na ito at mabilisang abandonahin ang anumang proyekto ng coal tungo sa isang "just transition" na aayon sa layunin ng Paris Agreement na limitahan ang pag-init ng daigdig hanggang 1.5°C.

Binigyang-diin ni Hassan, ang pagsabog ng Taal, pagliyab ng mga gubat ng Australia, pagbaha sa Pakistan at Bangladesh, paghagupit ng malalakas na bagyo sa USA ay nangyari sa pitong buwang hinarap ng buong mundo ang COVID-19.

Ayon naman kay Gerry Arances, executive director ng Center for Energy, Ecology, and Development (CEED) na sa gitna ng lumalalang krisis sa klima at kalidad ng hangin, pagmura ng mga teknolohiya ng renewable energy, at mga pangangailangang pangkalikasan at pang-ekonomiya na nangibabaw ngayong panahon ng COVID-19, panahon na upang mag-"decarbonize".



# PH'S COVID-19 tally exceeds 261K with 3,372 new cases; 20K recoveries

By: [Christia Marie Ramos](#) - Reporter / [@CMRamosINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 04:37 PM September 13, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — The total number of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) cases in the country has surpassed 261,000 after the Department of Health (DOH) recorded 3,372 new confirmed cases.

As of 4 p.m. on Sunday, the country's caseload was recorded at 261,216. Data from the DOH also showed 49,277 active cases nationwide.

Of the newly reported cases, 85 percent or 2,850 cases were recorded over the past 14 days.

The top regions with cases reported in the past two weeks are the National Capital Region, Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, and Quezon) and Central Luzon, the DOH noted.

The DOH likewise announced 20,472 recoveries, bringing the total number of patients who have recovered from the disease to 207,568.

The department also reported 79 deaths. This pushes the COVID-19 death toll to 4,371.

Of the 74 deaths, 57 occurred in September, 14 in August, six in July and one in March. Majority of these newly-reported deaths were recorded in the National Capital Region, according to the DOH.

Upon validation, the DOH also found 19 duplicates which were removed from the total caseload, including 12 recovered cases.

Moreover, the DOH said there were eight cases that were previously reported as recovered but after final validation, they were seven deaths and one active case.

Globally, over 28 million individuals have so far been infected by the new coronavirus, which originated from Wuhan City in China's Hubei province late last year. More than 906,000 have died from the disease across the world.

The virus causes mild or moderate symptoms such as fever and cough for most people. It causes serious illnesses such as pneumonia on older adults and people with existing health issues.

/MUF

Source: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1334831/phs-covid-19-tally-exceeds-261k-with-3372-new-cases-20k-recoveries>



# PH to be in better shape next year

Bangko Sentral chief disputes SWS poll results

By: [Daxim L. Lucas](#) - Reporter / [@daxing](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 04:30 AM September 14, 2020

The Philippine economy will surely be better in a year's time due to the combined effects of a low base and accelerating business activity in the current and succeeding quarters, according to the head of the central bank, assuring the public the the recovery was well under way.

In a statement, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Gov. Benjamin Diokno expressed disbelief at last week's Social Weather Station (SWS) survey results that showed 40 percent of Filipinos having a more pessimistic view of local economic prospects over the next 12 months.

"We're in better shape now than we were three months ago," he told reporters in a mobile phone message at the weekend. "Based on available information, I truly believe that the worst is behind us." "Repeat: the SWS survey is based on perception by a limited number of adults with limited information," Diokno added, explaining that the poll results were based on expectations of 2,000 adults.

The survey released by SWS last week also found out that this 40-percent economic pessimism rate among adult Filipinos—or the belief that the economy would take on a worse turn—was the highest since a 52-percent rate recorded in June 2008.

In 2008, the Philippines under former President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo was affected—albeit not gravely—by the global financial crisis.

Meanwhile, 24 percent of the respondents believed that the country's economic status would remain the same, while 30 percent expect it to improve. However, this 30-percent economic optimism, or belief that the economy would be better, was at its lowest since the 27 percent recorded last March 2015.

"I cannot imagine how the economy will be worse off 12 months from now, coming from a record-breaking contraction in the second quarter of 2020, owing to the total lockdown in March, April and May," he said.

With gross domestic product having contracted by 16.5 percent in the second quarter —the sharpest dive on record —the central bank expects the third and fourth quarters to register shallower declines owing the the gradual easing of restrictions imposed to slow the spread of the coronavirus pandemic.

Government economic managers expect that growth will resume its gradual uptrend next year.

"In the third quarter, the government has opened the economy gradually, let part of business activity to resume and allowed more transport to operate," Diokno said. "I expect that the economy will be more open in the fourth quarter than in the third quarter, more open in the first quarter of 2021 than in the fourth quarter of 2020, and so on. So it boggles my mind how the economy will be worse 12 months from now," he added. "The virus infection rate has started to flatten, 'R0' (the average number of people infected by one infectious individual) is now below 1, and the government has shifted from general lockdown to granular or localized lockdown."

"Let me assure everyone that based on immediate past, 'nowcast' and forecast data, the Philippines is now on its way to recovery," the central bank chief said. "Hence, the economy would be in a better—not worse—shape 12 months from now." INQ

Source: <https://business.inquirer.net/307262/ph-to-be-in-better-shape-next-year>





# Malay town, including Boracay, borders to stay open

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 04:16 AM September 14, 2020

ILOILO CITY, Iloilo, Philippines — —The borders of Malay town in Aklan province, which has jurisdiction over the prime tourist destination Boracay Island, will remain open despite an appeal of the municipal council to tighten travel restrictions.

Acting Malay Mayor Frolibar Bautista on Saturday denied the request of councilors to temporarily close the borders to inbound traffic.

The municipal council on Sept. 10 passed a resolution urging Bautista to shutter the borders as part of efforts to protect residents from COVID-19. It cited a report of the Aklan Provincial Health Office that documented the first local transmission of the virus in the province involving a staff of Dr. Rafael S. Tumbukon Memorial Hospital, the provincial hospital.

Aklan had 24 COVID-19 cases as of Saturday, including one fatality, 10 active case and 13 recoveries.

The Malay municipal council found the report of the provincial health office an “alarming development,” but Bautista pointed out that Aklan was under the more relaxed modified general community quarantine and had been enforcing health protocols.

Boracay has accepted tourists from Western Visayas starting on June 16.

Local governments and businesses in Aklan are also preparing to accept more local and international tourists coming from areas with no, or relatively low number of COVID-19 cases starting on Oct. 1.

—*Nestor P. Burgos Jr.*



## Covid-19: It's not over yet, maybe

By BusinessMirror Editorial

September 14, 2020

With the data from the Department of Health often delayed and “adjusted,” it is difficult for the average person to get a grip on the genuine Covid-19 situation in the Philippines. As with all data examination, the larger the number, the less likely accurate conclusions can be drawn.

Therefore, it might be better to look at other data rather than the number of cases, deaths, or tests conducted. A month ago, there was great and valid concern about the facilities dedicated to Covid patients being overwhelmed. At one point in the National Capital Region, we were up to nearly 80 percent of all Intensive Care Units and Isolation wards being occupied.

Currently, less than 50 percent of ICU and Isolation units nationwide are occupied, and about 60 percent of that number is in the NCR. However, here again the data is not as “clean” as it might appear. When there was concern, some if not many hospitals opened up more ICU and isolation beds for Covid patients.

Many people during the lockdown did take the time to learn a foreign language or organize their closets. But perhaps people spent most of their time becoming professionals at “20/20 hindsight.” God help the next virus that tries to take over the world because there are now legions of health experts with answers that are ready to do battle. We are prepared with a range of options from North Korea’s “shoot on sight” anyone displaying symptoms of illness, to Sweden’s basic strategy of letting the virus run its course.

In fact, Sweden became one of the most “hated” countries in 2020 for not following the mass lockdown protocols used by almost every other nation. The *New York Times* called Sweden a “pariah state.” That is the sort of language usually reserved for a nation that uses nerve gas to kill its own citizens (Iraq) or has a leader who reportedly boasts “I keep the decapitated heads of political enemies in my freezer.”

But it turns out that Sweden is like the smartest person in high school that everybody hated. That person goes on to invent a Smartphone app that makes him or her a billionaire and you use it every day. You remember their name; they don’t remember yours.

Sweden did suffer a large number of preventable deaths in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities. Who would have figured that a bunch of old and probably sick people in one place would probably get sick and die if Covid was spread in there?

But here is the cautionary tale. Anders Tegnell, the Swedish state epidemiologist and architect of the “Sweden strategy,” says: “To believe that once the vaccine is here, we can go back and live as we always have done. I think that’s a dangerous message to send because it’s not going to be that easy.”

Nonetheless, we need to take our chances, take proper precautions, and get back to work. But it is confusing. A couple of months ago, standing less than two meters from a stranger might be a death sentence. Now, we will be down to 0.75 of a meter on public transportation.

But then again, economic experts are now health experts and medical practitioners know what is best for the economy. Thank goodness there are only 108 days left until 2021.

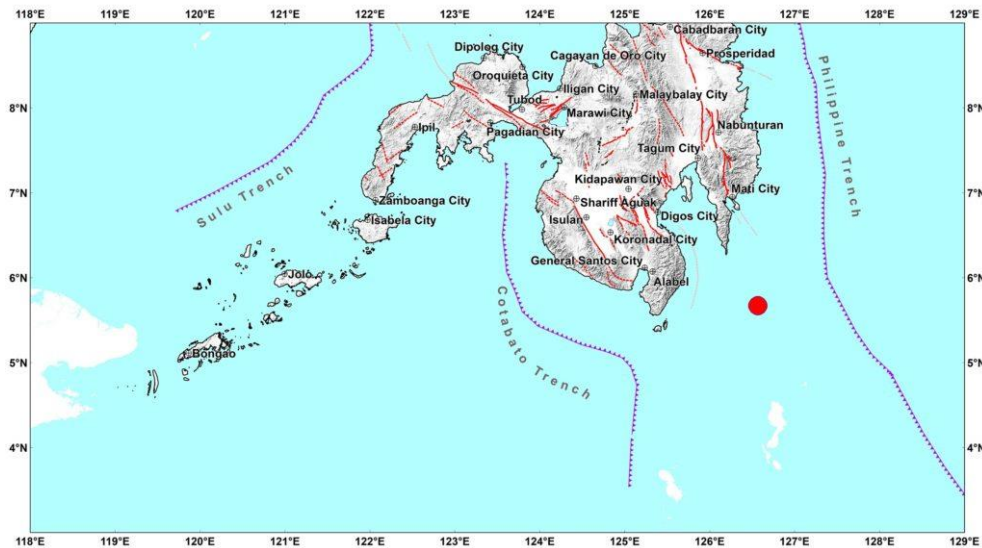
Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/09/14/covid-19-its-not-over-yet-maybe/>



# Jose Abad Santos, Davao Occidental nilindol

## Balita

By Ulat ng Bandera at Radyo Inquirer September 13, 2020 - 01:58 PM



Niyangig ng magnitude 3.2 na lindol ang Davao Occidental.

Ayon sa Phivolcs, namataan ang sentro ng lindol sa layong 108 kilometers Southeast sa Jose Abad Santos bandang 11:58 ng umaga.

32 kilometers ang lalim ng lindol at tectonic ang origin.

Ayon sa Phivolcs, wala namang napaulat na pinsala sa lugar at mga karatig-bayan.

Wala ring inaasahang aftershocks matapos ang pagyanig.



## Dalai Lama nanawagan ng ‘unified global action’ kontra climate change



September 13, 2020 @ 10:00 AM 19 hours ago

Tibet – Nananawagan si Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama sa mga lider sa mundo na magtulungan upang labanan ang climate change.

“Now we should pay more attention about global warming,” sabi ng lider.

Sabi pa ni Dalai Lama na ang epekto ng pagbabago ng klima ay mararamdaman sa mga maliliit na bansa.

“But poor people, they really face serious problem.” saad pa nito.RNT/ELM





## ADB prodded to step up in climate finance

By [Cai Ordinario](#)

September 14, 2020

In order to achieve the Paris Climate agreement, civil society organizations (CSOs) in the Philippines and abroad recommended that the Asian Development Bank (ADB) should align its country partnerships with the global environmental accord.

The report titled “Decarbonizing the ADB” stated that the multilateral development bank’s efforts to set a clean energy agenda and climate agenda are not enough.

The CSOs supported the call last week by the ADB’s Independent Evaluation Department (IED) that the Manila-based financial institution should formally withdraw from financing new coal-fired energy projects and revisit its energy policy.

“While the IED recommends emphasizing climate change mitigation and adaptation as a core priority and alignment with the ‘Strategy 2030,’ which refers to the Paris Agreement, it’s important to specifically and clearly state the 1.5-degree-Celsius Paris temperature goal,” according to the report, which was written by the Center for Energy, Ecology and Development and commissioned by the NGO Forum on the ADB.

“Developing Asia’s pivotal situation as the last bastion of coal and also among the most climate-vulnerable countries warrants that the ADB take a firm and stringent stand on pursuing a 1.5-degree-Celsius pathway, in order to avoid high-carbon lock-in and the risk of stranded assets in the future,” the report added.

The Paris Agreement aims for global carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions to decline by 45 percent by the year 2030 from 2010 levels and achieve a net-zero CO<sub>2</sub> emission by mid-century. The CSOs said these goals should prompt multilateral institutions such as ADB to be more proactive.

The CSOs said updating the country partnership strategy (CPS) would mean increasing ADB’s technical assistance to its Developing Member Countries (DMCs) to formulate long-term low greenhouse-gas emission development and efforts to decarbonize their economies.

The updated CPS will also prompt ADB to finance projects that will place DMCs on the 1.5-degree-Celsius pathway. The CSOs said ADB-funded projects should also be screened according to their alignment with the Paris agreement.

Further, the CSOs said the ADB should impose a shadow carbon price of \$80 per total carbon dioxide (tCO<sub>2</sub>) by 2020 and \$100/tCO<sub>2</sub> by 2030. Currently, ADB’s carbon price of \$36.30/tCO<sub>2</sub> is still considered as the bottom range or the lowest carbon prices imposed by financial institutions.

According to the 2017 Report of the High Level Commission on Carbon Prices, the explicit carbon-price level consistent with achieving the Paris temperature target is at least \$40–80/tCO<sub>2</sub> by 2020 and \$50–100/tCO<sub>2</sub> by 2030, provided a supportive policy environment is in place.



“To meet the Paris temperature goal, [the] ADB should impose carbon prices at least at the highest end of the range and also determine a faster and higher rate of increase of its carbon prices, much like how [the] EIB [European Investment Bank] has already determined its increasing carbon prices until 2050,” the report said.

Earlier, in an e-mail to BusinessMirror, the IED said the ADB approved \$2.06 billion in financing for coal-fired power plants between 2009 and 2019.

The IED said the financing for coal-fired power plants located in Pakistan, Philippines, China and Vietnam, accounted for a total of 4.8 percent of the total financial support of ADB for the energy sector.

The IED report stated that ADB approved \$42.5 billion for the energy sector between 2009 and 2019, the second-largest sector allocation after transport.

The Asia and Pacific region, IED said, is still heavily reliant on thermal coal for power and heat generation, which is a major contributor to climate change and air pollution.

The region has the world’s most coal projects in the pipeline, with 78 percent of new plants in the pipeline located in ADB’s developing member countries.

The IED review also found that ADB’s energy program made significant contributions to increasing the availability and reliability of electricity supply, through investment in power grid infrastructure, as well as increasing the share of renewable energy in the region through public and private sector financing.

ADB was a pioneering investor in renewable energy in many of its developing member countries. However, the IED said its energy program fell short of addressing other priorities such as demand-side efficiency, last-mile electrification, and sector reforms.



# 'Superfungus' threatens last Panamanian golden frogs

Juan José Rodríguez, Agence France-Presse

Posted at Sep 13 2020 06:33 PM



This file photo taken on April 16, 2009 shows a golden frog (*Atelopus zetequi*) at the El Nispero del Valle de Anton zoo, 124 km east of Panama City. Some 200 golden frogs survive -in seclusion- as a devastating and uncontrolled fungus threatens to exterminate a third of the amphibian species in the country, a situation that scientists describe as "critical." *Elmer Martinez, AFP*

PANAMA CITY - Cocooned from the outside world, some 200 critically endangered golden frogs are living a sheltered existence in Panama, protected from a devastating fungus that threatens to wipe out a third of the country's amphibian species -- a situation scientists describe as "critical."

The frogs, which are yellow or gold with black spots, enjoy a controlled environment inside fish tanks installed at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI), a 5,000-square-foot (465-square-meter) facility in Gamboa, north of Panama City.

Though endemic to the lush Central American country, no Panamanian golden frog can be seen in its natural habitat, threatened as it is by a so-called "superfungus" that has decimated amphibians in the wild.

According to a report by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) published this week, the planet has lost more than two-thirds of its vertebrates in less than 50 years.

The situation is especially dire in the tropical areas of Central and South America, where the extent of loss is pegged at 94 percent.

Believed extinct in the wild, only about 1,500 of the tiny Panamanian golden frogs are found in zoos where they can reproduce.

But it is not only frogs that are vulnerable to the fungus. Toads, salamanders and caecilians -- limbless amphibians similar to snakes -- are also at risk.

"In Panama, we can say that about a third of the 225 species of amphibians are threatened in some way," said STRI researcher Roberto Ibanez.

Gina Della Togna, a specialist in molecular and cellular biology at the University of Maryland, described the situation as "critical."

## SUPERFUNGUS

The biggest threat posed to amphibians is chytrid fungus, which spreads through water.

The pathogen is responsible for chytridiomycosis, an infectious disease that scientists say has already caused the disappearance of some 30 species.



The fungus becomes embedded in the animal's skin and infects it, causing it to be unable to exchange salts and water with the environment.

The disease causes irreparable damage to vital functions. Eventually the animal dies of heart failure caused by asphyxiation.

"It's a pretty dramatic and painful disease," said Angie Estrada, a biologist at Virginia Tech University and administrator of Panama's Summit Park.

"When the fungus gets to a place where it wasn't, it affects populations very much and animals die en masse. It causes certain death in the individuals it infects. It's a devastating phenomenon," said Della Togna.

The microorganism was first detected in the 20th century in the Korean Peninsula and scientists warn that it has already spread throughout the world.

"Anywhere in the world where there are amphibians, the fungus is already there," said Estrada.

It arrived in Panama in the early 1990s and has been wreaking havoc ever since.

"It's a superfungus that can even affect other species that are not amphibians," according to Ibanez.

He warned that deforestation, environmental destruction and pollution of streams and rivers caused by humans exacerbate the problem.

#### **- Glimmers of hope -**

Despite the gloomy scenario, scientists point to some glimmers of hope, saying that in the past few years some species believed to have gone extinct have been re-discovered.

Specialists suspect that some amphibians have been able to bolster their defenses against infection.

"This gives us hope, knowing that some frogs are returning and that they have ways to counter-attack" the fungus, said Estrada.

Meanwhile, in Gamboa, the STRI maintains some 2,000 specimens from 12 frog species in the hope they can one day be released into the wild to fend for themselves.

"The idea is not to keep these animals in captivity forever. We want to be able to reestablish populations in their natural habitat," said Ibanez.

To that end, Smithsonian researcher Della Togna is carrying out an assisted reproduction project, where she freezes the animals' semen in order to impregnate the females and increase their numbers.

With great care, she injects hormones into the tiny frogs that appear to get lost in the palm of her hand.

"Of all the different animals, amphibians are the world's most threatened," Della Togna said.

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/overseas/09/13/20/superfungus-threatens-last-panamanian-golden-frogs?fbclid=IwAR2y9jVkJMKsfrAZOiYI87gTPitfujFZZrj7Uf6c2AT7ZKwAeRXdfCMUV4QU>





# LA mayor on Trump's response to wildfires: 'This is climate change' not just about forest management

By [Caroline Kelly](#), CNN

Updated 1956 GMT (0356 HKT) September 13, 2020

(CNN)Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti on Sunday pushed back on [President Donald Trump's frequent characterization of wildfires](#), like those currently ravaging the West Coast, as simply a forest management issue.

"It's been very clear that years of drought, as we're seeing, whether it's too much water and too much rain in parts of our country right now, or too little," Garcetti told CNN's Jake Tapper on "State of the Union." "This is climate change and this is an administration that's put its head in the sand."

Slamming the administration as hosting "the last vestiges of the flat Earth society of this generation," Garcetti called for "real action."

"We need to reduce the carbon emissions that we have, and we need to make sure we can manage that water," he added. "This is not about just forest management or raking. Anybody who lives here in California is insulted by that, quite frankly, and (Trump) keeps perpetrating this lie."

Garcetti's comments come a day after the White House announced [Trump will visit California Monday](#). The President mentioned the wildfires during a speech at a rally Saturday night -- after weeks of remaining largely silent on the historically devastating fires that have killed over two dozen people and [burned more than 3 million acres in California](#) -- but did not speak on the climate crisis, an omission that is often a point of contention among his critics.

Trump told rallygoers in Minden, Nevada, that the fires are about "forest management," a characterization he has repeatedly offered of such blazes that has been previously [criticized as inaccurate](#).

## Fact-checking Trump's California wildfire criticism

"It is about forest management, please remember the words, very simply, forest management, please remember, about forest management, and other things," he said, also thanking the firefighters and first responders who are reacting to the fires.

Trump has pushed the familiar refrain for years while staying largely silent on climate change, despite [scientists having long warned](#) that fire seasons like this could happen, and that the more humans heat up the planet, the higher the odds in favor of the hot, dry conditions conducive to blazes.

After 2018's deadly Camp fire, Trump said that the forest floor should have been "raked out."

"They're starting again in California," Trump said at a rally in mid-August. "I said, you gotta clean your floors, you gotta clean your forests -- there are many, many years of leaves and broken trees and they're like, like, so flammable, you touch them and it goes up."

About 20% of California is made up of national forests, according to the US Department of Agriculture [Forest Service](#).

Garcetti on Sunday also asked that Trump respond to issues in Democratic-leaning cities and states just as he would in Republican ones, saying he believes they are treated unequally.

"I think leadership at the very top needs to be earlier, stronger, and from the President I wish that we would get as much attention not based on an electoral map but just purely on being Americans," Garcetti told Tapper. "And the need for leadership to be from the White House for all of America, you know whether it's twin hurricanes on the Gulf Coast or fires here on the West Coast, we're one nation."



In a subsequent interview on "State of the Union," White House Trade Adviser Peter Navarro called Garcetti's allegation that the administration acts with political motivation in offering federal aid to states affected by natural disasters "offensive," pointing to the efforts the President took to assist the state of New York during the coronavirus pandemic.

"Everything that New York wanted, they got. So, please, Mr. Garcetti, take care of Los Angeles better than you are doing," Navarro said.

Earlier, Garcetti acknowledged and thanked the Trump administration for declaring a State of Emergency in the state three weeks ago due to the fires.

"It's easy to forget that it's taken three weeks. I'm glad he's coming, but we need much more help when we have firefighters dying on the line and Washington refuses to help states and refuses to help local governments that are the first responders to emergencies like this, it's unconscionable."

California wasn't the only state Sunday voicing concerns over leadership on climate change in light of the wildfires.

"The President has said it's all about raking the forest, it's just a big and devastating lie," Democratic Oregon Sen. Jeff Merkley told ABC's George Stephanopoulos when asked about Trump's comments.

Environmental changes such as drier forests "are consequences of a warming planet," Merkley continued.

"We need to have a president now who follows the science on global warming," he added.

Democratic Oregon Gov. Kate Brown told CBS News on Sunday that the wildfires should serve a a "wake-up call."

"This is truly the bellwether for climate change on the West Coast," Brown said. "And this is a wake-up call for all of us that we have got to do everything in our power to tackle climate change."

This story has been updated with comments from Peter Navarro, Oregon Sen. Jeff Merkley and Oregon Gov. Kate Brown.

CNN's Veronica Stracqualursi, Kevin Liptak, Greg Clary, Kevin Bohn, Alison Main and Rebecca Grandahl contributed to this report.



# As wildfires rage, US voters still divided on climate

Published 20 hours ago on September 13, 2020 09:15 AM

By [Agence France-Presse](#)



Wildfires are burning out of control in the western United States, cities are choking on toxic air, and Hurricane Laura battered the Gulf Coast just weeks ago.

So why isn't the threat of global warming dominating the election contest between President Donald Trump and former vice president Joe Biden?

Climate change has in fact risen near the top of Democrat voters' concerns since surveys first began two decades ago, but remains anchored to the bottom of Republicans' priorities, meaning that the candidates don't need to spend much time sparring over the issue.

Talking about it helps Biden connect with his party — but this year green issues have been partly crowded out by the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting economic crisis, as well as racial justice protests, experts say.

Jon Krosnick, a professor of political science at Stanford University, told AFP that while the absolute number of people concerned by climate change was at its highest ever, it remained only one of several concerns.

"If he talks only about climate, he's hurting himself because he has to talk about other issues," he told AFP.

Trump, a famous climate-denier, has been silent on the issue.

There is little point in him using the issue to try to appeal to California, the state worst-hit by the fires, because it is so solidly Democratic.

If Biden has to weigh how much time he spends on climate change against other issues, and balance how an aggressive green agenda might turn off swing state voters in places like the Midwest, other Democratic lawmakers are more willing to go on the offense.

"It is just a fact that the Trump administration has the worst environmental record in history," New Mexico Senator Tom Udall, who is among the most green lawmakers in Congress, told AFP.

"The Trump administration stands with the special interests at the expense of everyone else," he continued, citing the president's withdrawal from the Paris agreement and axing of numerous environmental and wildlife regulations.

## **Democrats greener than ever**

One group of voters who are particularly charged by climate issues is the left of the Democratic party, said Anthony Leiserowitz, director of the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication.



Among Democrats who call themselves liberal, it is now the second most highly ranked issue, while it's the eighth for moderate Democrats, according to Yale's latest survey published in April.

That's why every Democratic candidate in the primaries had to make a climate pitch during the party's primaries and vowed to re-enter the Paris accord.

Indeed, the Biden campaign's goal of carbon neutrality by 2050 would have been considered a radical idea when he himself was vice president, just five years ago.

Paul Bledsoe, a lecturer at the Center for Environmental Policy at American University, said it was notable that when Biden invokes the climate, he does so through the lens of economic opportunity in the form of a Green New Deal.

"When I think about climate change, the word I think of is 'jobs'" Biden said in July.

"So these issues have sort of merged, I think, in the public consciousness," said Bledsoe, who worked on former president Bill Clinton's climate task force.

### **Republicans unmoved**

As for Republicans, it's not that they don't care about the environment — it's that climate change in particular has become a wedge issue, a result of their increasing hostility to collective action and the influence of fossil fuel donors, say experts.

When Americans first became conscious of environmentalism in the late 1960s, it was a non-partisan cause — indeed, it was under President Richard Nixon that the Environmental Protection Agency was created.

Basic goals like having clean air and clean water can still resonate today.

That's why, for example, Trump this week announced a decade-long ban on oil drilling off the Gulf Coast, a U-turn that surprised energy executives.

This was an objective shared by Republicans and Democrats in Florida, who feared the possible impact of oil spills on the state's tourism industry.

Francis Rooney, a Republican Congressman from Florida who is one of the few lawmakers from his party to proudly call himself an environmentalist and to back a carbon tax, said of Trump: "His environmental track record is not good at all."

"I have spoken with him about offshore drilling in Florida a lot, and I will say at least he gets that, he's decided that if he wants to win Florida, he needs to clearly oppose offshore drilling," he told AFP.

Rooney, who will stand down at the end of this term, said he was frustrated his party was no longer interested in environmental stewardship and said younger generations of conservatives were being turned off.

"I'm worried that we're going to lose. We're going to lose because we don't have a broad enough voting base," he said.

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/09/13/as-wildfires-rage-us-voters-still-divided-on-climate/>





# Oxford University vaccine trials to resume

September 13, 2020, 12:06 pm



LONDON – Trials of a coronavirus vaccine being developed by Oxford University and British drug manufacturer AstraZeneca will resume after being paused, they said in a statement on Saturday.

The trials had been paused last week after a participant fell ill.

According to the vaccine partners, the UK Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) said trials could resume, after a committee of theirs inspected safety data.

Oxford University said in a statement: “Globally some 18,000 individuals have received study vaccines as part of the trial. In large trials such as this, it is expected that some participants will become unwell and every case must be carefully evaluated to ensure careful assessment of safety.”

AstraZeneca said in a statement: “The UK committee has concluded its investigations and recommended to the MHRA that trials in the UK are safe to resume.” (Anadolu)



# Vaccine trial resumes as virus continues grim march

Published 19 hours ago on September 13, 2020 10:50 AM

By [Agence France-Presse](#)



Clinical trials of one of the most advanced experimental Covid-19 vaccines resumed Saturday after a brief safety pause, as infection numbers continued to march upward in countries across the globe.

The world's hopes for a reprieve from the pandemic were dealt a blow earlier in the week when pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca and Oxford University announced they had "voluntarily paused" their vaccine trial after a UK volunteer developed an unexplained illness.

But on Saturday the trial was given the all clear by British regulators to resume following a safety review. The company also announced it was resuming clinical trials in Brazil next Monday after being given the green light there as well.

The global death toll from the coronavirus has risen to 916,000 with 28.5 million infections, while France and the United Arab Emirates posted grim new milestones for daily infections on Saturday.

And with billions still suffering from the fallout of the pandemic, a worldwide race for a vaccine is underway, with nine companies already in late-stage Phase 3 trials.

Even during the pause, AstraZeneca said it remained hopeful that the vaccine could still be available "by the end of this year, early next year".

Oxford University said that "in large trials such as this, it is expected that some participants will become unwell and every case must be carefully evaluated".

Charlotte Summers, lecturer in intensive care medicine at Cambridge University, said the pause showed the researchers' commitment "to putting safety at the heart of their development programme."

"To tackle the global Covid-19 pandemic, we need to develop vaccines and therapies that people feel comfortable using, therefore it is vital to maintaining public trust that we stick to the evidence and do not draw conclusions before information is available," she said.

## **Backlash**

That public trust will be crucial to convincing a public that is impatient for a vaccine — and in some corners sceptical.

Among the impatient is US President Donald Trump, who has been accused by rival Joe Biden of "undermining public confidence" by regularly raising the possibility that a vaccine will be ready before November's election.



The Republican president is under pressure as the US toll continues to rise, nearing 6.5 million cases on Saturday with more than 193,000 deaths — by far the most in either measure in the world.

Biden also called Trump “reckless” for holding a rally in the Nevada city of Reno even after the venue had to be changed because the event breached local Covid-19 restrictions. Television images of the rally Saturday showed a packed outdoors crowd, with few wearing face masks.

Some of those potentially sceptical about a vaccine meanwhile turned out in numerous German cities and Poland’s capital Warsaw on Saturday, protesting against anti-coronavirus measures and often defying mask-wearing rules.

The movement is made up of a number of different groups, from self-declared “free thinkers” to anti-vaccine campaigners, conspiracy theorists and far-right activists.

### **France, UAE milestones**

There are signs of a resurgence of the virus in numerous countries that lifted many coronavirus measures after beating back the first wave of infections months ago.

France reported 10,000 new infections on Saturday, the country’s highest daily number since launching wide-scale testing.

The milestone came a day after Prime Minister Jean Castex declined to announce any new major restrictions despite a “clear worsening” in the country’s outbreak.

“We have to succeed in living with this virus, without returning to the idea of a generalised lockdown,” Castex said.

Another country to hit a daily milestone on Saturday was the United Arab Emirates, which recorded more than 1,000 new coronavirus cases for the first time.

In Spain, which this week became the first EU country to pass half a million infections, a case was detected among Princess Leonor’s classmates.

The 14-year-old heiress to the Spanish throne — who only returned to school in Madrid on Wednesday — will now have to observe a two-week quarantine.

The uncle of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, businessman Mohamad Makhlof, died from Covid-19 on Saturday, two close sources told AFP.

And in Latin America, which this week passed the milestone of eight million virus cases, worst-hit Brazil charted more than 131,000 deaths from Covid-19 as of Saturday, the second-highest in the world behind the US.

Latvia meanwhile reinstated a compulsory 14-day quarantine for arrivals from neighbouring Estonia due to an upsurge in cases there.

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/09/13/vaccine-trial-resumes-as-virus-continues-grim-march/>