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NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Pagtatambak ng dolomite sand inaasahang matatapos sa gitna ng taon: DENR

April Raffles, ABS-CBN News

Posted at Apr 15 2021 06:07 PM



Manila Bay dolomite sand beach project noong Abril 13, 2021. *George Calvelo, ABS-CBN News*

MAYNILA — Inaasahang matatapos sa kalagitnaan ng taon ang kontrobersiyal na pagtatambak ng crushed dolomite sa Manila Bay, sabi ngayong Huwebes ni Environment Undersecretary Jonas Leones.

Nasa 60 hanggang 70 porsiyento nang tapos ang pagtatambak ng dolomite sand sa Manila Bay, na posibleng matapos sa Hunyo o Hulyo, ani Leones na nag-inspeksiyon sa lugar nitong umaga ng Huwebes.

Ipinaliwanag din ni Leones na ang paglalagay ng artificial white sand beach ay bahagi lamang ng beach nourishment project ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources sa Manila Bay, na ngayo'y 50 hanggang 60 porsiyento nang tapos.



Ayon kay Leones, sa P389 milyong pondo para sa beach nourishment project, P23 milyon hanggang P28 milyon ang ginamit sa pagtatambak sa dolomite.

"Contracted na kasi rin 'yan eh so may mga liabilities din ang bawat parties kung 'di makakapag-comply," ani Leones.

Nauna nang sinabi ni Leones na 2019 pa inilaan ang pondo para sa "dolomite beach" project kaya hindi na puwedeng itigil.

Binatikos noong Miyerkoles ng ilang grupo ang muling pagtatambak ng gobyerno ng dolomite ng Manila Bay sa kasagsagan ng pagsipa ng mga kaso ng COVID-19 sa bansa.



Kasama rin sa beach nourishment project ang paglinis ng tubig sa Manila Bay.

Ayon kay Leones, ngayo'y nasa 100,000 most probable number (mpn) per 100 milligrams na lang ang fecal coliform level ng tubig sa Manila Bay kompara sa dati na million MPN per 100 milligrams.

Sa kabila nito, hindi pa rin aniya ligtas maligo sa Manila Bay.

Ayon pa kay Leones, hindi rin tamang ilaan ang lahat ng pondo ng DENR sa COVID-19, lalo't nakapagbigay na ang ahenisya ng 10 porsiyento ng kanilang 2020 budget para sa pagtugon sa pandemya.

Itinuloy rin daw ang naumpisahang dolomite beach project dahil manipis pa lang ang layer ng dolomite na nailagay noong 2020 kaya nagkaroon mga itim na buhangin noon.

Kailangan umanong i-meet ang minimum na kapal ng dolomite na nasa isang metro.



 **News5** 
20h · 

Inspeksyon ng DENR sa Manila Bay Beach Nourishment Project ngayong araw. Bukod diyan, titignan din ng ahensya ang water quality at solid waste sa lugar. | via Shyla Francisco



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Workers on Thursday prepare the white sand at the Manila Bay, which has been under rehabilitation since January 2019.

The STAR/KJ Rosales

Moreno: No harm in pushing through with 'dolomite beach' project

[Franco Luna](#) (Philstar.com) - April 15, 2021 - 1:14pm

MANILA, Philippines — Manila City Mayor Francisco "Isko Moreno" Domagoso was not informed about the latest dumping of dolomite sand along Manila Bay he said Thursday but added government programs should continue despite the pandemic.

To recall, a fresh layer of dolomite sand was poured over the so-called "white sand beach" along the city's baywalk earlier this week despite drawing the ire of the public earlier on in the pandemic.

"No, [I was not informed about the recent dump.] But I was informed about the project, don't get me wrong," Domagoso said in an interview aired over CNN Philippines "The Source."

He was, however, careful to point out that he saw nothing wrong with the project, saying: "We're very grateful that Roxas Boulevard is looking better, but I'm focused on what we can do about the pandemic."

Months ago, the move did not sit well with environmental groups and scientists, who argued that dumping the faux sand would only do more harm than good in the rehabilitation of the bay.

Even the Department of Health and the University of the Philippines' Marine Science Institute warned against the effects of the dolomite sand outside of just its environmental impact.

Asked about the timing of the re-dump amid the coronavirus pandemic, Domagoso said: "Well, life must go on. Things must go on. The country must move because economically, we are hurt."

"The DENR said it is not harmful to the environment, so for us, we agree with that...All of our plans in the government must still move forward even if we're in a pandemic."

The mayor opted not to comment on the disconnect between a "beautification project" — which the Palace said was intended to help the "mental health" of the city's residents — and a surging coronavirus wave.



Vice President Leni Robredo has slammed the project, saying the millions of pesos in resources could have instead gone to poor families who were left hungry amid the pandemic.

According to the city information office, the six district hospitals in the city were at a collective 75% occupancy rate, with other quarantine facilities in Manila already at capacity.

To date, 892,880 coronavirus infections have been recorded in the Philippines, 173,047 of which are still active cases.



In an interview on CNN Philippines, Moreno was asked about the timing of the resumption of the P389-million Manila Bay beautification project.

The STAR/Miguel de Guzman, file

No problem with dolomite sand project – Isko

[Robertzon Ramirez](#), [Marc Jayson Cayabyab](#) (The Philippine Star) - April 16, 2021 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Mayor Isko Moreno yesterday said he does not see any problem with the latest dumping of dolomite sand on Manila Bay while the region is battling a surge in COVID-19 cases.

In an interview on CNN Philippines, Moreno was asked about the timing of the resumption of the P389-million Manila Bay beautification project.

“Things must move on the way we wanted...We must continue to move on. The country must move because economically, we’re hurt,” he said.

Moreno said the “white sand beach” project of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) could be done simultaneously with the government’s pandemic response.

The DENR has said the dolomite sand project poses no adverse effects on the environment.

“The scientists and the DENR said it is not harmful to the environment so we agree with that,” Moreno said.

Sen. Richard Gordon and former vice president Jejomar Binay Sr. were among those who criticized the resumption of the dolomite sand project.

Instead of pushing through with the project, Manila Apostolic Administrator Bishop Broderick Pabillo urged the government to prioritize the distribution of aid to those affected by the pandemic.



Mayor Isko not opposed to dumping of crushed dolomite rocks on Manila Bay coast

Published April 15, 2021, 2:19 PM

by [Minka Klaudia Tiangco](#)

Manila Mayor Francisco “Isko Moreno” Domagoso does not see anything wrong with the recent dumping of another batch of crushed dolomite rocks on the coast of Manila Bay amid the pandemic.



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

Domagoso said the city government was not informed of the recent dumping activity done by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

However, he said, the government must continue working on its other projects for development while addressing the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Life must go on, things must be the way we wanted it,” he said in an interview with CNN Philippines on Thursday (April 15).

“We must continue to move on and the country must move on because, economically, we’re hurt,” he added. “All other things in the government, including visions, aspirations, and future development for short term and long term must be done simultaneously while we are fighting against the pandemic.”

Netizens and lawmakers have criticized the DENR’s P389-million project to improve Manila Bay’s appearance, saying that it can be harmful to the environment and to humans. They said the synthetic white sand may just be washed away during storms and high tide.

The DENR said the dolomite material is bigger than dust so it cannot be inhaled and does not pose a hazard to health. Measures are also in place to ensure that the crushed dolomite rocks are not washed away, it said.

Domagoso has supported the project since it was first announced.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2021/04/15/mayor-isko-not-opposed-to-dumping-of-crushed-dolomite-rocks-on-manila-bay-coast/>



'Life goes on': Mayor Isko uninformed but not against dumping crushed dolomite along Manila Bay coast

By [CNN Philippines Staff](#)

Published Apr 15, 2021 11:23:24 AM



Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, April 15) — Manila Mayor Isko Moreno revealed on Thursday that he was not informed about the fresh batch of dolomite sand that was dumped along the Manila Baywalk, but noted that there is nothing wrong about the ongoing ₱389 million project.

In an interview with CNN Philippines' The Source, Moreno said other government initiatives may still continue amid the COVID-19 fight. This includes the controversial "white sand" project which critics earlier slammed as "mere aesthetics" and waste of taxpayers' money.

"Life must go on. Things must move on," the mayor said. "All other things in the government in terms of vision, aspirations, future development for midterm and long-term, must be done simultaneously while we're fighting against the pandemic. We cannot stop."

Photos taken by CNN Philippines on Wednesday showed heavy equipment dumping the artificial sand along Roxas Boulevard, with the new haul covering darker-colored sand.



Moreno also supported the previous claim of the government that the project is safe.

"The Department of Environment and Natural Resources said it is not harmful to the environment," he said. "We agree with that."



The DENR has yet to provide the latest details on the project which was previously slammed by netizens and environmental advocates.

The Department of Health and marine experts from the University of the Philippines' Marine Science Institute also earlier warned that aside from the environmental impact brought by the dolomite material, prolonged dust inhalation may cause chronic health effects to the public. These risks include discomfort in the chest, shortness of breath, and coughing.

In September 2020, the agency said measures are in place to ensure that the "white sand" will not be washed away by storms and high tide. It also assured the DOH that the dolomite material used for the project is bigger than dust and does not count as a health hazard.

Vice President Leni Robredo previously said the 389 million project could have instead gone to the over 80,000 poor families who were left hungry due to the pandemic.



Isko defends new coat of dolomite sand in Manila Bay amid pandemic

Published April 15, 2021 2:02pm



Manila Mayor Isko Moreno on Thursday defended the pouring of a new coat of dolomite sand in a portion of the Manila Bay as the country battles against the COVID-19 pandemic.

Interviewed on CNN Philippines, Moreno pointed out the government should continue its projects considering that the country's economy suffered due to the impact of the pandemic. "Life must go on. Things must move on the way we wanted it," Moreno said.

"We must continue to move on. The country must move because economically we're hurt... All other things in the government in terms of visions, aspirations, future development for midterm and long term must be done," he added.

Moreno made the statement when asked if the timing of pouring another coat of dolomite sand in the area was appropriate amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

While the national government is working on beautifying the Manila Bay, Moreno said he will focus on what the local government can do about the pandemic.

On Wednesday, several backhoe operators are currently at work in the area [pouring and leveling crushed dolomite rocks](#) in the Manila Bay.

About 500 tons of crushed dolomite rocks were placed last year by the government to spruce up a portion of the Baywalk area in the Manila Bay and was [opened to the public by September 2020](#).

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) earlier said that the P389-million project will discourage people from littering.

The health department has declared that the rocks are not a health hazard.

The [project was criticized](#) by environmentalists and fisherfolk, saying that the project was not the answer to pollution control in the area.

Citing information from the DENR, Greenpeace Southeast Asia campaigner Sonny Batungbacal said that only 15 percent (2.4 million out of 16.3 million) of the water-served population in Metro Manila are connected to a sewerage system. -MDM, GMA News

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/metro/783840/isko-defends-new-coat-of-dolomite-sand-in-manila-bay-amid-pandemic/story/>



Isko defends, Binay blasts fresh dolomite

posted April 15, 2021 at 10:30 pm

by [Willie Casas](#)

Manila Mayor Francisco “Isko Moreno” Domagoso defended on Thursday the pouring of a new coat of dolomite sand in a portion of the Manila Bay, saying that projects of the government should continue despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Life must go on. Things must move on the way we wanted it,” Domagoso said in an interview on CNN Philippines.

However, former Vice President Jejomar Binay disagreed, saying: “With thousands infected and dying from COVID-19, and over 4 million out of work and needing ayuda, government is wasting millions on a fake dolomite ‘beach.’”

“Some people in government have lost not only their compassion and sense of priorities but their common sense,” he added.

Still, Domagoso said: “We must continue to move on. The country must move because economically we’re hurt... All other things in the government in terms of visions, aspirations, future development for midterm and long term must be done.”

This was the mayor’s reply when asked if the timing of pouring another coat of dolomite sand in the area was appropriate amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

While the national government is working on beautifying the Manila Bay, Domagoso said he will focus on what the local government can do about the pandemic.

On Wednesday, several backhoe operators are currently at work in the area pouring and leveling crushed dolomite rocks in the Manila Bay.

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Several criticisms and controversies have hounded the use of crushed dolomite boulders on a portion of the Manila Bay beach, a vital part of the bigger Manila Bay rehabilitation project spearheaded by the DENR.

The overlaying of the dolomite in September 2020 in Manila Bay beach, also called “beach nourishment project”, caught the public’s attention, stirring controversy and attracting people to flock to the area to get a glimpse of the “white sands.”

Many groups and individuals criticized the project, throwing allegations at the DENR, calling the project a health hazard and a waste of public funds.

However, the DENR emphasized that the beach nourishment with the use of dolomite is a significant component of the rehabilitation aimed to protect the coastal resources in the area and prevent coastal flooding, erosion, and pollution.



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DENR: Maraming mawawalan ng trabaho kung hindi itutuloy ang Manila Bay rehab project

#FrontlinePilipinas | Sinagot ng DENR ang mga batikos na inilaan na lang dapat para sa #COVID19 response ang pondo sa dagdag na dolomite sa Manila Bay.

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Patuloy na pagtambak ng dolomite sa Manila Bay pinuna

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Apr 14 2021 05:37 PM | Updated as of Apr 14 2021 07:04 PM



Patuloy na tinatambakan ng crushed dolomite ang bahagi ng Manila Bay nitong Abril 14, 2021. *George Calvelo, ABS-CBN News*

Binatikos ng ilang grupo ang patuloy na pagtatambak ng gobyerno ng crushed dolomite sa bahagi ng Manila Bay sa kasagsagan ng pagsipa ng mga kaso ng COVID-19 sa bansa.

Kinuwestiyon ng grupong Oceana Philippines kung bakit pa dinagdagan ang nasabing "dolomite beach" gayong nasira na ang unang tambak sa lugar noong nakaraang taon.

"Hindi mo mapigilan 'yung ano ng waves kung may storm surges, no amount of infrastructure or rocks na nilagay nila ay hindi maanod," ani Oceana Vice President Gloria Ramos.

Inihirit ng grupo ng mangingingisdang Pamalakaya na second dose ng bakuna at hindi second dose ng dolomite ang kailangan ng mga tao.

Labas din umano ito sa utos ng Korte Suprema na rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay.

"Dapat i-rehabilitate ang Manila Bay, i-rehab, ibalik sa dating pangisdaan at ligtas na languyan. Wala pong sinabi ang Supreme Court na tambakan ng dolomite," ani Pamalakaya Chairman Fernando Hicap.



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A portion of Manila Bay is filled anew with crushed dolomite as part of a P389-million rehabilitation project, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Amid criticisms over its necessity and costs, the government said the project can help improve the public's mental health. | [@VALSHOOTER72](#)



3:45 PM · Apr 14, 2021



♡ 61

🔗 See the latest COVID-19 information on Twitter



Ayon kay Environment Undersecretary Jonas Leones, 2019 pa inilaan ang pondo para sa "dolomite beach" project kaya hindi na puwedeng itigil.

"Ito na 'yong budget na in-allocate ng Congress, ito na 'yung nai-award na sa contractors na gagawa, tapos puputulin natin eh magkakaroon tayo ng problema doon," ani Leones.

Ayon sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources, inaasahang matatapos ang proyekto sa Hunyo o Hulyo pero hindi pa agad ito bubuksan sa publiko para maiwasan ang pagdagsa, na maaaring maging sanhi ng pagkalat ng COVID-19.

-- Ulat ni April Raffles, ABS-CBN News

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/04/14/21/patuloy-na-pagtambak-ng-dolomite-sa-manila-bay-pinuna?fbclid=IwAR15rWOF9fiDXJT5iumGJ8i9ijdDIlp4zYzG21pLKwGZZfMPKgLCIIVToow>



7h · 🌐

...

Idinepensa ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources ang panibagong pagtatambak ng dinurog na dolomite sa tinaguriang "Dolomite Beach" sa isang bahagi ng Manila Bay.

Anila, manipis lang ang nailatag na dolomite noong nakaraang taon kaya kailangang muling magtambak nito.

BASAHIN DITO ang buong ulat: <https://bit.ly/3tqWukM>



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Sayang milyones sa pekeng dolomite 'beach' – Jojo Binay

By Abante News Online — Last updated Apr 15, 2021

NEWS



Binira ni dating Vice President Jejomar 'Jojo' Binay ang gobyerno sa panibagong dolomite sand na tinambak sa Manila Bay bilang parte ng rehabilitation project sa naturang lugar.

Ayon kay Binay, sa daming tinamaan at namamatay sa virus ay nag-aksaya lang ng pera ang gobyerno, kung saan puwede sana umanong maibigay ang pera bilang ayuda.

"With thousands infected and dying from COVID-19, and over 4 million out of work and needing ayuda, government is wasting millions on a fake dolomite 'beach,'" giit ng dating Bise Presidente.

"Some people in government have lost not only their compassion and sense of priorities but their common sense," aniya pa.

Ang 'dolomite beach' ay parte ng P389 million na proyekto ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources para mapaganda ang Manila Bay. (Ray Mark Patriarca)



Oceana urges DENR to halt dolomite dumping on Manila Bay

Marje Pelayo • April 15, 2021

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MANILA, Philippines – A civil society organization wants the cessation of renewed dolomite dumping on Manila Bay.

The group, in a statement, urged the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to immediately order its contractor to stop the dumping of new loads of crushed dolomite on the baywalk area of Manila Bay.

“Instead of tending to the flawed beautification project of Manila Bay, the government needs to prioritize the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on its people,” Oceana vice president Gloria Estenzo-Ramos said.

“What is happening now is appalling. People need to be protected from this alarming fast transmission of COVID-19 and the rising number of deaths from the virus. The poor need subsidy because of loss of income and worried that their family will die not only from COVID but from hunger,” he added.

The group’s call comes after several backhoe operators were seen pouring and levelling crushed dolomite sand in Manila Bay early Wednesday morning.

Estenzo-Ramos emphasized that the project is just a “band-aid” solution.

“Dolomite dumped in the area from September to December 2020 has already been reclaimed by the sea. From December 2020 to February 2021, this dolomite beach has eroded by at least 300 square meters. They are refilling it again and even extending the area,” she said.

She also demanded that an Environmental Impact Assessment be conducted on the project, despite claims by DENR that it will not conduct any such study considering that it is a “beautification project and will be beneficial to the environment.

Manila Bay is a key biodiversity area identified by the DENR-Biodiversity Management Bureau and a sardine-spawning ground identified by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR).

Critics have slammed the project, questioning its necessity and costs as the Philippines continues to struggle against controlling the spread of COVID-19.

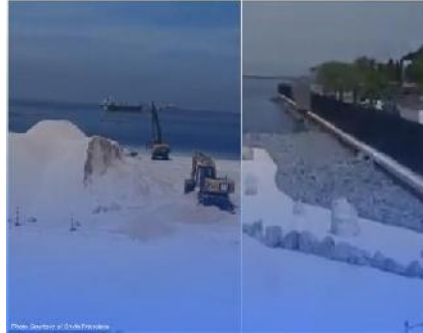
The Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Department of Public Works and Highways have defended the project saying it serves as an “enhancer” for the beautification project in the area.

Source: <https://www.untvweb.com/news/oceana-urges-denr-to-halt-dolomite-dumping-on-manila-bay/>



Imbes ayuda at bakuna, buhangin ang inuna- solon PONDO SAYANG SA DOLOMITE

11 hours ago [jake](#)



(BERNARD TAGUINOD)

NANGHIHINAYANG ang isang mambabatas sa pondong naaaksaya sa dolomite na itinatambak ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sa Manila Bay imbes na gamitin ito sa ayuda o kaya sa mass testing at bakuna.

“Napakahirap unawain ng ganitong klaseng prayoridad ng gobyerno,” ani Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Eufemia Cullamat matapos ituloy ng DENR ang pagtatambak ng dolomite sa Manila Bay.

Sinabi ng mambabatas na kulang na kulang ang mass testing, bakuna at maging ang ayuda sa mga taong labis na naapektuhan sa COVID-19 pandemic subalit inuunang gastusan ang dolomite sa Manila Bay.

Ang DENR ay may pondong aabot sa P389 million para sa rehabilitation project ng pamahalaan sa Manila Bay na sinimulan noong nakaraang taon subalit malaking bahagi sa tinambakan ng dolomite ang naglaho nang magkaroon ng sunod-sunod na bagyo noong nakaraang taon.

“Sariling interes na naman ng pagpapataba ng bulsa ng iilan ang maaring konklusyon dito. Ang dolomite budget ay inilaan na lang sana para sa pandagdag sa sahod at hazard pay ng mga frontliners at ayuda para sa pamilyang apektado.

Sahod na lang sana imbes na buhangin. Libreng mass testing imbes na buhangin. Ayuda at bakuna na lang sana, naging buhangin pa,” panghihinayang na pahayag ni Cullamat.

Ganito rin ang sentimyento ni Kabataan party-list Rep. Sarah Elago kaya ang ayuda at bakuna na inaasahan aniya ng mamamayang Pilipino ay “naging buhangin pa” dahil mas inuna itong gastusan ng gobyerno.

Mas marami sana aniyang natulungan ang gobyerno kung ginagamit din ang nasabing pondo sa ayuda lalo na’t maraming manggagawa ang nawalan ng trabaho nang magpatupad ng panibagong enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) sa Metro Manila, Rizal, Laguna, Cavite at Bulacan.

“Ang matalino, mahusay at maka-mamamayang pamahalaan ay ire-realign ang P389-M budget para sa social amelioration program, pagpapalakas ng sistemang pangkalusugan at pagsisiguro ng ligtas na balik-eskwela para hindi na tumagal ang matinding kalbaryo ng mamamayan,” ayon sa nasabing grupo ni Elago.

Ibinasura rin ng grupo ang depensa ng DENR na para sa mental health umano ng mga Pilipino na dumadaan sa Manila Bay ang nasabing proyekto lalo na ngayong panahon ng pandemya.

“Para sa mental health namin?! Lalo niyo lang binibigyan ng sama ng loob ang mamamayan!”, tugon ng grupo. Kamakalawa ay muling binuhusan ng dolomite ang bahagi ng Manila Bay dahil natakpan na naman ito ng itim na buhangin.

Source: http://saksingayon.com/nasyunal/imbes-ayuda-at-bakuna-buhangin-ang-inuna-solon-pondo-sayang-sa-dolomite/?utm_source=ReviveOldPost&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=ReviveOldPost&fbclid=IwAR3jnfD_PCDxQmcu2gMTNhx9YVqz8UnJHYUYYN4NrmrewmelCWVCTmMVdo

Scientists' group says 'dolomite' project like throwing money into sea

By HANA BORDEY, GMA News

Published April 16, 2021 12:48am



A group of scientists on Thursday urged the administration to focus on its COVID-19 pandemic response rather than spending funds for the replenishment of the controversial dolomite sand in Manila Bay.

In a statement, AGHAM-Advocates of Science and Technology for the People hit the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) for being “tone deaf” on the effects of the new batch of dolomite sand dumped in Manila Bay to the ecosystem.

“The agency’s claim that the ‘white-sand beach experience’ the project will give Manileños has a positive impact on overall mental health is pure hogwash. What is more important now is to address the growing anxiety over the failed COVID-19 pandemic response of the Duterte government,” the group said.

“Why don’t the government use the fund for the dolomite project, instead, to buy and develop more testing kits in order to implement free mass testing? Effectively curbing the spread of the pandemic will surely contribute positively to our mental health,” it added.

AGHAM said the government is “literally throwing money into the sea” as these funds could have been used for the improvement of hospital facilities, vaccine procurement, and financial assistance to pandemic-hit Filipinos.

“At a time when new COVID-19 cases and the death toll are rising, the filling of sand in Manila Bay is a glaring insult to Filipinos suffering from this health crisis,” AGHAM said.

The group reiterated previous questions on the effect of dolomite in the overall rehabilitation of Manila Bay particularly in combating coastal erosion and the possibility of oxygen deficiency in neighboring marine ecosystems.

AGHAM also pointed out that the high levels of coliform would not make Manila Bay safe for recreational activities, adding that the DENR has not conducted any impact assessments on the water body.

GMA News Online sought DENR’s comment on AGHAM’s statement, but there are no response as of writing time.

On Wednesday, [fresh batches of dolomite sand](#) were placed at the Manila Bay area.



About 500 tons of crushed dolomite rocks were [placed last year](#) by the government to spruce up a portion of the baywalk area and was opened to the public by September 2020.

DENR earlier said that the P389-million project was meant [discourage people from littering](#).

Manila Mayor Isko Moreno on Thursday also [defended the replenishment](#) of dolomite sand in a portion of the Manila Bay as the country battles against the COVID-19 pandemic.

He said the government should continue its projects considering that the country's economy suffered due to the impact of the pandemic. --NB, GMA News



Dolomite sand not the solution to Manila Bay's solid waste problem, says environmentalists

By [Rex Remitio, CNN Philippines](#)

Published Apr 16, 2021 12:20:48 AM



Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, April 16) – Some environmentalists argued the overlaying of dolomite sand along a portion of Manila Bay is not the solution to its solid waste management problem.

Prof. Marlon Pareja, an educator and scientist from De La Salle University - Dasmariñas said the dolomite beach project has nothing to do with reducing solid waste floating at the iconic bay.

"Kung sasabihin ng government na mare-reduce ang solid waste because of the dumping of the dolomite, puwede ko pong sabihin na wala siyang [kinalaman] kasi it's not part of the whole process of solid waste collection. Hindi po siya efficient as far as solid waste collection is concerned," Pareja said.

[Translation: If the government would insist that solid waste will be reduced because of the dumping of the dolomite, I can say it's not related because it's not part of the whole process of solid waste collection. It is not efficient as far as solid waste collection is concerned.]

Backhoes were seen dumping fresh batches of crushed dolomite along the baywalk the past few days.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) earlier said this is part of the government's P389-million "white sand" project to rehabilitate the area.

DENR Undersecretary Jonas Leones earlier confirmed to CNN Philippines they will reopen the so-called Dolomite Beach to the public by the third quarter provided quarantine restrictions have already eased.

Leones added they will put strict protocols in place to ensure the preservation of what they deem as a Boracay-like beach in Manila.

He said people can only visit at certain hours during the day and no one is allowed to stay overnight at the beach.

The official also responded to critics who have been saying they're only focusing on the beach as their way of rehabilitating Manila Bay.

"Sabihin ko lang sa mamamayan natin, hindi lang ito [Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program] nakafocus sa Manila Bay mismo, but in all of tributaries, esteros, ina-address na rin po natin 'yang problema na 'yan," Leones said.



[Translation: I'll assure our citizens that the Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program is not just focused solely on Manila Bay, but in all of its tributaries and estuaries. We are addressing problems related to that.]

Aileen Lucero, EcoWaste Coalition national coordinator, however, said there are lots of trash deep down the waters of Manila Bay for the government to even bother about the baywalk's "cosmetic beautification."

She added government must focus on reducing solid waste and creating alternative delivery systems for better garbage collection in areas near the Manila Bay.

"We do not need this cosmetic beautification para lang sa isang beach nourishment [project]. Ito kasi ay magpapabalik-balik lang," Lucero said. "Sa ilalim ng Manila Bay, marami ring basura at nadaragdagan pa lalo ng basura dahil marami pa dahil wala namang national ban para rito sa mga single-use plastic."

[Translation: We do not need this cosmetic beautification for a beach nourishment (project). The garbage will just keep going back. Beneath the waters of the Manila Bay, there are many waste and it keeps adding up because there is no national ban on single-use plastics.]

Both Pareja and Lucero have suggested to the government to focus on developing and implementing an "accurate and science-informed" National Waste Recovery Plan as framed in the Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act.

They added policy makers should shift their focus to recovery and reduction of solid wastes rather than end-of-pipe solutions such as cleanup drives.

"Cleanup is a waste of money actually kasi ang tingin ng tao eh okay lang na magkalat ako, mayroon naman na magki-cleanup so it's not sustainable. Kung lalagyan natin siya ng isang batas na nagbabawal ng mga single use [plastics] na dinidispone nila, tinatapon lang kung saan, kung ie-enforce natin 'yung RA 9003, hindi natin kailangan mag-cleanup."

[Translation: Cleanup is a waste of money actually because people can perceive that it's okay to litter since it will be cleaned, so it's not sustainable. We don't need a cleanup if there is a law banning single-use (plastics), proper waste disposal, and proper enforcement of RA 9003.]



EDITORIAL - Dumping what is important

(The Freeman) - April 16, 2021 - 12:00am



Work goes on in the dolomite beach in Manila Bay. Yesterday saw another load of dolomite sand being dumped in the artificial beach. Observers also noted decorative rocks arranged in attractive patterns on the sand.

Along with that fresh load of dolomite sand came an outpouring of public opinion against what people see as an unnecessary expense in this time of difficulty.

We already called this project an extravagance that we cannot afford at this time and we still stand by that statement.

The fact that this so-called beautification project cannot be enjoyed by the people whose taxes are paying for it anytime soon --four months according the some sources-- plus the fact that the dolomite never really seems to stay put for very long, rubs even more salt into the wound.

Those who insist that the project has already been planned long before the pandemic broke out, and that certain appropriations have been made and cannot be changed, otherwise there may be liabilities if payments are not made to contractors might have a point.

However, the fact remains that money better used for other purposes is being spent for something that will be of little or no benefit to anyone in the near future.

Many families are still feeling hunger because of jobs lost as a result of the pandemic and the subsequent lockdowns. Many places still need facilities for people sick with severe COVID-19. Our contact tracing efforts are still coming up short of expectations. Surely the government must see the need to at least realign some of those resources for more important purposes and projects.

Purposes and project that have actual importance at this time and can mean life or death for some people.

Along that line perhaps it is also time to make some adjustments to how our system works. A system that cannot make adjustments when it is clear there are more pressing needs than others is a flawed one that should be corrected or replaced immediately.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/the-freeman/opinion/2021/04/16/2091528/editorial-dumping-what-important/amp/>



- Headline
- Editorial
- Column
- Opinion
- Feature Article



"CRASS, TOTALLY INSENSITIVE TO THE PLIGHT OF OUR PEOPLE."
Ito ang reaksyon ni Sen. Richard Gordon kaugnay sa Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program.

NEWS 5 DIGITAL



SEN. RICHARD GORDON
APRIL 15, 2021
[@DickGordonDG](#)





MANILA BAY BEAUTIFICATION NOT NOW! USE MONEY TO FIGHT COVID & HUNGER!

Dolomite project for Manila Bay is not needed right now and is sheer bad judgment. CRASS, TOTALLY INSENSITIVE TO THE PLIGHT OF OUR PEOPLE.

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PHOTOGRAPH BY BOB DUNGO JR. FOR THE DAILY TRIBUNE @tribunephil_bob

DOLomite is again laid in what remains of the shores of the Manila Bay after the first layer placed there by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources was washed out by seawater.



Disposable face masks among trash collected from Manila Bay

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Apr 15 2021 05:28 PM



A personnel from the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) shows collected disposable surgical masks during a cleanup at Manila Bay along Roxas Boulevard in Manila on Thursday. Environmental groups call for the proper disposal and management of personal protective equipment like face masks, face shield and other medical wastes.

Source: https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/multimedia/photo/04/15/21/disposable-face-masks-trash-manila-bay?fbclid=IwAR10NBoFIShTfR3kmmnezBSrIwPRRLAgiWNX_GTAPs33SoA5F06B4OeGxgM



DENR closes resorts in GenSan, Cotabato forestlands

By: [Rommel G. Rebolledo](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Inquirer Mindanao](#) / 05:04 AM April 15, 2021



NIGHT VIEW A tourist enjoys the nighttime view of General Santos City from Sanchez Peak. —PHOTO FROM GENERAL SANTOS CITY WEBSITE

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has ordered the closure of at least 17 inland resorts and tourist destinations here and in the nearby town of Polomolok in South Cotabato province for violating environmental management laws.

According to Maria Elvira Lumayag, the community environment and natural resources officer of General Santos City, these destinations are operating within timber and forestlands which are normally off-limits to such leisure activities and uses as stated in Presidential Decree No. 705, or the Forestry Code of the Philippines.

The closure orders, she said, were signed by Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu.

Among those shut were major tourist-drawing spots like the Barikot Peak, Sanchez Peak, Malyango Peak, Queen Sheba Hidden Garden, Ulo Tulan and Buko-Buko Peak which offer camping and trail hiking activities in the hinterlands of General Santos.

Compliance

In Polomolok, those ordered closed were Ante Agro-Eco Farm, Bato Peak and Armros Nature Farm. As of Wednesday, only Armros Nature Farm in Polomolok and Ulo Tulan in General Santos City had announced on their respective social media platforms that they were suspending operations and assured their patrons that they would comply with regulatory requirements.

Lumayag said the resort owners and operators sought a reconsideration of the order and asked that they be allowed to operate while they were securing a forest land-use agreement for tourism (FLAgT).

Under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' Administrative Order No. 28 issued in 2004, a FLAgT allows a business entity to "occupy, manage and develop ... any forestland of the public domain for tourism purposes" for up to 25 years.



These include operations of bathing establishments, campsites, ecotourism and hotels. Under AO 28, the FLAgT recipients will share revenues with the government apart from paying a minimum entry fee of P25,000 for a half-hectare area or less, and P150,000 for a 5-ha area or more.

The DENR is mandated to identify which areas are suitable for tourism operations and have these bid out for interested groups.

Apart from being branded as the country's "tuna capital," General Santos City is fast becoming a destination for mountain tourism, especially trail hiking and climbing.

A similar trend has been observed in Polomolok as it offers a good vantage view of Mt. Matutum.



30 Poor Families Kick Off Reforestation In Leyte Town



By [Featuresdesk \(MD\)](#) April 14, 2021

The Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) here has tapped 30 poor families in Burauen, Leyte to reforest 186 hectares of land in the next three years.

These families recently received at least PHP337,319 as initial compensation for their effort to carry out the central government's enhanced National Greening Program (NGP).

The amount represents about 15 percent of the total project cost, said Jen Lamoste, CENRO Palo NGP coordinator in an interview Tuesday.

The project requires more than PHP3 million from seedling production to planting. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources will set aside more funds for maintenance.

"During the first year of their contract, families will undertake activities under comprehensive site development such as the production of seedlings and establishment of 186 hectares NGP plantation in Burauen town," Lamoste told the Philippine News Agency.

Of the 186 hectares, 70 hectares are intended for indigenous tree species cultivation, 30 hectares for fruit trees, and 86 hectares for bamboo.

The DENR has been adopting the "family approach" as one of the modes in implementing the enhanced NGP where families are assigned to establish forest plantations composed of timber and non-timber species.

"The DENR wants poor families to directly benefit from NGP instead of people's organization. We have personnel regularly monitoring them to ensure that initial funds released are being used for seedling production and provision of the family's basic needs,"

Each family can receive up to PHP121,000 in a year for seedling production and planting of indigenous trees. They are entitled to receive an additional up to PHP90,000 for two-year maintenance and protection.

The maximum area for each family is nine hectares, Lamoste said.

Within production zones, beneficiary families can also establish agroforestry plantations composed of timber, non-timber, and high-value crops such as coffee, cacao, rubber, and other fruit trees, provided that the area must be planted with more forestry species than high-value crops. (PNA)

Source: <http://pageone.ph/30-poor-families-kick-off-reforestation-in-leyte-town/>



Iloilo City eyes 1.6-hectare beach forest

Published April 15, 2021, 4:34 PM

by [Tara Yap](#)

ILOILO CITY – The city government of Iloilo is eyeing to create a 1.6-hectare beach forest as one of its future eco-parks.



A rendered image of the proposed beach forest in Iloilo City.
(Iloilo City PIO)

Mayor Jerry Treñas has directed Engr. Noel Hechanova, chief of the Iloilo City Environment and Natural Resources Office (Iloilo City ENRO), to head the project in Boulevard of Molo district.

This is one of the plans of the Iloilo City government after inking memorandums of agreement (MOA) with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Western Visayas (DENR Region 6) as part of its programs to address climate change.

The beach forest will be a biodiversity conservation park that will have a botanical garden in which there will be a small demo nursery where umbrella tree, botong, bakauan, bamboo, bitaog, ago, and other tree species will be planted.

The Iloilo City ENRO is also eyeing to construct a small hatchery as a means of promoting marine turtle conservation. The area has been known to be a nesting place of “pawikan” (sea turtle).

Aside from the beach forest, a coastal forestland area is being developed in Barangay Hinactacan in La Paz district. It will showcase the city’s natural mangrove forests.



Pena: Earth Day 2021

[ROX PENA](#)

April 15, 2021

THIS April 22nd will be the 51st Earth Day celebration. Like last year, the events will most likely be held virtually due to strict health protocols in many countries, including the Philippines. The theme for this year is "Restore our Earth."

Global environmental issues like climate change and environmental destruction are always on the Earth Day agenda. However, this year, I feel that there are pressing issues at hand, which are related to the Covid-19 pandemic that must also be addressed, especially here in the Philippines. They may be considered short-term concerns, but failure to address them may lead to more serious consequences.

Foremost is the safe disposal of facemasks. Some studies estimate that around 129 billion face masks are used globally every month. If every Filipino will use one disposable face masks every day, that's a hundred million a day and three billion a month. Where will all those facemasks go? Ideally, used facemasks should not be mixed with ordinary household waste and should be treated as special waste. They require special handling and disposal.

Used facemasks are not only health hazards but also a threat to the environment. Most disposable facemasks are made from plastic microfibers. A month ago, divers have discovered facemasks and other personal protective equipment (PPE) entangled in the reefs at the popular dive spot of Anilao in Batangas.

Next concern is the disposal of vaccine-related waste such as syringes and vials. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has assured the public of the establishment of guidelines and procedures for the proper disposal of medical vials and syringes used for coronavirus vaccine injections.

DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns Benny D. Antiporda pointed out that " there is already an existing set of guidelines on managing hazardous waste as stated in the DENR-Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) memorandum circulars (MC) 2020-14, 2020-15 and 2020-16 on the issuance of Special Permit to Transport for the treatment and disposal of healthcare wastes." A check on the EMB website also shows one more Covid-related MC, 2020-20. It's now a matter of following and enforcing these guidelines.

Usec. Antiporda said that one of the requirements in the memo is to monitor the healthcare wastes coming from healthcare institutions as well as Covid-19 Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF)-designated quarantine facilities. At present, there is a system for monitoring hospitals through the reports of their Pollution Control Officers (PCOs). However, quarantine facilities do not have PCOs. They are usually managed by local government units (LGUs). I hope the environmental officers of the LGUs are following the EMB guidelines.

Happy Earth Day everyone! Let's do our share in restoring our Earth.

Duterte lifts suspension on new mining deals; DENR ordered to strictly enforce mines safety, environmental policies

Published April 15, 2021, 11:23 AM

by [Genalyn Kabiling](#)

Recognizing the “economic benefits” of the mining industry, President Duterte has authorized the lifting of the moratorium on new mineral agreements in a bid to generate job opportunities and spur countryside growth.



President Rodrigo Roa Duterte (KING RODRIGUEZ/ PRESIDENTIAL PHOTO)

In Executive Order No. 130, the President directed authorities to strictly implement mining safety and environmental policies, review existing mineral deals for possible renegotiation, and rationalize the existing revenue-sharing scheme.

The order on the grant of new mineral projects subject to compliance with the relevant laws was signed by the President on April 14 and released by the Palace Thursday, April 15. It will take effect upon publication in a newspaper.

The President’s latest directive amended EO 79 issued in 2012 that institutionalized and implemented several reforms in the mining sector. The Aquino-era EO prohibited the approval of new mining permits until a new legislation rationalizing revenue-sharing scheme is enacted.

“The moratorium on mineral agreements under Section 4, EO No. 79 is hereby lifted,” the new executive order read.

“In addition to ushering significant economic benefits to the country, the mining industry can support various government projects, such as the Build, Build, Build Program, by providing raw materials for the construction and development of other industries; and the Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa Program, by increasing employment opportunities in remote rural areas where there are mining activities thereby stimulating countryside development,” it added.

EO 130 noted the Philippines has tapped “less than 5 percent of its mineral resources endowment to date.”

Under the new EO, the amended Section 4 now reads “The Government may enter into new mineral agreements, subject to compliance with the Philippine Mining Act of 1995 and other applicable laws, rules, and regulations.”

“The DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources) may continue to grant and issue Exploration Permits under existing laws, rules, and guidelines. The grantees of such Permits shall have the rights under the said laws, rules, and guidelines over the approved exploration area and shall be given the right to first option to develop and utilize the minerals in their respective exploration area upon the approval of the declaration of mining project feasibility,” it added.



The same EO also directed DENR to formulate terms and conditions in the new mining agreements that will “maximize government revenues and share from production.” It would include the possible declaration of such areas as mineral reservations to get royalties in accordance with the country’s laws.

The President also tasked the DENR to review existing mining contracts and agreements “for possible renegotiation” of the terms and conditions, that must be mutually acceptable to the government and the mining contractor.

Both the DENR and the Department of Finance have also been ordered to take measures to rationalize the existing revenue-sharing scheme.

In the same EO, the President ordered DENR “to strictly implement mines safety and environmental policies.”

“It shall ensure strict implementation of and compliance with the recommended measures of the Mining Industry Coordinating Council involving all mining operations, including other pertinent laws, rules, and regulations, and terms and conditions of the mineral agreements,” the order read.

The latest presidential directive was reached after the DENR conducted a review of the regulatory framework of the mining industry. The order noted that department put in place policies to enhance environmental safeguards to ensure mining operations observe the protection of the environment.

Mining companies earlier called on the government to lift the suspension on new mining agreements and the use of open pits to help promote economic growth in the pandemic-hit country. The country earlier fell into recession after the pandemic lockdown weakened the economy and led to a rise in unemployment and hunger.



Duterte lifts moratorium on mineral agreements

By Azer Parrocha April 15, 2021, 1:37 pm



File photo

MANILA – President Rodrigo Duterte has issued an executive order (EO) lifting the nine-year moratorium on mineral agreements to spur economic growth and support projects and programs of the government.

Duterte signed EO No. 130 on April 14, amending Section 4 of EO No. 79, s. 2012 that prohibits the grant of mineral agreements “until a new legislation rationalizing existing revenue sharing schemes and mechanisms shall have taken effect”.

“The moratorium on mineral agreements under Section 4, EO No. 79 is hereby lifted,” Section 1 of the amended EO 130 read.

Under the new EO, Section 4 of EO No. 79, which was signed by former President Benigno Aquino III in 2012, shall be amended to read as follows: “Section 4. Grant of Mineral Agreements. The Government may enter into new mineral agreements, subject to compliance with Philippine Mining Act of 1995 and other applicable laws, rules, and regulation.”

“The DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources) may continue to grant and issue Exploration Permits under existing laws, rules, and guidelines. The grantees of such permits shall have the rights under the said laws, rules, and guidelines over the approved exploration area and shall be given the right of first option to develop and utilize the minerals in their respective exploration area upon the approval of the declaration of mining project feasibility,” it added.

The new EO also directs the DENR to “formulate the terms and conditions in the new mineral agreements that will maximize government revenues and share from production, including the possibility of declaring these areas as mineral reservations to obtain appropriate royalties, in accordance with existing laws, rules, and regulations.”

“The DENR shall likewise undertake a review of existing mining contacts and agreements for possible renegotiation of the terms and conditions of the same, which shall in all cases be mutually acceptable to the government and the mining contractor,” the EO read.

The DENR and the Department of Finance are directed “to undertake appropriate measures to rationalize existing revenue sharing schemes and mechanisms.”

EO 130 also directs the DENR to strictly implement mines safety and environmental policies.

“It shall ensure strict implementation of and compliance with the recommended measures of the Mining Industry Coordinating Council involving all mining operations, including other pertinent laws, rules, and regulations, and the terms and conditions of the mineral agreements,” the EO read.

Duterte issued EO 130 to usher significant economic benefits to the country.



"The mining industry can support various government projects, such as the Build, Build, Build Program, by providing raw materials for the construction and development of other industries; and the Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa Program, by increasing employment opportunities in remote, rural areas where there are mining activities thereby stimulating countryside development," the EO read.

According to the new EO, the country has tapped less than 5 percent of its mineral resources endowment to date.

On Dec. 19, 2017, Duterte signed Republic Act No. 10963 or the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusive (TRAIN) Act. Section 48 of the law has doubled the rate of excise tax on minerals, mineral products, and quarry resources from 2 percent to 4 percent.

Duterte has repeatedly urged the mining industry to observe stricter environmental rules or risk getting shut down.

He earlier admitted that despite being discussed in various meetings, "nothing" has been done to address illegal logging and mining in the country. **(PNA)**



Duterte lifts moratorium on new mining agreements

By Catherine S. Valente, TMT

April 15, 2021

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte has authorized the lifting of a nearly 9-year moratorium on new mineral agreements in a bid to generate job opportunities and spur countryside growth.

In Executive Order (EO) 130, Duterte amended EO 79 issued by former president Benigno Aquino 3rd in 2012 that suspended applications for mineral contracts in protected areas, prime agricultural lands, tourism development areas, and other critical places like island ecosystems, among others.

“The moratorium on mineral agreements under Section 4, EO No. 79 is hereby lifted,” the new executive order read.

“In addition to ushering significant economic benefits to the country, the mining industry can support various government projects, such as the Build, Build, Build Program, by providing raw materials for the construction and development of other industries; and the Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa Program, by increasing employment opportunities in remote rural areas where there are mining activities thereby stimulating countryside development,” it added.

The country has tapped “less than 5 percent of its mineral resources endowment to date,” according to EO 130.

Under the new EO, the amended Section 4 now reads “The Government may enter into new mineral agreements, subject to compliance with the Philippine Mining Act of 1995 and other applicable laws, rules, and regulations.”

“The DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources) may continue to grant and issue Exploration Permits under existing laws, rules, and guidelines. The grantees of such Permits shall have the rights under the said laws, rules, and guidelines over the approved exploration area and shall be given the right to first option to develop and utilize the minerals in their respective exploration area upon the approval of the declaration of mining project feasibility,” it added.

The same EO also directed DENR to formulate terms and conditions in the new mining agreements that will “maximize government revenues and share from production.”

It would include the possible declaration of such areas as mineral reservations to get royalties in accordance with the country’s laws.

The President also tasked the DENR to review existing mining contracts and agreements “for possible renegotiation” of the terms and conditions, that must be mutually acceptable to the government and the mining contractor.

Both the DENR and the Department of Finance have also been ordered to take measures to rationalize the existing revenue-sharing scheme.

In the same EO, the President ordered DENR “to strictly implement mine safety and environmental policies.”



“It shall ensure strict implementation of and compliance with the recommended measures of the Mining Industry Coordinating Council involving all mining operations, including other pertinent laws, rules, and regulations, and terms and conditions of the mineral agreements,” the order read.

The latest presidential directive was reached after the DENR conducted a review of the regulatory framework of the mining industry.

The order noted that the department put in place policies to enhance environmental safeguards to ensure mining operations observe the protection of the environment.

The order on the grant of new mineral projects subject to compliance with the relevant laws was signed by the President on April 14 and released by the Palace Thursday, April 15. It will take effect upon publication in a newspaper.

In 2018, Duterte lifted a 2-year moratorium on approving mining exploration permits to help determine the potential of some prospects in the Philippines, the world’s No. 2 nickel ore exporter.

The President has repeatedly criticized miners for polluting rivers and destroying forests.

But a government panel in 2018 said 23 out of 27 mines have passed an initial review for compliance with state regulations.

Mining companies had called on the government to lift the suspension on new mining agreements and the use of open pits to help promote economic growth in the pandemic-hit country.

The Philippines is the second biggest supplier of nickel ore to top buyer China, after Indonesia, where it is used to produce stainless steel.



Duterte lifts moratorium on mineral agreements

Thursday, April 15, 2021 People's Tonight15

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte has issued an executive order (EO) lifting the nine-year moratorium on mineral agreements to spur economic growth and support projects and programs of the government. Duterte signed EO No. 130 on April 14, amending Section 4 of EO No. 79, s. 2012 that prohibits the grant of mineral agreements "until a new legislation rationalizing existing revenue sharing schemes and mechanisms shall have taken effect".

"The moratorium on mineral agreements under Section 4, EO No. 79 is hereby lifted," Section 1 of the amended EO 130 read.

Under the new EO, Section 4 of EO No. 79, which was signed by former President Benigno Aquino III in 2012, shall be amended to read as follows: "Section 4. Grant of Mineral Agreements. The Government may enter into new mineral agreements, subject to compliance with Philippine Mining Act of 1995 and other applicable laws, rules, and regulation."

"The DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources) may continue to grant and issue Exploration Permits under existing laws, rules, and guidelines. The grantees of such permits shall have the rights under the said laws, rules, and guidelines over the approved exploration area and shall be given the right of first option to develop and utilize the minerals in their respective exploration area upon the approval of the declaration of mining project feasibility," it added.

The new EO also directs the DENR to "formulate the terms and conditions in the new mineral agreements that will maximize government revenues and share from production, including the possibility of declaring these areas as mineral reservations to obtain appropriate royalties, in accordance with existing laws, rules, and regulations."

"The DENR shall likewise undertake a review of existing mining contacts and agreements for possible renegotiation of the terms and conditions of the same, which shall in all cases be mutually acceptable to the government and the mining contractor," the EO read.

The DENR and the Department of Finance are directed "to undertake appropriate measures to rationalize existing revenue sharing schemes and mechanisms."

EO 130 also directs the DENR to strictly implement mines safety and environmental policies.

"It shall ensure strict implementation of and compliance with the recommended measures of the Mining Industry Coordinating Council involving all mining operations, including other pertinent laws, rules, and regulations, and the terms and conditions of the mineral agreements," the EO read.

Duterte issued EO 130 to usher significant economic benefits to the country.

"The mining industry can support various government projects, such as the Build, Build, Build Program, by providing raw materials for the construction and development of other industries; and the Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa Program, by increasing employment opportunities in remote, rural areas where there are mining activities thereby stimulating countryside development," the EO read.

According to the new EO, the country has tapped less than 5 percent of its mineral resources endowment to date.

On Dec. 19, 2017, Duterte signed Republic Act No. 10963 or the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusive (TRAIN) Act. Section 48 of the law has doubled the rate of excise tax on minerals, mineral products, and quarry resources from 2 percent to 4 percent.

Duterte has repeatedly urged the mining industry to observe stricter environmental rules or risk getting shut down.

He earlier admitted that despite being discussed in various meetings, "nothing" has been done to address illegal logging and mining in the country. *Philippine News Agency*

Source: <https://journal.com.ph/news/nation/duterte-lifts-moratorium-on-mineral-agreements/>



Duterte lifts nine-year ban on new mining deals

By LLANESCA T. PANTI, GMA News

Published April 15, 2021 11:59am

Updated April 15, 2021 3:59pm



President Rodrigo Duterte has lifted the nine-year ban on granting new mining agreements to maximize government revenues and stir economic growth.

Duterte issued Executive Order (EO) 130, which provides that the government "may enter into new mineral agreements, subject to compliance with the Philippine Mining Act of 1995 and other applicable laws, rules, and regulations."

The ban was imposed by Duterte's predecessor, Benigno Aquino III, in 2012.

In his EO, Duterte said the Philippines so far has tapped less than 5% of its mineral resources endowment.

The EO tasked the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to "formulate the terms and conditions in the new mineral agreements that will maximize government revenues and share from production, including the possibility of declaring these areas as mineral reservations to obtain appropriate royalties, in accordance with existing laws, rules, and regulations."

It also tasked the DENR to undertake a review of existing mining contracts and agreements for possible renegotiation of the terms and conditions.

The DENR and the Department of Finance, on the other hand, will take measures to rationalize existing revenue sharing schemes and mechanisms.

EO 130 argued that new mining agreements can stir economic growth needed to support government programs such as the Build, Build, Build and the Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa Program.

The government is hopeful that the lifting of the ban will result in increase in employment opportunities in remote rural areas where there are mining activities "thereby stimulating countryside development."



EO 130 states that the lifting of the ban was made after DENR conducted a thorough review of the regulatory framework of the mining industry and "has [put] in place additional rules, regulations, and policies providing for and enhancing environmental safeguards to ensure that mining operations observe environmental protection."

Likewise, EO 130 also allows DENR to continue issuance of Exploration Permits under existing laws, rules, and guidelines.

The recipients of such exploration permits will have the rights under the said laws, rules, and guidelines over the approved exploration area and given the right of first option to develop and utilize the minerals in their respective exploration area upon the approval of the declaration of mining project feasibility.

The Chamber of Mines of the Philippines, the umbrella organization of mining, mineral quarrying and processing companies in the country, lauded the lifting of the ban on new mining projects.

"A major roadblock to the huge potential of the Philippine mining industry to contribute to socio-economic growth has been removed," the group said in a [statement](#). — KBK, GMA News

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/money/companies/783822/duterte-lifts-nine-year-ban-on-new-mining-deals/story/?fbclid=IwAR2N27nbTfmXgDBffMKwomcMdBwpX1VzdzrodHgeIoxCN58o-2ERthVvwE>



FOR ECONOMY | Duterte allows government to enter new mining agreements after lifting ban

April 15, 2021 , 03:01 PM

(April 15, 2021) – President Rodrigo Duterte has lifted a moratorium prohibiting the government from signing new mining deals, hoping to usher in economic growth to reverse the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Duterte signed Executive Order (EO) 130 on Wednesday, reversing a portion of an earlier directive issued by former President Noynoy Aquino in 2012, which banned new mining applications until the signing of a new law modifying revenue-sharing schemes. It essentially allows the government to ink new mineral deals and review existing agreements to possibly renegotiate existing terms.

No law has been passed over the past nine years to fulfill the stipulated condition in the previous order. Both the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Department of Finance (DOF) have a huge role in carrying out Duterte's new EO.

"The DENR shall formulate the terms and conditions in the new mineral agreements that will maximize government revenues and share from production, including the possibility of declaring these areas as mineral reservations to obtain appropriate royalties, in accordance with existing laws, rules, and regulations," a portion of EO 130 said.

Wilfredo Moncamo of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) said the mining industry is "elated" that Duterte heeded the sector's bid "to contribute to the economic recovery of the country." He said some investors had been hesitant to invest given the need for a new mineral production sharing agreement (MPSA) as mandated under the previous order.

"(This) will authorize the mining company to proceed to development and commercial extraction. These are the activities or projects needed that can generate economic activities, revenues, employment, services, taxes, and other indirect economic activities in remote areas in the country," said Moncamo, vowing to adhere to strict environmental guidelines.

Duterte insisted the country was only able to tap less than 5% of the country's mineral resources. He said the country could gain so much more in mining projects following the approval of the tax reform law in 2018, which doubled the excise tax on minerals from 2% to 4%.

Mining issues have been controversial over recent years due to its reported impacts on the environment. Even Duterte repeatedly castigated mining firms for destroying the country's waters and forests, but his words did not appear consistent with his actions.

Duterte's recent moves are directly opposed to the stance of his former DENR secretary, the late Gina Lopez, who ordered to close down at least 26 mining operations in 2017. The following year, the government said 23 of these mining firms complied with environmental laws. It was also during that year when Duterte lifted a moratorium on new mining exploration.

Fisherfolk group Pamalakaya warned Duterte's recent order could "spell doom" to the environment as it could allow "Chinese plunder" of the country's mineral resources.

"The government would let foreign mining firms to exploit and plunder our mountains, forests, and seas with all their might while we beg for alms in the form of taxes and other duties in return. There are many other ways to keep the restore the economy without exposing our natural resources to big mining interests," said Pamalakaya chairman Fernando Hicap. "This is a betrayal against the people who resisted destructive mining and until now continue to fight for their right to livelihood and environment protection."

(Beatrice Puente/PM)

Source: https://news.tv5.com.ph/top-stories/read/for-economy-duterte-allows-government-to-enter-new-mining-agreements-after-lifting-ban?fbclid=IwAR2QWN4Zl_DJHIqo0vYjtKrgpcrvIxSTye0bARL32IXP_Hr40810qyuDDvQ



Duterte inalis na ang moratorium sa pagmimina

On Apr 15, 2021



BINAWI na ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte ang moratorium sa pagmimina.

Ito'y matapos makapagpatupad na ng mga bagong batas ang gobyerno para sa pag-rationalize ng existing revenue sharing schemes and mechanisms kasama na ang Tax Reform Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) Act na nagtatakda ng dobleng rate sa excise tax sa minerals, mineral products at quarry resources sa 4 % mula sa dating 2%.

Nakasaad sa Executive Order No. 130 ng Malakanyang na pirmado ni Pangulong Duterte nitong Miyerkules, Abril 14, na puwede nang pumasok muli ang pamahalaan sa bagong mineral agreements alinsunod sa Philippine Mining Act of 1995 at iba pang mga batas.

Dahil dito, maaari nang ipagpatuloy ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang pagbibigay at pag-iisyu ng exploration permits sang-ayon sa umiiral na batas at mga panuntunan.

Inaatasan din ang DENR na bumuo ng terms and conditions sa bagong mineral agreements kung saan magagamit nang husto ng gobyerno ang kita at shares nito sa produksyon, kabilang na ang posibilidad na ideklara ang mga lugar na ito bilang mineral reservations para makakuha ng kaukulang royalties.

Inaatasan din nito ang DENR na i-review ang existing mining contracts at mga kasunduan para sa posibleng renegotiation sa terms and conditions na magiging katanggap-tanggap sa gobyerno at sa mining contractor.

Base sa EO 130, kailangang magpatupad ang DENR ng mahigpit na mines safety and environmental policies at mga patakaran ng Mining Industry Coordinating Council (MICC) para sa lahat ng mining operations na naglalayong maoobserbahan ang environmental protection at maging responsable ang pagmimina. **(Josephine Patricio)**

Source: https://www.policefilestonite.net/2021/04/15/duterte-inalis-na-ang-moratorium-sa-pagmimina/?fbclid=IwAR2eteB_4MmHR9Bm5DnrxcvbTBUh0Ll93OrfaKiM_92CI2jDk-XluDC97zM



Moratorium sa pagmimina, binawi na ni Duterte

By **Bombo Reymund Tinaza**

-April 15, 2021 | 2:57 PM

Tinanggal na ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte ang ipinatutupad na moratorium sa pagmimina.

Sa inilabas na Executive Order No. 130 ng Malacañang na pirmado ni Pangulong Duterte kahapon, Abril 14, 2021, nakasaad na maaari nang pumasok muli ang pamahalaan sa bagong mineral agreements alinsunod sa Philippine Mining Act of 1995 at iba pang mga batas.

Dahil dito, maaari nang ipagpatuloy ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang pagbibigay at pag-iisyu ng exploration permits sang-ayon sa umiiral na batas at mga panuntunan.

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Sa ilalim ng kautusan, inaatasan din ang DENR na i-review ang existing mining contracts at mga kasunduan para sa posibleng renegotiation sa terms and conditions na magiging katanggap-tanggap sa gobyerno at sa mining contractor.

Nakasaad din sa EO 130 na kailangang magpatupad ang DENR ng mahigpit na mines safety and environmental polices at mga patakaran ng Mining Industry Coordinating Council (MICC) para sa lahat ng mining operations na naglalayong maoobserbahan ang environmental protection at maging responsable ang pagmimina.

Ang pagbawi na ito ni Pangulong Duterte sa moratorium sa pagmimina ay matapos makapagpatupad na ng mga bagong batas ang pamahalaan para sa pag-rationalize ng existing revenue sharing schemes and mechanisms kasama na ang Tax Reform Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) Act na nagtatakda ng dobleng rate sa excise tax sa minerals, mineral products at quarry resources sa 4 porsyento mula sa dating 2 porsyento.



Philippines lifts nine-year-old moratorium on new mining projects

April 15, 2021 | 11:30 am



PRESIDENTIAL PHOTO/ KING RODRIGUEZ

MANILA - Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has lifted a moratorium on new mineral agreements imposed in 2012, according to an executive order made public by the presidential palace on Thursday.

The executive order, which Duterte signed a day earlier, allows the government to enter into agreements for new mining projects and undertake a review of existing mining contracts and agreements for possible renegotiation of the terms, as it seeks to boost state revenues.

— Reuters

Source: https://www.bworldonline.com/philippines-lifts-nine-year-old-moratorium-on-new-mining-projects/?fbclid=IwAR0GfYHhbW4raVXrnJqHLLZO2HrECctLYU04nUCZIt6b_J1aTZPts8ZND3I

Palace lifts ban on new mining agreements

By **Jonathan L. Mayuga** and Samuel Medenilla -April 16, 2021



In Photo: A caterpillar Inc. mining truck leaves after collecting newly-excavated oxide ore

President Duterte has signed Executive Order (EO) 130 lifting an almost decade-old moratorium on the processing of new mining projects held in abeyance since 2012 by former President Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino's EO 79.

Specifically, Duterte's order amended Section 4 of EO 79 signed by Aquino on July 6, 2012, on the Grant of Mineral Agreements Pending New Legislation, thereby allowing the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) to proceed with the processing of new mining project applications.

With the latest signed by President Duterte last Wednesday, new mining operations are also expected to resume. In removing the prohibition, he cited the provision of the Republic Act 10963 or the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) Act which doubled the tax rate for the said resources from 2 percent to 4 percent.

President Duterte said higher tax rate coupled with the "additional rules, regulations, and policies" implemented by the DENR are sufficient grounds to allow the government to enter into new mineral agreements.

"The DENR shall strictly implement mines safety and environment policies. It shall ensure strict implementation of and compliance with the recommendation measures of the Mining Industry Coordinating Council involving all mining operations, including other pertinent laws, rules, and regulations, and terms and conditions of mineral agreements," President Duterte said in his two-paged EO 130.

'Welcome development'

MGB Director Wilfredo G. Moncano, in a telephone interview, said Duterte's latest order in the mining sector is a "welcome development."

The mining official said he would immediately create a small group that will work on the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of the new order.

The MGB official said the IRR would focus principally on the grant of new mining permits and declaration of new mining areas as "mineral reservations."

"All these will be in the IRR. We will immediately work with the Department of Finance [DOF] and other stakeholders to craft the IRR," he said.



Moncano said big industry players, as well as local government units (LGUs) that host mining projects will be summoned for their inputs in the crafting of the IRR.

In a separate text message, Moncano expressed elation with the issuance of the new order, stressing that the lifting of the mining moratorium will boost the country's economic recovery effort amid the unprecedented global health crisis brought by the onset of Covid-19 pandemic since last year.

"The MGB, DENR, the mining industry, and the mining investors, among others, who were awaiting this Executive Order that will lift the moratorium in the processing of new mining projects, are elated that the mining sector's proposal to contribute to the economic recovery of the country during this pandemic is heeded and supported by the highest Executive office of the country. There are mining projects under priority listing right now that are hindered or hesitant to invest and proceed to development and commercial extraction because of the previous EO [EO 79] imposing a moratorium to MGB-DENR on the issuance of new Mineral Production Sharing Agreement [MPSA]," he said.

"The issuance of an MPSA by reason of the lifting of the moratorium through this EO 130 will authorize the mining company to proceed to development and commercial extraction. These are the activities or projects needed that can generate economic activities, revenues, employment, services, taxes, and other indirect economic activities in remote areas in the country," he said.

Moncano said, however, that the processing of applications and eventually, approval of new mining projects, do not mean that the protection of the environment and safety will be taken lightly.

"On the contrary, strict environmental and safety measures will be put in place. The DENR and DOF will soon craft the implementing rules and regulations for this EO 130," he said.

The mining industry's big players, represented by the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP), has been calling for the lifting of the mining moratorium, blaming President Aquino's mining policy for the decreasing mining investments since EO 79's signing in 2012.

Roadblock removed

IN a news statement, COMP said that the lifting of the moratorium on new mining projects is most welcome especially in the time of great national difficulty.

"A major roadblock to the huge potential of the Philippine mining industry to contribute to socioeconomic growth has been removed. We welcome the lifting of the moratorium on new mining projects—in place for nearly nine years—in this time of great national difficulty as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic," COMP said.

COMP said that mining projects that will be allowed to operate will provide additional government revenues in the form of taxes and fees, royalty fees, and increase in export value, as well as employment opportunities for thousands of Filipinos, especially those in rural areas.



"The industry's positive impact on host communities can be clearly seen in regions around the country where mining has been allowed to flourish, such as in Caraga and Mimaropa," COMP said.

"The removal of this policy roadblock will undoubtedly help encourage both local and foreign investments into the country. Since 2010, investor interest in the Philippines has declined. Executive Order 130 will help bring the Philippines back on the investment map," the group added.

COMP believes that adequate social and environmental laws, rules, and regulations are already in place to mitigate the impact of mining on communities and the environment.

"Despite this, the members of the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines have voluntarily adopted the Towards Sustainable Mining program, a global social and environmental performance standard that compels us to operate beyond mere compliance. We have also subscribed to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative to further demonstrate our commitment to the highest standards of transparency and accountability in business," the group added.

Reforms under way

Sought for comment, COMP Executive Director Ronald Recidoro said he anticipates that the new order will bring about significant reforms in the contracting and regulation of new mining projects.

"Government focus is really on strict compliance with social and environmental regulations and revenue generation. [The] industry will be happy to meet government halfway," he said via text message to the BusinessMirror.

Asked if it the new order would make mining in the Philippines competitive while ensuring that both government and the private sector are equally benefiting from a new mining revenue-sharing scheme, he said the order to the DENR and DOF is clear.

"The order to the DENR and DOF is to formulate the terms and conditions in the new mineral agreements that will maximize government revenues," he said.

"We've had a lot of discussions with our counterparts in the DOF and we [have] both agreed that the fiscal regime should be rational. For us, that means we must maintain our competitiveness as an investment destination. Because if the mining tax regime is 'too onerous,' it will also not attract the kind of long-term investments that we are all looking for," he pointed out.

Betrayal of Lopez's legacy?

The anti-mining group Alyansa Tigil Mina (ATM), for its part, expressed surprise and dismay with the issuance of Malacañang of EO 130.

"This is a betrayal of the Duterte administration against the legacy of former DENR Secretary Gina Lopez and treachery against the future generations of Filipinos," Jaybee Garganera, national coordinator of ATM told the BusinessMirror via text message.

"President Duterte has completed his turn around—from claiming to protect the environment and stop the destruction of forests by destructive mining—to a pro-mining President. Lifting the mining moratorium exposes his administration's support for mining



projects that will impact our water, food supply, forest, biodiversity, indigenous communities and fragile island-ecosystems," Garganera said.

Garganera lamented that the lifting of the mining moratorium was made one week before the celebration of Earth Day 2021.

"The minions of this regime led by DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu and DOF Secretary Carlos Dominguez have once again failed the Filipino people in standing up for ecological integrity and environmental sustainability. This will be the saddest Earth Day celebration for many communities," he averred.

"In the middle of a climate crisis and this pandemic, corporate interests and profit has won again over the welfare and benefits of man," he added.

Garganera said ATM would not take Malacañang's action sitting down.

"We will mobilize all our members to intensify and broaden the resistance against mining, especially those who stand to benefit from this new policy. And we will defy this callous government who keeps turning a blind eye against mining-affected communities and environmental defenders," Garganera said.

Amended provisions

The revisions in EO 79 stipulated in EO 130 include the giving authorization to DENR to "formulate the terms of and conditions in the new mineral agreements that will maximize government revenues and share from production," through royalties in accordance with existing laws.

The task of "rationalizing existing revenue-sharing schemes and mechanisms" will be handled by both DENR and DOF.

EO 130 retained the original provision of EO 79 in terms of allowing the grant of new mineral agreements subject to compliance with the Philippine Mining Act; granting of Exploration Permits; and the mandate of DENR to review existing mining contracts.

EO 130 is set to take effect immediately after its publication in a newspaper of general circulation.



Mining deals freeze thawed

Executive Order 130 allowed the government to enter into new mineral agreements subject to compliance with the Philippine Mining Act of 1995

Published 4 hours ago on April 16, 2021 02:30 AM

By [MJ Blancaflor](#) @tribunephil_MJB



President Rodrigo Duterte has lifted the nine-year-old moratorium on new mining deals provided that these comply with laws as the country seeks to boost state revenues.

The President on Wednesday signed Executive Order (EO) 130 which allowed the government to enter into new mineral agreements subject to compliance with the Philippine Mining Act of 1995 and other relevant regulations. Copies of the order were released to reporters on Thursday.

The order revoked the suspension of applications for mineral contracts in protected areas, prime agricultural lands, tourism development areas, and other critical places, which was imposed by former President Benigno S. Aquino III in 2012 pending the passage of a law providing reforms in the mining sector including revenue sharing schemes.

Due to absence of such law, the President directed the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to “formulate terms and conditions in the new mineral agreements that will maximize government revenues and share from production, including the possibility of declaring these areas as mineral reservations to obtain appropriate royalties.”

The Department of Finance should work with the DENR to rationalize existing revenue-sharing schemes and mechanisms, he added.

Trade group hails EO

In a statement, the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines said a “major roadblock” to the potential of the mining industry to contribute to socio-economic growth has been removed.

“Mining projects that will be allowed to operate following this development will provide additional government revenues in the form of taxes and fees, royalty fees, and increase in export value, as well as employment opportunities for thousands of Filipinos, especially those in rural areas,” the group said.

“The industry’s positive impact on host communities can be seen in regions around the country where mining has been allowed to flourish, such as in Caraga and MIMAROPA,” it added.

The chamber also noted that the moratorium attracts more local and foreign investments into the country.

“Since 2010, investor interest in the Philippines has declined. Executive Order 130 will help bring the Philippines back on the investment map,” it said.



The Philippine Nickel Industry Association (PNIA) also welcomed the decision; saying that the move will also increase the industry's support to host communities.

"PNIA has always maintained the industry's contribution to countryside development by providing employment opportunities and livelihood, and ensuring the sustainability of our host communities," the group noted.



President Rodrigo Duterte holds a meeting with some members of the Inter-Agency Task Force on the Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) at the Malago Clubhouse in Malacañang on April 13, 2020.

Presidential Photo/Karl Norman Alonzo

Duterte ends Aquino-era mining ban in departure from anti-mining past

[Prinz Magtulis](#) (Philstar.com) - April 15, 2021 - 3:02pm

MANILA, Philippines — In a departure from his anti-mining stance, President Rodrigo Duterte lifted a 9-year-old ban on new mining agreements on Thursday, ending a controversial policy considered the last big hurdle to miners looking to capitalize on mineral-rich Philippines.

As expected, Executive Order 130 was met by contrasting views from mining companies which in numerous cases had been at the receiving end of Duterte's harsh rhetoric, and environmentalists whose opposition to the administration is only tempered by the president's adverse attitude toward mining.

"The Government may enter into new mineral agreements, subject to compliance with the Philippine Mining Act of 1995 and other applicable laws, rules, and regulations," the EO stated.

The Chamber of Mines of the Philippines, an industry group, immediately welcomed the news. "A major roadblock to the huge potential of the Philippine mining industry has been removed," the group said in a statement. The mining and oil sub-index closed up 5.38% at the local bourse on Thursday after the news.

Alyansa Tigil Mina, an environmental group, meanwhile opposed. "Pres. Duterte has completed his turn around, from claiming to protect the environment and stop the destruction of forests by destructive mining to a pro-mining president," the group said in a separate statement.

Indeed, the EO marks a dramatic shift in Duterte's stance against mining since lambasting the sector on his State of the Nation Address in 2017. At the time, the chief executive slammed the nascent industry, blaming them for costly environmental destruction, while supposedly giving far less in government revenues.

A lot has changed since then. After the late Gina Lopez was not confirmed as environment secretary in 2017, Duterte's economic managers reversed majority of her 26 mining suspensions that drew the ire of mining firms. Meanwhile, in July 2020, the government restored an environmental clearance to the \$5.9-billion Tampakan open-pit mining project in South Cotabato, which has long been stuck after getting opposed by the local state.



Broad change

The EO is arguably the biggest and broadest policy change on this front, especially since it would again open the gates to future mineral investors looking at the Philippines' untapped resources. But that does not mean it would be a field day for them as well, as Duterte also instructed the state's top environmental agency to ensure government gets its due, even from already existing pacts.

"The DENR shall formulate the terms and conditions in the new mineral agreements that will maximize government revenues and share from production...", the EO said.

"The DENR shall likewise undertake a review of existing mining contracts and agreements for possible renegotiation of the terms and conditions of the same, which shall in all cases be mutually acceptable to the government and mining contractor," it added.

More broadly, this marked another push to open the economy to foreign investors, some of which have tested constitutional boundaries that limit 40% equity in select industries. This includes Duterte pressing on his allies in Congress to pass three bills that will permit more foreign players in retail, public services like transport, plus a broader liberalization measure that reduces sectors where foreign capital is prohibited.

In October last year, Duterte also lifted a prevailing moratorium on oil and gas exploration in the West Philippine Sea, a decision officials said was meant to find and develop new energy sources, but one that also inevitably opens partnerships with foreign investors, including those from China, on these exploration deals.

Finally, late last month, Duterte likewise enacted the Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises Act that reduced corporate tax rates and tax perks in a bid to level the playing field for companies in and out of economic zones. All these in a bid to get the private sector to facilitate the economy's pandemic recovery, while the government repeatedly hesitates to spend more over fears of ballooning its deficit and debt.

For Ronald Recidoro, vice-president at Chamber of Mines, it would take some time to bring back the appetite of foreign miners for the Philippines, but added that the EO was a move in the right direction.

"I think at the most, you will see an uptick in investment inquiries, but how soon will those translate to MPSA (mineral production sharing agreements), it will be long. It takes 10 to 15 years to graduate from application to actual MPSA," Recidoro said by phone.



Moratorium on mining projects lifted

April 16, 2021 | 12:34 am



A view of nickel ore stockpiles at DMCI Mining Corp.'s mine in Sta. Cruz, Zambales, Feb. 7, 2017.
— REUTERS/ERIK DE CASTRO

By Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza, *Reporter*

PHILIPPINE President Rodrigo R. Duterte finally lifted the nine-year moratorium on new mineral agreements, in a bid to boost revenues as the country recovers from the pandemic.

Executive Order (EO) No. 130, signed by Mr. Duterte on April 14, allows the government to enter into new mineral agreements and review existing mining deals for possible renegotiation.

"The DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources) shall formulate the terms and conditions in the new mineral agreements that will maximize government revenues and share from production, including the possibility of declaring these areas as mineral reservations to obtain appropriate royalties," the order stated.

The DENR was also tasked to review existing mining contracts and possibly work out new terms that will be "mutually acceptable to the government and the mining contractor."

The Finance department and DENR were ordered to implement measures to "rationalize existing revenue-sharing schemes and mechanisms."

The DENR was also directed to strictly implement mine safety and environmental policies.

The new EO amends the one made by then-President Benigno S. Aquino III in 2012 which prohibited the grant of new mining deals in several protected areas, while awaiting the passage of a law that would increase the government's share in mining revenues.

Republic Act No. 10963 or the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) Act doubled the excise tax on minerals, mineral products and quarry resources to 4%, starting 2018.

The country has tapped less than 5% of its mineral resources endowment to date, the EO stated, emphasizing the mining sector can support the government's infrastructure projects and create jobs.

"We welcome the lifting of the moratorium on new mining projects — in place for nearly nine years — in this time of great national difficulty as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic," the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (CMP) said in a statement.

The CMP said mining projects will provide much-needed government revenues, in the form of taxes and royalty fees. The new order will also help attract local and foreign investments in the sector.



Astro C. del Castillo, First Grade Finance, Inc. managing director, said EO 130 will entice local and foreign investors to take a serious look at the country's mineral industry again.

"The mining industry and the financial capital markets have been waiting for this. It is a win-win formula amongst the government, the private sector, and the mining industry and environmental advocates," he said in a mobile phone interview.

Mr. Del Castillo said this will also help bring back confidence in the financial capital markets, especially in the minerals industry.

"We'll see a knee-jerk reaction from mining stocks as a reaction to this news, causing a spillover tomorrow and the coming days. Eventually the market will correct itself and people will be focused on the fundamentals of the listed mining companies and if they can take advantage of the good news," he added.

NO IMMEDIATE IMPACT?

Wilfredo G. Moncano, acting director of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau, said in a Viber message these mining projects will help "generate economic activities, revenues, employment, services, taxes, and other indirect economic activities in remote areas in the country."

However, he noted mining's contribution to the country's growth output would not be that huge as firms will be just starting the development of projects this year.

"The gestation time of mining projects before it takes commercial extraction takes between a year to five years depending on the size of the project and if there are complementary mineral processing plants constructed," Mr. Moncano said.

John Paul R. Rivera, an economist at the Asian Institute of Management, said the reopening of the mining sector will certainly contribute to economic growth "but will not give as much given the industry's previous performance."

"Historically, the mining/extractive sector makes a relatively small contribution to the Philippine economy roughly around 1% of GDP or approximately 5% of exports," he said.

The contribution of the mineral industry would remain small if the country is unable to tap its other mineral resources such as gold, copper, nickel, among others, Mr. Rivera said.

He said growing concern over mining's environmental impact will make it more challenging for the industry, especially amid the so-called climate crisis.

"Lifting the moratorium on mining without domestic industries to process and use the minerals will just mean that the most significant value-added from our finite mineral resources will keep going to foreign firms, industries and economies," Ibon Foundation Executive Director Sonny A. Africa said in a Facebook messenger chat. "While the cost is great the real economic gains are negligible."

Mr. Africa said mining and quarrying even before the pandemic only employed around 190,000 in 2019, "not even a half a percentage point of total employment."

"The refusal to really reform economic policies combined with the pandemic will just mean that people will remain worse off than before the pandemic for many years to come," Mr. Africa said.

Kalikasan People's Network (Kalikasan) said the new order will result in a "boom of environmental violations."



"We cannot allow this deluge of destructive mines while our communities are still reeling from the converging pandemic and climate crises," Kalikasan Chairperson Leon Dulce said in a Facebook messenger chat.

Mr. Dulce said the new order will just operate on "outdated" provisions that allow companies "to skimp on rehabilitation, polluter taxation, and waste management."

"Mining companies need only to pay P50 per ton of waste disposed of in unauthorized areas, and only P0.05 for every ton of mine waste and P0.10 for mine tailings in terms of compensation for resulting damages."

"This recent backtracking of the President and his administration on mining proves that indeed his past pronouncements and postures as pro-environment has finally confirmed much of our perspective that they were nothing but lip service," Antonio Les Marchand, advocacy officer of Mission for People's Initiatives, Inc., said in a Facebook messenger chat.

Mr. Marchand said the order would only result in more serious threats to local communities, citing instances where several foreign mining firms were able to evade accountability.

Mr. Marchand called on the government to be transparent and disclose the results of the amendment of the moratorium on new mining agreements.

Anti-mining group Alyansa Tigil Mina (ATM) said in a statement Thursday that the decision to lift the moratorium on mineral agreement is treachery against future Filipino generations.

"Lifting the mining moratorium exposes Mr. Duterte's support for mining projects that will impact our water, food supply, forest, biodiversity, indigenous communities, and fragile island ecosystems," the group said.

"We will mobilize all our members to intensify and broaden the resistance against mining, especially those who will benefit from this new policy. And we will defy this callous government that keeps turning a blind eye against mining-affected communities and environmental defenders," it added. — *with* Revin Mikhael D. Ochave



Ban on new mining agreements lifted

By Catherine S. Valente, TMT April 16, 2021

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte has lifted the moratorium on new mineral agreements to generate job opportunities and spur countryside growth.

The President issued Executive Order (EO) 130 that amended EO 79 issued by former president Benigno Aquino 3rd in 2012 that suspended applications for mineral contracts in protected areas, prime agricultural lands, tourism development areas, and other critical places like island ecosystems, among others.

“In addition to ushering significant economic benefits to the country, the mining industry can support various government projects, such as the Build, Build, Build Program, by providing raw materials for the construction and development of other industries; and the Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa Program, by increasing employment opportunities in remote rural areas where there are mining activities thereby stimulating countryside development,” the EO read.

The country has tapped “less than 5 percent of its mineral resources endowment to date,” according to the order.

The order authorized the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to grant and issue exploration permits under existing laws, rules and guidelines. It also directed the environment department to formulate terms and conditions in the new mining agreements that will “maximize government revenues and share from production.”

It would include the possible declaration of such areas as mineral reservations to get royalties in accordance with the country’s laws.

Duterte also tasked the DENR to review existing mining contracts and agreements “for possible renegotiation” of the terms and conditions that must be mutually acceptable to the government and the mining contractor.

The DENR and the Department of Finance were directed to take measures to rationalize the existing revenue-sharing scheme.

President Duterte ordered DENR “to strictly implement mines safety and environmental policies.” The EO will take effect upon its publication in a newspaper.

In 2018, he lifted a two-year moratorium on the issuance of mining exploration permits to help determine the potential of some prospects in the Philippines, the world’s No. 2 nickel ore exporter. Duterte has repeatedly criticized miners for polluting rivers and destroying forests.

But a government panel in 2018 said 23 out of 27 mines have passed initial review for compliance with state regulations.

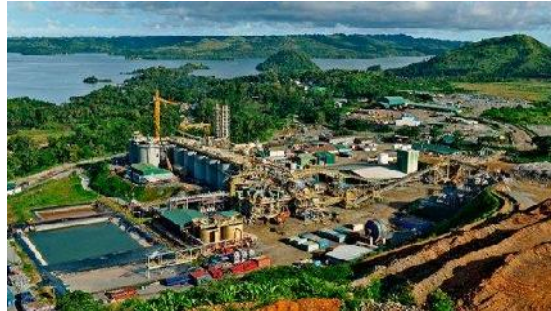
Mining companies earlier called on the government to lift the suspension on new mining agreements and the use of open pits to help promote economic growth.

The Philippines is the second-biggest supplier of nickel ore to China, after Indonesia, where it is used to produce stainless steel.

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2021/04/16/news/national/ban-on-new-mining-agreements-lifted/864213/>

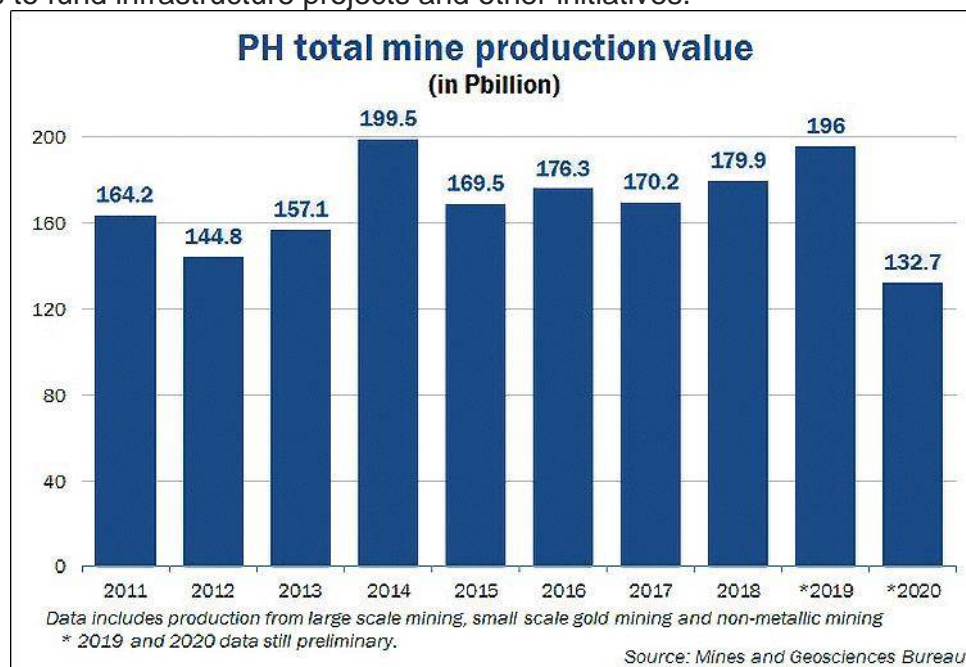
Lifting of ban on new projects one less hurdle to mining revival

By Jed Macapagal -April 16, 2021



The local mining industry has one less roadblock on its way to revival after President Duterte lifted a nine-year moratorium on new mineral agreements between the government and the private sector.

Duterte signed Wednesday Executive Order (EO) 130 lifting a moratorium on new mineral agreements imposed in 2012, reopening the door to fresh mining investments as he seeks to boost state revenues to fund infrastructure projects and other initiatives.



But the industry's full potential cannot be harnessed with the continued ban on open pit mining ban under Department Order 2017-10.

Mliners have said lifting of the ban on open pit mining can "unlock" at least \$1.8 billion in additional exports and P12 billion in revenues for the government. Large metallic mining projects of Kingking, Tampakan and Silangan have been stalled by the ban.

In lifting the moratorium, Duterte said new mining projects can support various government projects such as the Build, Build, Build Program by providing raw materials for the construction and development of other countries apart from the expected increased employment opportunities in remote rural areas.

The President said the DENR conducted a thorough review of the regulatory framework of the mining industry placed additional rules, regulations and policies for enhanced environmental safeguards to ensure that mining operations observe environmental protection.



In a statement, the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines said the new policy will allow the local mining sector to provide additional government revenues in the form of taxes, fees and royalties apart from increased export value as well as employment opportunities.

“The removal of this policy roadblock will undoubtedly help encourage both local and foreign investments into the country. Since 2010, investor interest in the Philippines has declined. EO 130 will help bring the Philippines back on the investment map,” the group said

COMP said there are adequate social and environmental laws, rules and regulations that will mitigate the impact of mining on communities and the environment.

Meanwhile, the Philippine Nickel Industry Association also welcomed the new government policy.

“PNIA has always maintained the industry’s contribution to countryside development by providing employment opportunities and livelihood, and ensuring the sustainability of our host communities. We remain steadfast in our thrust to adhere to the highest safety standards in our operations and to deliver beyond compliance on environmental safety and protection,” the group said in a separate statement,

However, environmental group Alyansa Tigil Mina said the lifting of the moratorium is a “betrayal” against the legacy of former DENR Secretary Regina Lopez and is a “treachery” against the future generations of Filipinos.

The Philippines is one of the world’s largest producer of nickel, copper and gold.

The Philippines is currently the biggest supplier of nickel ore to top metals consumer China, though less than 5 percent of its reserves of all minerals are estimated to have been extracted so far. – With Jocelyn Montemayor and Reuters



Solon lauds EO allowing mining deals for economic recovery

By Filane Mikee Cervantes **April 15, 2021, 3:06 pm**



(File photo)

MANILA – The chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee on Thursday said the establishment of new mining agreements will pave the way for the country’s bid for competitiveness in the electric vehicle and renewable energy battery sector, as well as the country’s long-term economic recovery.

Albay Rep. Joey Salceda made the statement after President Rodrigo Duterte issued Executive Order (EO) 130, which lifts the nine-year moratorium on mineral agreements to spur economic growth and support projects and programs of the government.

“We are currently in a mineral boom, and metallic resources that we have in abundance, like gold and silver, are at elevated prices. Because there has been much monetary expansion all over the world, investors want to hedge their bets on some store of value. Gold has been the first choice for that, historically,” Salceda said, citing the fact that the Philippines has some of the world’s largest deposits of precious metals.

He also noted that the country has large reserves of nickel and copper, which are crucial to the global push for electric vehicles, as they are critical inputs to the batteries that power these vehicles.

“So, it can only mean well for our economic recovery, especially if we can set up the ground rules and the tax regime for mining well,” he said.

He said the country should now develop a plan to aggressively play a role in developing inputs to electric vehicles using its mineral resources.

“In the past, renewable energy was not always relied upon because of fluctuations in supply. When there’s no wind, there is little wind-powered energy supply. Solar energy requires consistent sunlight, and so on,” he added.

With powerful battery technology, driven by nickel and cobalt, he said renewable energy can be stored better, so that fluctuations are managed.

“In other words, we now have the power and the prospects to create millions of jobs in renewable energy, battery manufacturing, sustainable mining, and related sectors. This will be a key driver of economic recovery post-Covid, but we have to be very wise with our policies,” Salceda said.

Over the next 10 years, he said that some 1.3 million jobs await the country in nickel-related industries.

“The world appears to see that this is the future. Top nickel buyer and electric vehicle manufacturer Tesla is already larger in market cap than all other major car manufacturers combined. Chinese electric vehicle manufacturers are also rising. Nickel will be very big, and as one of the world’s largest producers of nickel, we will be very important, if we will be wise,” he said.

Salceda also added that the country can become a global power in renewable energy and in the electric vehicle supply chain with the right policy moves.



"The Philippines remains among the world's largest producers of nickel. Despite taking a small production dip between 2017 and 2018, when nickel production fell from 366,000 metric tons (MT) to 340,000 MT, the nation increased its output to 420,000 MT in 2019. That is very strategic, when you account for the potential growth in prices of nickel," he said.

Duterte signed EO 130 on April 14, amending Section 4 of EO No. 79, s. 2012 that prohibits the grant of mineral agreements "until a new legislation rationalizing existing revenue sharing schemes and mechanisms shall have taken effect".

Under the new EO, Section 4 of EO No. 79, the government may enter into new mineral agreements, subject to compliance with Philippine Mining Act of 1995 and other applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

The new EO also directs the DENR to "formulate the terms and conditions in the new mineral agreements that will maximize government revenues and share from production, including the possibility of declaring these areas as mineral reservations to obtain appropriate royalties, in accordance with existing laws, rules, and regulations."

"The DENR shall likewise undertake a review of existing mining contacts and agreements for possible renegotiation of the terms and conditions of the same, which shall in all cases be mutually acceptable to the government and the mining contractor," the EO read.

The DENR and the Department of Finance are directed "to undertake appropriate measures to rationalize existing revenue sharing schemes and mechanisms."

"The mining industry can support various government projects, such as the Build, Build, Build Program, by providing raw materials for the construction and development of other industries; and the Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa Program, by increasing employment opportunities in remote, rural areas where there are mining activities thereby stimulating countryside development," the EO read.

According to the new EO, the country has tapped less than 5 percent of its mineral resources endowment to date. **(PNA)**



Miners' groups welcome lifting of ban on new mining projects

By Kris Crismundo April 15, 2021, 6:58 pm



Logo taken from COMP website

MANILA – The Chamber of Mines in the Philippines (COMP) and the Philippine Nickel Industry Association (PNIA) have lauded the decision of President Rodrigo Duterte to lift the nine-year moratorium on new mining projects.

“We welcome the lifting of the moratorium on new mining projects --in place for nearly nine years-- in this time of great national difficulty as a result of the Covid-19 (coronavirus disease 2019) pandemic,” COMP said in a statement Thursday.

COMP added the new mining projects will generate new revenues for the government in the form of taxes and fees, as well as royalty fees while increasing export revenues and job generation, especially in the rural areas.

“The removal of this policy roadblock will undoubtedly help encourage both local and foreign investments into the country. Since 2010, investor interest in the Philippines has declined. Executive Order 130 will help bring the Philippines back on the investment map,” the group said.

Meanwhile, PNIA said the lifting of the moratorium on new mining agreements recognizes the role of the mining industry in economic recovery and development.

“PNIA has always maintained the industry’s contribution to countryside development by providing employment opportunities and livelihood, and ensuring the sustainability of our host communities,” it said in a separate statement.

Both groups said they will continue to adhere to the highest environmental and social standards to mitigate the impacts of mining on the environment and the host communities. **(PNA)**

Mining group cites 'positive impact' on economy as Duterte lifts moratorium on new deals

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Apr 15 2021 05:00 PM



A rock sample containing oxidized iron is shown at the Mining Philippines Conference at the Sofitel Hotel in Pasay city on September 11, 2019. *Jonathan Cellona, ABS-CBN News/File*

MANILA - The lifting of the moratorium on new mining projects is "most welcome" especially in this time of "great national difficulty," the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines said Thursday.

Preventing new mining projects is a "major roadblock" to the country's huge potential in terms of economic growth, the chamber said in a statement.

Mining projects that will be allowed to operate will provide additional government revenues in terms of taxes and fees, royalty fees and increase in export value, in addition to employment opportunities for thousands of Filipinos, the group said.

"The removal of this policy roadblock will undoubtedly help encourage both local and foreign investments into the country," the statement said.

"The industry's positive impact on host communities can be clearly seen in regions around the country where mining has been allowed to flourish, such as in Caraga and MIMAROPA," it added.

The group added that there are "adequate" social and environmental laws in place to mitigate the impact of mining, adding that they have adopted the global standard called Towards Sustainable Mining program.

President Rodrigo Duterte lifted the 9-year moratorium on new mining deals by signing EO 130. The chief executive said that the industry could help revive and support the economy.

But the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) said the measure "will embolden huge foreign corporations in undertaking environmental plunder of our lands."

"More farmers and indigenous peoples will be evicted from their farmlands and residences, as mining corps carve mountains," the KMP said in a statement.

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/business/04/15/21/mining-group-cites-positive-impact-on-economy-as-duterte-lifts-moratorium-on-new-deals>



'Fiscal regime on mining gains to boost Covid fight'

By **Jovee Marie de la Cruz** -April 16, 2021



Rep. Joey Salceda

AFTER the government lifted the moratorium on new mining agreements, the chairman of the House Committee on Ways and Means last Thursday said fiscal regimes and ground rules for mining should be established to ensure that the benefits of the industry are maximized for the country's economic recovery post Covid 19-pandemic.

House Committee Ways and Means Chairman Joey Sarte Salceda said the establishment of new mining agreements will pave the way for the country's bid for competitiveness in the electric vehicle and renewable energy battery sector, as well as the country's long-term economic recovery.

"We now have the power and the prospects to create millions of jobs in renewable energy, battery manufacturing, sustainable mining, and related sectors. This will be a key driver of economic recovery post-Covid, but we have to be very wise with our policies," Salceda said.

Over the next 10 years, Salceda said, some 1.3 million jobs await the country in nickel-related industries.

"It can only mean well for our economic recovery, especially if we can set up the ground rules and the tax regime for mining well."

But he said officials should now develop a plan so the country can aggressively play a role in developing inputs to electric vehicles using its mineral resources.

"We are currently in a mineral boom, and metallic resources that we have in abundance, like gold and silver, are at elevated prices. Because there has been much monetary expansion all over the world, investors want to hedge their bets on some store of value. Gold has been the first choice for that, historically," Salceda said. The lawmaker also emphasized that the Philippines has some of the world's largest deposits of the precious metal.

"We also have Asia's second-largest reserve of nickel in Asia, and we have large reserves of copper. These minerals are crucial to the global push for electric vehicles, as they are critical inputs to the batteries that power these vehicles. Nickel has also seen historic highs this year," Salceda added.



The lawmaker noted that the government hasn't relied on renewable energy because of fluctuations in supply.

"When there's no wind, there is little wind-powered energy supply. Solar energy requires consistent sunlight, and so on," Salceda said. "With powerful battery technology, driven by nickel and cobalt—another Philippine product—renewable energy can be stored better, so that fluctuations are managed."

The lawmaker added that the country "can become a global power in renewable energy and in the electric vehicle supply chain, but only if it makes the right policy moves."

"The Philippines remains among the world's largest producers of nickel. Despite taking a small production dip between 2017 and 2018, when nickel production fell from 366,000 metric tons (MT) to 340,000 MT, the nation increased its output to 420,000 MT in 2019. That is very strategic, when you account for the potential growth in prices of nickel," he said.

Five polices

MEANWHILE, Salceda recommended five key policies that Congress and the executive "have to work together on" to ensure that the benefits of the industry are maximized.

First, Salceda said, the fiscal regime on mining has to be enacted so that tax uncertainty can be removed. Salceda is a principal author of the existing proposal in the House on the matter (House Bill 6135).

"Second, we have to establish a counter-cyclical mining trust fund that will accumulate revenues during commodity booms, and distribute aid to mining communities during commodity busts. It will help smoothen the impact of global prices on the communities that depend on mining for its economic survival," he said.

"Third, we must secure our energy supply. Mining has very high energy requirements. We may need to integrate mines with the downstream natural gas sector as the cleanest source of cheap power among the non-renewables," he added.

Fourth, the lawmaker said the country needs to encourage value-added.

"To maximize the benefits of its extractive industry, the Philippines should promote domestic value-added. The launching of the Leyte Ecological Industrial Zone (LEIZ) roadmap, accompanied by the Copper Industry Development Roadmap, is a welcome development in this direction. The country should make a push to occupy significant portions of the electric vehicle and battery manufacturing space," he said.

"Fifth, we need to keep investing in research and development to find new ways to create value in mining. I strongly believe that R&D in mining should be part of the Strategic Investment Priorities Plan (SIPP) under Create, and should get the highest tier of benefits," Salceda added.

The lawmaker said he will coordinate with the Department of Finance for needed additional legislation.



"My committee will continue to exercise oversight over the fiscal aspects of this new development. There are matters that need to be settled as to how the revenues will be shared with communities and the national government. Remember this is national patrimony," Salceda said.

"I will confer with the Secretary of Finance to see what we can do. The EO says the DOF and the DENR will have to harmonize the existing revenue sharing agreements, but they have very limited power to do that without legislation," he added.



Mining stocks soar on lifting of ban on new mining deals

By TED CORDERO, GMA News Published April 15, 2021 6:51pm



Mining and oil stocks were the big gainers during the trading session on Thursday as investors cheered the lifting of the nine-year ban on granting new mining contracts.

The Mining and Oil index gained 449.53 points or 5.38% to close at 8,802.71.

"Several mining stocks ended with substantial gains after President Duterte's Executive Order 130 was made public earlier today. It allows the government to enter into new mining agreements with corporations, ending the ban that was imposed in 2012," AAA Equities head of research Chris Mangun said.

"The move is seen to spur economic growth and support projects and programs of the government," he said.

Duterte issued [Executive Order 130](#), which provides that the government "may enter into new mineral agreements, subject to compliance with the Philippine Mining Act of 1995 and other applicable laws, rules, and regulations."

The order lifted the ban on new mining projects imposed by Duterte's predecessor, Benigno Aquino III, in 2012.

The Chamber of Mines of the Philippines lauded the move as it [removes a "major roadblock"](#) to the mining sector and will also attract local and foreign investments into the country.

The bellwether PSEi, meanwhile, closed higher by 16.75 points or 0.26% to 6,539.96 at the closing bell. The broader All Shares also inched up by 12.96 points or 0.33% to 3,997.58.

"Trading on blue chips was similar to the day before, last-minute buying allowed the main index to close at its high for the day," Mangun said.

"Trading volumes remain low as the sentiment is mainly cautious," he added.

More than 4.303 billion shares valued at P5.423 billion, changed hands. Advancers led decliners, 103 to 100, and 46 issues were unchanged.—AOL, GMA News

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/money/companies/783899/mining-stocks-soar-on-lifting-of-ban-on-new-mining-deals/story/>



Palace lifting of moratorium on mining deals could lead to more disasters

Published April 15, 2021, 5:59 PM by [Ellson Quismorio](#)

Pro-environment group Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment (Kalikasan PNE) has frowned over Malacañang's recent decision to lift the moratorium on mining agreements.



(MANILA BULLETIN FILE PHOTO)

Kalikasan PNE expressed fear in a statement Thursday, April 15 that the move—made official by an Executive Order (EO)—might lead to more disasters during the time of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

“[President] Duterte’s order to lift the mining agreement moratorium will be a disaster upon disaster because the Mining Act of 1995 is still in place. We cannot allow this deluge of destructive large-scale mining when communities are still suffering from the converging pandemic and climate crises,” said Leon Dulce, the group’s national coordinator.

“The Mining Act encourages the opening up of mineral lands to up to 100 percent ownership by foreign corporations. It does not orient the mining industry to extract based on people’s needs, but based on unfettered corporate greed,” Dulce noted.

According to Kalikasan PNE, Republic Act (RA) 7942 or the Mining Act of 1995 provided auxiliary rights to mines that allow them to cut timber, deplete and disrupt water, and ease communities away from their lands as they deem fit.

The group further reckoned that the law also provides for investment guarantees, since the Mining Act prods government to ensure the removal of obstacles to mining, including conflicting land use such as agricultural lands and communities.

“Case in point would be how foreign miner Oceanagold had disrupted and depleted the water supply in the village of Didipio, Kasibu in Nueva Vizcaya province. Communities oppose mining projects because of how they deprive their residents of natural resources,” Dulce explained.

Kalikasan PNE noted that the law has outdated provisions that shortchange obligations to rehabilitation, polluter taxation, and waste management.

Apparently, mining companies need only to pay P50 per ton of waste disposed in unauthorized areas, P0.05 for every ton of mine waste, and P0.10 for mine tailings in terms of compensation for resulting damages.

“Let us recall that in the industry-wide audit made by the late Environment Secretary Regina Lopez, at least 68 percent of mining companies had been found with serious violations. This revelation already spells the potential disaster that the Executive Order will bring to the environment and communities,” Dulce said.

Kalikasan PNE also noted that the EO might potentially aggravate the COVID-19 situation in mining communities especially since an outbreak had previously occurred in the operations of the Lepanto Consolidated Mining Company in Mankayan, Benguet.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2021/04/15/palace-lifting-of-moratorium-on-mining-deals-could-lead-to-more-disasters/>



Bayan Muna: Lifting of ban on mining projects to worsen environment, economic crises

Published April 15, 2021, 7:25 PM

by [Vanne Elaine Terrazola](#)

Bayan Muna Representative Eufemia Cullamat expressed on Thursday, April 15, her dismay over President Duterte's decision to lift the nine-year ban on new mining deals, warning that the move would only exacerbate problems in the environment and the economy.



(Bayan Muna Representative Eufemia Cullamat facebook page/ MANILA BULLETIN FILE PHOTO)

Duterte, on Wednesday, April 14, signed Executive Order No. 130 lifting the moratorium on new mineral agreements imposed by his former President Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III in 2012.

He cited the "economic benefits" of the mining industry to the country and its supposed contribution to government projects such as the massive "Build, Build, Build" infrastructure project of his administration.

"Nakakadismaya ang desisyon ng administrasyong Duterte. Imbes na patuloy na maampat ang pagkasira ng kalikasan na nagdudulot ng mga delubyo sa ating kapaligiran at mamamayan, eto na naman ang pagbubukas ng ibayong pandarabong sa ating likas-yaman, ang panibagong magpapalala sa kondisyon ng kalikasan at taumbayan (The Duterte administration's decision is disappointing. Instead of stopping the environmental destruction that has been causing disasters to our country, here we are allowing the exploitation of our resources, which would worsen the situation of our environment and of our people)," said Cullamat, who represents indigenous groups.

The Manobo leader maintained that mining projects will not help the country's economy. "Kakarampot na two percent royalty taxes ang maiiwan sa atin kapalit ng tone-toneladang lupa na binubungkal sa ating mga kabundukan, mga yamang-tubig na nalalason sa tailings waste ng mga korporasyon ng mina, at kawalan ng kabuhayan at panirahan sa mga lugar na pinagmiminahan (A meager two-percent royalty tax goes to our coffers in exchange for the tons of soil they extract from our mountains, the water resources contaminated by mining corporations, and the loss of livelihood and homes of residents in mining sites)," she lamented.



Cullamat said that with the lifting of the suspension on new mining projects, the government is “betraying” indigenous communities that would be affected and displaced in the process.

“Ang likas-yamang inaasahan naming mga maliliit para mabuhay ay sapilitan pang ilalako sa mga dambuhalang kumpanya para dambungin (The natural resources that we in small communities depend on are being sold to big companies to exploit),” she said.

Cullamat appealed for the scrapping of the EO No. 130, as well as the Mining Act of 1995.

Tip off leads gov't troops to a CTG-controlled gold mining site in Lagonoy, CamSur

By Ana-Liza S. Macatangay Published on April 15, 2021

CAMP ELIAS ANGELES, Pili, Camarines Sur, April 15 (PIA) -- A tip-off regarding an on-going illegal mining operation at Sitio Pagsimbugan, Barangay Mapid in the municipality of Lagonoy, led government troopers to the abandoned mining site.



(Photo credits: 96IB, 83IB, DPAO)



(Photo credits: 96IB, 83IB, DPAO)

"Joint Task Force Bicolandia (JTFB) forayed into a mining site illegally controlled by the Communist Terrorist Group (CTG) in Lagonoy, Camarines Sur, Tuesday, April 13, and was able to recover at least 200 mining shafts, ten water pumps and generator sets from the said abandoned small-scale mining site," Division Public Affairs Office (DPAO) Spokesperson Capt. John Paul Belleza stated.

After receiving the information from a concerned community member, 96th Infantry Battalion (96IB) and 83rd Infantry Battalion (83IB) personnel immediately conducted Law Enforcement Support Operation.

Engr. Shiela Solomon of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) Bicol, together with JTFB and 9ID Commander MGen Henry A. Robinson and Philippine National Police (PNP) RO5 Regional Director PBGen Bartolome Bustamante visited the mining area and found out that it was already abandoned by the CTG.

Deep in the woods, the mining site is an hour away from Mapid proper.

Engr. Solomon confirmed that the mining site has no permit, thereby violating Republic Act (RA)7076, otherwise known as the Small-Scale Mining Act. The violators will also be penalized in accordance to the provisions of RA 7942 or the Philippine Mining Act of 1995 specifically the theft of minerals under Sec. 103.

A sample was collected from the mining site to verify that gold is really mined from the area.

In a press statement, PBGen. Bustamante said that the MGB noted down the violations found as per their inspection. He vowed to give their full cooperation and assistance to fast track the issuance of cease-and-desist order (CDO) to stop the operation of the gold-mining activity in the said area.

As per evidence of the lumbers found and used in the said mining site as a support in the makeshift mining holes, the CTG members who were in charge of the mining operation, will also be charged with illegal logging activities.



9ID Commander MGen Henry A. Robinson, Philippine National Police (PNP) RO5 Regional Director PBGen Bartolome Bustamante and Engr. Shiela Solomon of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) personally visited the mining area in Lagonoy, Camarines Sur, April 13, 2021. (Photo credits: 96IB, 83IB, DPAO)

"MGen. Robinson assured the public that the troops will continue to implement stringent security measures in the area to prevent the communist NPA terrorists (CNTs) from going back to the mining site and continue their illegal mining operations. He also lambasted the CTG for accusing the government of being inutile when in truth, their group is the one involved in the rampant conduct of illegal activities to support their anti-development and anti-people acts," the official said as quoted in the press statement released by DPAO.

The JTFB Commander also said that the CTGs controlled the area and was able to make it as a rich resource generation activity to fund their illegal works and serve as economic sustainment to continue to sow fear and terrorism activities in the community.

"Moreover, rivers, which serve as water source of the residents living nearby, can get contaminated because of the filth coming from the makeshift mining shafts during their mining operations. "*Sinasamantala rin nila ang kawalan ng kalsada sa lugar na ito para magsagawa ng mga iligal na aktibidad.*" ("They took advantage of the unpaved road to conduct illegal activities") That is why they hate the developmental projects of the government, especially road constructions because once the community is already accessible, it will hamper their unlawful activities," MGen. Robinson further said.

MGen Robinson thanked the members of the community once again for their act of bravery and for their cooperation. The tip off is a sign that the community is already fed up with the CTGs illegal activities, victimizing even the poor people at their expense. (PIA5/Camarines Sur. with reports from CJPBelleza,DPAO)



Batapa-Sigue: Restore our earth, disrupt greed



[JOCELLE BATAPA-SIGUE](#)

April 15, 2021

MY GREEN trilogy or the three ordinances I authored more than ten years ago as city councilor of Bacolod are among my cherished policies. These are the Bacolod Earth Day Ordinance, the Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Ordinance and the Bacolod Watershed Preservation and Water Conservation Ordinance. Come to think of it, Bacolod is a trailblazer when it comes to environmental policies. As a policymaker and local legislator, I can say I have done my part to pay a little rent for space I occupy on this planet. We cannot be freeloaders all the time. Sadly, there is always a tendency to abuse power, whether policy-making or executive powers. One good example is Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Department Administrative Order (DAO) 2020-06 and DAO 2018-16, which are the basis taken by Cenro (City Environment and Natural Resources Office) when it issued a permit to Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) to cut 35 narra and molave trees lining up the road in front of the old Bacolod airport in Barangay Singcang.

DAO 2020-06 dated February 12, 2020, amended and expanded the provisions of DAO 2018-16 to include all applications for permits for tree cutting or earth-bulldozing in order to fast-track the processing and issuance of said permits for the construction of roads, bridges, flood control, and other infrastructure projects for public purposes of national government agencies. DAO 2018-16 signed by Secretary Roy Cimatu on July 18, 2018 orders all Cenros to act immediately on all applications for removal and relocation of trees for the construction of roads, bridges, flood control and other government infrastructure projects of the DPWH.

Because of these two orders, previous orders on the requirement of timber licenses, environmental impact assessments, tenurial instruments and similar measures including approval of permits up to the levels of the Secretary or Regional Offices are no longer needed. These orders of the DENR favoring DPWH applications are dangerous and prone to abuse.

In Bacolod, narra and molave trees which are more than fifty years old were affected by these orders. Sadly, local officials and authorities simply allowed the trees to fall and failed to even see whether the project has something directly to do with "construction of roads, bridges, flood control and other government infrastructure projects" as mentioned in the orders. Apparently, the cutting of said premium trees is simply for beautification and convenience of pedestrians and motorists. What authorities fail to weigh is the need for this project and the environmental impact of cutting old trees of great environmental and aesthetic value. The area, as many Bacolodnons would know, does not see heavy foot traffic in normal times, and much less, during this pandemic.

As author of the three environmental ordinances, especially the Earth Day Ordinance of 2006, I am no stranger to the need for conserving our environment and creating plans for the city which is heavy on the urban side, with more integrated and sustainable frameworks. However, not all leaders and policymakers wear the same lenses.



The Earth Day Bacolod-Negros Occidental Network which started in 2006 laments the fact our advocacies have been here for fifteen years or even more, yet we still face the kind of nonchalance and apathy towards conservation that we face today. On April 22, we join the world as we mark International Day with the theme: Restore Our Earth. I am sharing the content of our online petition for the scrapping of the DAO orders. Please help us by sharing this appeal. What happened to Bacolod can happen to other cities since the orders are national in scope.

Our appeal reads: A mere department order CANNOT amend and/or expand a law, in this case, Presidential Decree 705 or the Forestry Reform Code of the Philippines. DAO 2020-06 signed by DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu is a clear encroachment of legislative powers.

DAO 2020-06 covers the whole country including protected areas, which is subject only to PAMB Clearance. This over-encompassing department circular puts the survival of our country's ecological survival directly into the hands of only a few.

DAO 2020-06 grants blanket authority to all Cenros exercising jurisdiction over the area where the trees are found to issue the permit even without tenurial instruments, which will consult and allow interested citizens, organizations, and entities to put the areas into effective and responsible on-site management. This department order threatens the historical, cultural, health, heritage and most of all environmental rights of communities, whose concerns, and points, are not taken into consideration prior to the issuance of any permit.

Climate change goals are the lowest or "red zoned" goals in the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGS) 2030 based on the Unescap Decade of Action Report 2021. The Philippine Government through the DENR should be at the forefront of protecting our environment and should not relinquish its mandate to any other department at the expense of environmental degradation.

The State is mandated to protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accordance with the rhythm and harmony of nature (Section 16, Article 11, Philippine 1987 Constitution) and not according to the Build, Build, Build plan of the DPWH and other agencies.

The Covid-19 pandemic must constantly remind us that man-made creations prove to pose destruction to our environment, such that we must carefully balance our actions with the preservation of Nature. The Build, Build, Build projects should not be tantamount to Destroy, Destroy, Destroy the Environment. Instead, we call on the DENR to join us as we mark International Earth Day 2021 with the theme: Restore Our Earth. Restore, Restore, Restore.



Environment advocates 'mourn death' of trees at old airport



BACOLOD. Some environment advocates from various sectors join the early morning silent protest along Araneta Street in Bacolod City on Thursday, April 15, 2021, to "mourn the death" of the trees that were recently cut the area. (Erwin P. Nicavera)

[ERWIN P. NICAVERA](#)

April 15, 2021

CLAD in black, some environment advocates from various sectors have staged an early morning silent protest along Araneta Street in Bacolod City Thursday, April 15, to "mourn the death" of the trees that were cut the area, specifically beside the old airport.

Educator Rhoderick Samonte, who was among those who gathered at the site of the felled trees, said they are grieving for the damage that has been done by different government offices by cutting the 26 fully-grown trees recently.

Samonte said it is just right to join the protest not only to grieve but also to call on city residents to "wake up" and recognize the harm brought by not having a concern to nature.

"Thanks but no thanks. For the nine remaining trees, thanks for they have been saved. But, have we not learned our lessons," he said, adding that "why they have to wait first for the people's outcry before putting a stop to their doings?"

"Why is it hard for the government to consult its constituents?" Samonte further asked, as he stressed that as the world celebrates the Earth Month this April, what happened in Bacolod City was an exact opposite to its theme "Restore Our Earth."

Campaigners brought with them placards bearing messages like "Trees murdered by DPWH and DENR," "Your job is to defend not destroy the environment" and "Grow 35,000 in exchange of 35," among others.

In his Facebook post, Samonte said the silent protest is a loud voice on behalf of the fallen trees, trees whose value is priceless.

"Without trees, none of us will live." he said.

Samonte called on the DPWH and Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the City Government to admit their mistakes, apologize and make amends.

"Repair the damage that had been done. How? Do not uproot the tree stumps. Instead water them, heal them, and allow them to regrow and recover," he added.

Fr. Chris Gonzales, director of the Social Action Center (SAC) of the Diocese of Bacolod, who also joined the protest, said those involved government offices and agencies were not on their right mind and have no valid reasons to cut the trees.

Gonzales said "basi kinanglan nila subong tapalan kay subong nagatinudluanay sila, wala may nag-ako."



The SAC director said such "sad event" had awakened not only the residents, but also government leaders that people will really react whenever they make wrong policies and decisions.

"I hope this won't happen again, I hope they will reconsider their plans," the priest added.

Some members of Youth for Climate Hope also participated in the silent protest.

One of them was Joshua Villalobos, who said that they were outraged upon knowing that the trees were cut, adding that they were dismayed because the [government] officials were seemingly washing their hands on the issue.

"These trees have also served as sheds for locals waiting for vehicles when going home," he said, adding that "if the government wants to develop the sidewalk, it would be better if we still have these trees especially amid the hotter weather now."

Another youth leader Elmeer Meeynard Calimpos of Green Alert Network also aired his sentiment.

"We have been fighting for our remaining forest cover in Negros Island yet many can't still realize the value of trees as our natural climate solution. The old airport trees served as the Negrosanons natural waiting shed while waiting for buses going south," Calimpos said in his Facebook post.

He added that to restore the damage, they demand that the City Council pass a resolution stating that at least 35,000 endemic trees should be planted.

According to the DPWH-Bacolod headed by District Engineer Jaime Javellana, they have been authorized by the DENR to cut 35 trees, including 15 molave, 12 narra, seven mahogany, and one eucalyptus to give way for ongoing projects.

Of the 35, some 26 trees have already been cut, and after Bacolodnons aired their protest, Lone District Representative Greg Gasataya wrote Javellana on Tuesday, asking for an investigation.

"In this light, this representation requests an investigation on the cutting of the trees along the area, an explanation as to why such a course of action was undertaken and to ensure that the remaining trees in the vicinity remain unharmed," Gasataya said.

He added that while he "appreciates the commitment of the District Engineering Office to infrastructure development," there should be "exertions to ensure that infrastructure projects are sustainable and should maintain a balance between development and preservation of nature."

On Wednesday afternoon, April 14, Mayor Evelio Leonardia said he instructed city police director, Colonel Manuel Placido, to stop the cutting of trees instantly, and issued an executive order creating a joint committee to investigate the incident.

"The trees were some of the treasures of Bacolod that people marveled at, and we considered those trees as part and parcel of the city," Leonardia said, adding that "what is most important now is we must make sure a similar incident does not happen again."

In media interviews, Javellana said they need to cut the trees for the safety of pedestrians, commuters, and motorists, considering that the roots have already damaged the sidewalk and posed danger to the public.

Ongoing projects include the improvement of sidewalk and installation of streetlights from the Bacolod public plaza to the Old Bacolod airport with a budget of P32 million. (With reports from PNA)

Source: <https://www.sunstar.com.ph/article/1891833>



Bill seeking waste-to-energy management amid pandemic pushed in Senate

Robie de Guzman • April 15, 2021 • 52



MANILA, Philippines – Senator Sherwin Gatchalian on Thursday pushed for the passage of a measure that will allow the use of waste-to-energy (WTE) technology for the proper management of wastes in the country.

In a statement, Gatchalian said that the accumulation of household wastes as a result of the lockdowns, including medical wastes, has given rise to the need for proper waste management and other solid waste management treatment facilities, especially amid the coronavirus pandemic.

He added that the Department of Health (DOH) requires medical wastes to undergo waste treatment before being hauled to disposal facilities.

“Contrary to arguments that the operation of a WTE plant poses a threat to public health and the environment, such facility will require air pollution control systems to ensure emissions are within the standards of the Philippine Clean Air Act,” Gatchalian said.

“The bill establishing the framework for WTE facilities specifies this,” he added.

The senator was referring to Section 5 of Senate Bill 1789 or the proposed WTE Act, which he principally authored, stating that only waste treatment technologies that do not emit toxic and poisonous fumes into the environment and comply with relevant laws, rules, and regulations shall be allowed.

If a WTE facility is found to be non-compliant, it will be penalized and can be closed by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), he said.

The bill also provides environmental and health safeguards with the DENR and the DOH both playing a key role in the regulation of these facilities.

WTE is the process of generating energy from the treatment of waste through various technologies.

Gatchalian, who chairs the Senate energy committee, said that in the last two decades, the WTE industries in Europe, North America, and Asia have developed technologies that are currently among the cleanest sources of thermoelectric energy, the conversion of heat directly into electricity.

WTE plants in Italy, Spain, Japan, and Germany have also shown that emissions are highly controlled and have passed their stringent regulations, he pointed out.

“WTE can even be a leading contributor to the planned reduction of greenhouse gas emissions as it will reduce fossil fuel usage and increase energy production through the use of renewable sources,” he said.

The lawmaker also allayed concerns over WTE being costly and will not contribute to post COVID-19 recovery.

He said that under the proposed measure, it is the project proponent that will shoulder the expense in the construction and operation of the facility and not the local government units.

The processing fee paid by LGUs to these facilities will be subject to a fair, reasonable, and equitable standard, criteria, and guideline, he added.

The senator also debunked the idea that the country may resort to the importation of trash, emphasizing that section 14 of the bill clearly prohibits WTE facilities from using imported municipal solid waste as WTE feedstock for a WTE facility.

“Otherwise, these facilities will be penalized,” he said.

Source: <https://www.untvweb.com/news/bill-seeking-waste-to-energy-management-amid-pandemic-pushed-in-senate/>



Tagalog News: Maayos na waste management sa kasagsagan ng COVID-19 pandemic, isinulong

By Lucia F. BroñoPublished on April 15, 2021



Senator Win Gatchalian

LUNGSOD CALOOCAN, Abril 15 (PIA) -- Muling isinusulong ni Senator Win Gatchalian ang panukalang pagtatayo ng mga waste-to-energy (WTE) facilities sa bansa bilang paraan ng waste management sa dumaraming basura dulot ng patuloy na pagpapatupad ng quarantine restrictions sa mga apektadong komunidad. Kasama na rito ang medical wastes na batay sa kautusan ng Department of Health (DOH) ay kinakailangan munang dumaan sa waste treatment bago ito kolektahin at dalhin sa kaukulang imbakan ng mga basura.

“Salungat sa pananaw ng iba na ang operasyon ng planta ng WTE ay magiging mapanganib sa kalusugan ng publiko at kapaligiran, ang ganitong pasilidad ay mayroon pa ngang air pollution control systems upang masiguro na ang anumang usok na lumabas ay hindi lalabag sa pamantayang nakasaad sa Philippine Clean Air Act. Ang panukalang pagtataguyod ng WTE facilities ay tinitiyak na masunod ito,” ani Gatchalian.

Ang tinutukoy ng senador ay ang probisyon sa Section 5 ng Senate Bill 1789 o ang panukalang WTE Act, na siyang punong may-akda, na nagsasabing ang dapat lamang na ipatayong planta ng WTE ay ‘yung mayroong waste treatment technologies na magsisiguro na hindi ito magbubuga ng mga nakalalasang usok at tumutugon sa mga kasalukuyang mga panuntunan, regulasyon at batas. Ang hindi pagtugon sa mga nasabing kondisyon ay may karampatang parusa bukod pa sa agarang pagpapasara ng kalihim ng Department of Environment at Natural Resources (DENR).

Nakasaad din sa panukalang batas ang mga environmental at health safeguards na ipatutupad ng DENR at DOH, ang mga punong ahensyang namamahala sa regulasyon ng mga nasabing pasilidad. Ang WTE ay tumutukoy sa proseso ng paggawa ng enerhiya mula sa mga basura na dumaan sa treatment.

Sa kanyang ginawang pagsasaliksik, sinabi ng Senate Energy Committee Chairperson na sa nakalipas na dalawang dekada, ang mga industriya ng WTE sa Europa, North America at Asya ay nakabuo na ng mga teknolohiya sa paggawa ng enerhiya at kabilang sa mga pinakamalinis na pinagkukunan ng thermoelectric energy, ang prosesong pagko-convert ng init sa kuryente.

Bukod ryan, ang mga planta ng WTE sa Italy, Spain, Japan at Germany na tumutugon sa mahigpit na regulasyon ay nagpapatunay na mabisa ang WTE.



“Ang mga WTE facilities ay maaaring maging kaakibat sa pagtugon sa planong pagbaba ng greenhouse gas emissions dahil mababawasan ang paggamit ng petrolyo at tataas ang produksyon ng enerhiyang nagmumula sa mga renewable sources,” ani Gatchalian.

Sinisiguro rin ng mambabatas na hindi magiging magastos ang pagtatayo ng WTE facilities at hindi ito magiging sagabal sa pagbangon mula sa pandemya dulot ng COVID-19 dahil nakasaad sa panukalang batas na hindi aakuin ng mga local government unit (LGUs) ang pagpapatayo nito. Bagkus, ito’y sasaluhin ng project proponent mula sa private sector. Tanging ang processing fee ang babayaran ng LGU tuwing gagamit ito ng pasilidad at ito’y batay sa patas at makatarungang mga pamantayan.

Hindi rin aniya maaaring makalusot ang pinangangambahan ng iba na magdudulot lamang ito ng pag-angkat ng basura mula sa ibang bansa dahil nakasaad sa Section 14 ng panukalang batas na ipinagbabawal ang mga pasilidad ng WTE na gumamit ng mga imported na municipal solid waste bilang feedstock. (PIA NCR)

Gatchalian pushes for proper waste management amid COVID-19 pandemic

By OSWG Published on April 15, 2021



Senate Committee on Energy chairman Senator Win Gatchalian speaks at the groundbreaking ceremony of the 6 MW waste-to-energy biomass power plant. The accumulation of household wastes as a result of the lockdowns, including medical wastes, has given rise to the need for proper waste management and other solid waste management treatment facilities to include waste-to-energy (WTE) facilities as an appropriate waste management strategy, said Senator Win Gatchalian. Photo by Mark Cayabyab/OS WIN GATCHALIAN

PASAY CITY, Apr. 15 -- The accumulation of household wastes as a result of the lockdowns, including medical wastes, has given rise to the need for proper waste management and other solid waste management treatment facilities to include waste-to-energy (WTE) facilities as an appropriate waste management strategy, said Senator Win Gatchalian, adding that the Department of Health (DOH) requires medical wastes to undergo waste treatment before being hauled to disposal facilities.

"Contrary to arguments that the operation of a WTE plant poses a threat to public health and the environment, such facility will require air pollution control systems to ensure emissions are within the standards of the Philippine Clean Air Act. The bill establishing the framework for WTE facilities specifies this," Gatchalian said.

Gatchalian was referring to Section 5 of Senate Bill 1789 or the proposed WTE Act, which he principally authored, stating that only waste treatment technologies that do not emit toxic and poisonous fumes into the environment and complies with relevant laws, rules, and regulations shall be allowed. If a WTE facility is found to be non-compliant, it will be penalized and can be closed by the DENR Secretary. The bill provides environmental and health safeguards with the DENR and the DOH both playing a key role in the regulation of these facilities. WTE is the process of generating energy from treatment of waste through various technologies.

The Senate Energy Committee Chairperson said that in the last two decades, the WTE industries in Europe, North America, and Asia have developed technologies that are currently among the cleanest sources of thermoelectric energy, the conversion of heat directly into electricity.

Gatchalian further pointed out that WTE plants in Italy, Spain, Japan, and Germany have shown that emissions are highly controlled and have passed their stringent regulations.

"WTE can even be a leading contributor to the planned reduction of greenhouse gas emissions as it will reduce fossil fuel usage and increase energy production through the use of renewable sources," he said.



The lawmaker also allayed concerns over WTE being costly and will not contribute to post COVID-19 recovery stressing that under the proposed measure, it is the project proponent that will shoulder the expense in the construction and operation of the facility and not the local government units (LGUs). He said the processing fee paid by LGUs to these facilities will be subject to a fair, reasonable, and equitable standard, criteria, and guideline.

The senator also debunked the idea that the country may resort to importation of trash, emphasizing that section 14 of the bill clearly prohibits WTE facilities from using imported municipal solid waste as WTE feedstock for a WTE facility. Otherwise, these facilities will be penalized. (OSWG)



EcoWaste promotes alternative strategy vs. solid waste

By Catherine Teves [April 15, 2021, 8:02 pm](#)



MANILA – Public interest network EcoWaste Coalition is advocating a shift in the way the country addresses its problem on solid waste.

"Shift focus from end-of-pipe solutions in waste disposal to waste recovery and reduction instead," EcoWaste national coordinator Aileen Lucero urged the government during the coalition's online briefing on the problem on Thursday.

Lucero said the government must develop and implement a science-informed national waste recovery plan that is aligned with Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act.

She saw the need to develop a national policy on the production, distribution, use, and disposal of single-use plastics (SUPs) to help significantly reduce waste generation in the country.

The results of a study EcoWaste and its partners presented during the briefing highlighted the urgency of the shift.

The results showed some 87 percent of total waste generated in the study's five sites around Metro Manila end up polluting the environment.

The SUPs – disposable plastics, such as bags and sachets – account for almost 23 percent of mismanaged waste, the results showed.

This mismanaged waste is not collected and properly disposed of due to various causes, such as problems with garbage trucks, said Marlon Pareja, professor at the De La Salle University, which partnered with EcoWaste and the University of Santo Tomas in conducting the study.

"To address mismanaged waste, LGUs (local government units) concerned need to increase waste collection by about six times," Pareja said in the briefing.

He noted, however, that such an increase requires bigger budgets to cover the additional cost for labor, gasoline, maintenance, and landfill use.

Pareja said focusing on waste recovery while regulating the production and use of SUPs would help avoid the costly option while easing the pressure on garbage truck collection.

The study's results, he said, indicate it could be done.

Citing 2015 data from the National Solid Waste Management Commission, he said about 80 percent of waste generated in the country could be recovered for reuse and recycling.



There's high public awareness in the study's sites about solid waste management and the need for environment-friendly alternatives to SUPs, he added.

The study's sites are Barangay Dionisio in Parañaque City, Barangay 649 in Manila, Barangay 76 in Pasay City, Barangay San Agustin in Malabon City, and Barangay Tangos South in Navotas City. (PNA)



Achievable? PH finally submits Paris Agreement pledge

Published April 15, 2021, 9:49 PM by [Ellson Quismorio](#)

The Philippine government has committed to reduce the country's greenhouse gas emissions by a whopping 75 percent between 2020 and 2030 as part of its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) under the Paris Agreement.

This was bared in a statement Thursday night, April 15 by the Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities (ICSC). ICSC is a Manila-based international policy group advancing climate resilience and low carbon development.

The NDC represents the country's pledged actions to help achieve the goal of the Paris Agreement, which is to limit the rise of global temperature to 1.5-degree Celsius (maximum of 2.0-degree Celsius) from the pre-industrial era, and in effect prevent global warming. Manila is a signatory to the 2015 international accord.

Of the 75 percent target, which would come from the agriculture, wastes, industry, transport, and energy sectors, 72.29 percent is conditional while the remaining 2.71 percent is unconditional, meaning it will be undertaken without international funding or other support.

According to ICSC, the government also said that it shall "endeavor to undertake equitable adaptation strategies with mitigation co-benefits and ensure their contribution to the national pandemic recovery."

Rex Barrer, climate governance lead of ICSC said it's high-time that the Philippine NDC was officially submitted to the United Nations (UN).

"We may have missed the December 31 [2021] deadline, but that never stopped the national government in doing their part to reach the country's adaptation and mitigation targets," he said. A possible source of criticism is the low unconditional number (2.71 percent), which the group acknowledged.

"We recognize the frustration over the low unconditional number, but we also take hope in the Department of Energy's (DOE) commitment to continuously update its pledge as reflected in the current effort to improve on the Philippine Energy Plan (PEP).

"The coal moratorium already demonstrated their leadership last year. The challenge now is to see the NDC process as a means by which the modernization of the electricity sector is realized, driven by genuine competition and premised on greater reliance on flexible generation," Barrer said.

"To this end, we are committed to support the government's goal to rapidly modernize the country's power sector and to ensure sooner rather than later the integration of transport modernization strategies into long-term energy development," he said.

Barrer said the Philippines plans to achieve the 75 percent reduction in emissions through enhanced access to climate finance, technology development and transfer, and capacity building.

"With this, we reiterate the call for rich, high-emitting countries to be accountable and provide the needed resources and support for the mitigation efforts of developing countries. We only account for 0.3 percent of the world's emissions, and we can only do so much on our end.

"We are still a long way from that goal. It is now time to turn this pledge to transformative action," he said.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2021/04/15/achievable-ph-finally-submits-paris-agreement-pledge/>



Palace reminds Japan of principles of int'l environmental law

April 15, 2021 3 min read

MANILA – Malacañang on Thursday reminded Japan of international environmental law after the East Asian nation announced its plan to release huge amounts of contaminated water from the destroyed Fukushima nuclear plant into the sea.

Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque said countries that fail to control pollution and the depletion of natural resources will be meted out with appropriate actions.

“I can only repeat the principles of international environmental law that I hope all countries will comply with. First principle is that we are one eco-system, second principle is we are interconnected, and the third principle is that the polluter must pay,” Roque said in a virtual press briefing.

On Tuesday, the Japanese announced that it will release more than 1 million tons of contaminated water that have built up at the wrecked Fukushima plant after treatment and dilution.

This amount of water is enough to fill 500 Olympic-sized swimming pools.

The first release of water used will begin in about two years to allow filtering of the water to remove harmful isotopes, build infrastructure and acquire regulatory approval.

Japan described the water release as necessary to push through with the complex decommissioning of the plant after it was crippled by a 2011 earthquake and tsunami.

Japan’s neighbors in Asia such as China and South Korea have opposed the plan to release Fukushima plant water into the ocean.

China denounced the plan as “extremely irresponsible”, warning that the move will seriously damage international public health and safety, and the vital interests of people in neighboring countries.

“We strongly urge the Japanese side to face up to its responsibility, follow the science, fulfill its international obligations and duly respond to the serious concerns of the international community, neighboring countries, and its own people,” the Chinese foreign ministry said in a statement on its website.



South Korea expressed “strong regret” over Japan’s decision, summoning Koichi Aiboshi, Tokyo’s ambassador in Seoul to protest the move.

“The decision can never be accepted and would not only cause danger to the safety and maritime environment of neighboring countries, it was also made unilaterally without sufficient consultations with our country, which is the closest neighbor to Japan,” South Korea’s office of government policy coordination said in a statement.

South Korean President Moon Jae-in ordered officials to explore petitioning an international court over Japan’s decision amid protests by fisheries and environmental groups.

“I cannot but say that there are many concerns here about the decision as a country that is geographically closest and shares the sea with Japan,” Moon said. **(PNA)**

Source: <https://maharlika.tv/2021/04/15/palace-reminds-japan-of-principles-of-intl-environmental-law/?fbclid=IwAR1HuRppuZJUaHN5Axf3SdZwATUMe60SOTeRU9nzMyter8mEFGCG4eWL9f0>



SMC boosts Tullahan river cleanup program

Work on Sectors 4 and 5 involves more than just dredging to maintain its ideal depth. This part also involves widening parts of the river and removal of illegal structures that restrict the flow of water, especially during heavy rains.

Published 4 hours ago
on April 16, 2021 02:30 AM
By [Julio Yap Jr.](#)



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF SMC SMC's P1 billion dredging initiative is on track to increase its daily waste and silt extraction output to 1,500 metric tons, to boost the government's flood mitigation efforts before the rainy season.

San Miguel Corporation (SMC) on Thursday said that is on track to more than double its daily dredging of silt and trash for its P1 billion Tullahan-Tinajeros river system cleanup project from 600 metric to 1,500 metric tons per day for the 11.5-kilometer (km) stretch which it is implementing.

According to SMC, this covers the initial sections 1-3 of the project from the mouth of the Manila Bay in Navotas City to Tinajeros Bridge, and sections 4-5 from Tinajeros Bridge to Potrero in Malabon and Valenzuela cities.

It said the five-year project covers the entire 27-km length of the Tullahan-Tinajeros river system.

Following this effort, SMC said it is also advancing the start of dredging at the tributary's Malabon and Valenzuela sections, to boost the government's flood mitigation efforts before the rainy season sets in.

"We were able to average 1,000 metric tons (MT) per day last March to deliver our highest monthly dredging total so far. Currently, we are averaging 1,200 MT and we will gradually increase to 1,500 MT. With the arrival of our new, additional dredging equipment, we will also start dredging Sectors 4 and 5 where heavier flooding was experienced during heavy typhoons last November 2020," SMC president Ramon Ang said.

"Work on Sectors 4 and 5 involves more than just dredging to maintain its ideal depth. This part also involves widening parts of the river and removal of illegal structures that restrict the flow of water, especially during heavy rains. This is part of the dredging plan approved by the DPWH," he said.

As of 13 April 2021, Ang said that a total of 168,004 MT of silt and solid waste had already been removed from the river.

"We will need the support and cooperation of the local government units and other stakeholders to enable us to complete our task of rehabilitating the river and assisting in their flood mitigation efforts," he stressed.

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2021/04/16/smc-boosts-tullahan-river-cleanup-program/>



Residents of Batasan Hills in Quezon City line up to receive their financial assistance from the national government on April 7, 2021.

The STAR/Michael Varcas, file

COVID-19 cases exceed 900,000

[Mayen Jaymalin](#) (The Philippine Star) - April 16, 2021 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Confirmed COVID-19 cases nationwide exceeded 900,000 yesterday as the Department of Health (DOH) logged additional 11,429 new cases.

The DOH said the new cases brought to 904,285 the total number of COVID cases. Of the number, 20.3 percent or 183,527 are active cases.

Additional 856 recoveries pushed to 705,164 or 78 percent the number of those who recuperated from the infection, while those who succumbed to the illness reached 15,594 with the inclusion of 148 fatalities.

COVID-related deaths account for 1.72 percent of total cases.

To boost the government response against COVID-19, Philippine Health Insurance Corp. (PhilHealth) president Dante Gierran yesterday reported that the agency has paid P830 million claims of various hospitals.

In a radio interview, Gierran also gave assurance that the agency would pay its remaining balance with the Philippine Red Cross (PRC) upon proper assessment of claims.

While there were minor delays due to certain issues, Gierran said PhilHealth is financially capable of paying all the claims.



No plan to impose stricter quarantine outside NCR Plus

By Ruth Abbey Gita-Carlos April 15, 2021, 3:26 pm



File photo

MANILA – Malacañang ruled out Thursday the possibility of a more restrictive quarantine measure in areas outside the National Capital Region Plus (NCR Plus).

This, after the Department of Health reported an increase of the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) cases in five regions apart from the NCR Plus which covers Metro Manila Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna, Rizal.

In an online press briefing, Health Secretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said there was an upward trend of Covid-19 infections in Ilocos Region, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, and Cordillera Administrative Region.

While the government is monitoring the situation in areas outside NCR Plus, it does not see the need to impose stricter quarantine rules in the entire Luzon, Roque said.

“Sa ngayon po, binabantayan naman po natin ang datos at wala pa naman pong ganoong conclusion ang nakikita natin. Ang talagang paglobo po ng mga kaso ay nandito sa NCR Plus. At kaya nga po ang response natin dito muna sa NCR Plus (As of now, we are monitoring the data and we have not arrived at a conclusion [to implement stricter quarantine measures in Luzon]. Rise in Covid-19 cases is seen in NCR Plus. So our response is focused on NCR Plus),” Roque said.

Roque added that the Covid-19 surge in other areas is not that “bad” unlike in NCR Plus.

“As I said, binabantayan din natin ang kaso sa iba’t ibang lugar ng Pilipinas pero so far po (we are monitoring the cases in different parts of the Philippines but so far), nothing as bad as what we are seeing in the NCR Plus,” he said.

Two weeks after being under the most restrictive enhanced community quarantine (ECQ), Metro Manila, Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna, and Rizal are now under the less stringent modified ECQ (MECQ) until April 30.

Apart from NCR Plus, the City of Santiago in Isabela, Quirino province, and Abra are also under MECQ.

A more relaxed general community quarantine (GCQ) is imposed in Cagayan, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya, Batangas, Tacloban City, Iligan City, Davao City, Lanao del Sur, and Quezon.

The rest of the country remains under modified GCQ.

On Wednesday, Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Salvador Panelo advised the public to get used to the quarantine and health rules imposed by the government to stop the further transmission of Covid-19 in the country.

Panelo reminded the public to keep wearing face mask and face shield, and observe physical distancing and regular handwashing. **(PNA)**

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1136891>

‘Silent diplomacy’ keeps peace at WPS

Around 136 ships were seen in Burgos Reef, 9 in Julian Felipe Reef, 65 in Chigua Reef, 6 in Panganiban Reef, 3 in Zamora Reef, 4 in Pag-Asa Islands, 1 in Likas Island, 5 in Kota Island and 11 in Ayungin Shoal, marking the largest gathering of Chinese vessels in the area

Published 6 hours ago on April 16, 2021 12:20 AM

By [MJ Blancaflor](#) @tribunephi_MJB



PHILIPPINE Coast Guard member gets a closer view of one of the Chinese ships swarming at the West Philippine Sea as the PCG makes its presence known near the Julian Felipe Reef.

No confrontation marked the approach of a Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) ship and another vessel owned by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) towards the Chinese militia vessels swarming at the Julian Felipe Reef on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Commodore Armand Balilo, the PCG spokesperson, gave “no exact figures on the number of (Chinese) vessels” still present in the West Philippine Sea (WPS), a territory being contested by China.

Photographs provided by the PCG to the public, however, showed six Chinese maritime vessels that did not move despite the close approach of the PCG’s BRP Cabra (MRRV-4409) that was commissioned in 2018 for environmental and humanitarian missions as well for maritime security and patrol.

Another Philippine ship from the BFAR was accompanied by two smaller boats of the PCG. They also came close to the Chinese vessels.

The National Task Force for the West Philippine Sea (NTF-WPS) earlier expressed concern over a PCG report that about 220 Chinese fishing vessels, believed to be manned by their maritime militia, have been sighted in line formation at the Philippine-owned reef, also known as Whitsun Reef, on 7 March.

The reef is located approximately 175 nautical miles west of Bataraza, Palawan.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana has repeatedly demanded the immediate departure of the remaining 44 Chinese vessels from the Julian Felipe Reef. The Chinese Embassy in Manila called Lorenzana’s remark “unprofessional” as it maintained its “historical claim” over the feature that is within the Philippines’ exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) expressed support over the DND’s demand for the remaining Chinese ships’ withdrawal.

On Wednesday, DFA Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. confirmed that two diplomatic protests have been lodged after the Chinese government insisted that it will not withdraw its vessels from the Julian Felipe Reef and other Philippine maritime zones.

Sovereignty patrols conducted on 11 April by the Armed Forces Western Command recorded Chinese Maritime Militia vessels in the territorial waters of the Municipality of Kalayaan in Province of Palawan and the EEZ.



Around 136 ships were seen in Burgos Reef, 9 in Julian Felipe Reef, 65 in Chigua Reef, 6 in Panganiban Reef, 3 in Zamora Reef, 4 in Pag-asa Islands, 1 in Likas Island, 5 in Kota Island and 11 in Ayungin Shoal, marking the largest gathering of Chinese vessels in the area.

Despite confirmation by several foreign military agencies, China denies having a militia manning these “blue ships” that are actually a de facto navy force. These 187,000 boats are maintained by China’s People’s Liberation Army (PLA). The PLA claims these are fishing vessels.

These “Little Blue Men”, as members of the militia are called, have built military facilities in Philippine territories Subi and Mischief reefs, however, despite China’s earlier claim that it has no plan to militarize the sea lanes.

Aside from the PCG and BFAR ships, other Philippine maritime vessels are present but farther from the area.

The BRP Apolinario Mabini (PS-36) — formerly securing the Philippines-Indonesia border, was pulled out from the Eastern Mindanao area and redeployed to Palawan. It is an aging ship originally called HMS Plover (P240) during her service with the Hong Kong Squadron of the Royal Navy (1983-1984). Its weapons and systems were upgraded in August 2019.

Other Navy ships now in Palawan are:

The BRP Dagupan City (LS-551) — commissioned in the early 1990s and used in military and peacetime operations as an amphibious transport. It is fairly armed for defensive purposes and carries four 7.62mm general-purpose machine guns at the front side decks, and two Oerlikon 20 mm cannons.

The BRP Magat Salamat (PS-20) was acquired by the Philippine Navy in April 1976. Along with other ex-World War II veteran ships of the Philippine Navy, she is considered as one of the oldest active fighting ships in the world today.

BRP Miguel Malvar (PS-19), originally built as USS Brattleboro PCE(R)-852, a PCE(R)-848-class rescue patrol craft escort for the United States Navy during World War II and acquired by the Philippine Navy in April 1976 was also deployed.

Despite these ships’ presence, Malacañang credited the ease in the WPS situation to President Rodrigo Duterte’s “privately” dealing with the Chinese government in addressing the issue.

“Whatever the President is doing, let us allow him to do it in a private manner,” presidential spokesman Secretary Harry Roque said in a news conference.

Roque said the issue can be resolved through diplomacy.

Several lawmakers and civil groups criticized Duterte over his perceived silence on the presence of the Chinese vessels in the Philippine territories despite the strongly-worded statements and diplomatic protests from his defense and foreign affairs officials.

Roque, however, said the President’s diplomatic efforts do not have to be made in public, adding that it was an “exception to freedom of information.”

He also took pride that the Philippines moved from a “position of antagonism with China to a position of friendship” under the Duterte administration.

“The President’s diplomatic initiatives do not need to be announced in public. It is covered by exception since he should make the right decision no matter what,” he said.

Earlier in the day, retired Supreme Court Senior Associate Justice Antonio Carpio said China would still believe it has the President as an ally as he has yet to publicize his stance on the matter.



“The President must speak. He must stand up himself because if his subordinates do the talking, China will not listen because China will listen only to the leader of the nation. If the President is silent, then China will continue,” Carpio told ANC in an interview.

“They will feel the heat because they will lose a friend if the President will speak,” he added.

The retired magistrate, who was part of the team that argued for the Philippines’ maritime rights in the WPS before a Hague-based arbitration court, underscored that the presence of Chinese ships within the country’s territory is a “very important national issue” that should not be played down.

Individuals from various fields have also signed a petition calling for the resignation of President Duterte over his supposed “subservience” to China, as well as his administration’s pandemic response.

At press time, over 2,000 individuals signed the petition which was posted on change.org.

Among them were academicians, civic leaders, doctors, lawyers, religious groups, and businessmen. The Palace has yet to comment as of this writing.

“Duterte’s subservience to China threatens to tie our vaccination program to China’s expansionist agenda in the West Philippine Sea,” the petition read.

“The Covid-19 pandemic is getting worse. We are suffering our worst economic crisis in decades. And the aggressive encroachment of China on Philippine territory and maritime rights is unfolding as we speak,” it added.

Days ago, opposition Senator Risa Hontiveros said Malacañang “behaved largely like a doormat to China,” adding that the President showed no sign of balancing the country’s interests or altering his pivot to Beijing with just a year left before his term ends.

She also condemned what she called a “duplicitous strategy” from China by providing vaccines, potentially in exchange for the Philippines’ maritime resources.

Eight business organizations, in a joint statement Wednesday, have expressed support for calls made to China to pull out its vessels from the Julian Felipe Reef.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana demanded that the vessels leave the West Philippine Sea, saying he was “no fool” and that there was “no other reason” for the Chinese to stay there when the weather was clear.

Meanwhile, the Philippines is facing a potential shortage in fish supply as “240,000 kilos of fish (are) illegally taken from Philippine waters every single day that the massed Chinese fishing vessels remain in the WPS,” the NTF-WPS disclosed.

Each of the Chinese ships could catch at least 1 ton of fish per day.

Grassroots environmental group the Homonhon Environmental Rescue Organization (HERO) echoed the NTF-WPS report after an earlier warning that the country’s earth materials were used in reclamation and infrastructure projects of China in the disputed Spratlys Islands.

“This is worse than an invasion. Even our fisher folks no longer have anything to eat,” HERO president Villardo “Billy” C. Abueme said. **(With Raffy Ayeng, Tina Maralit, Sundy Locus and Alvin Murcia)**

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2021/04/16/silent-diplomacy-keeps-peace-at-wps/>



Brazil urged to stop Amazon deforestation

By Agence France-Presse

April 16, 2021

RIO DE JANEIRO: Brazil must demonstrate it can reduce the ongoing deforestation in the Amazon before Norway resumes payments in support of preserving the world's largest rainforest, the Norwegian environment minister said.

Norway worked closely with Brazil to protect the vulnerable ecosystem between 2008 and 2018, paying \$1.2 billion into the Amazon Fund, which pays Brazil to prevent, monitor and combat deforestation.



DESTROYED A fire rages at the Amazon river near the border with Peru in November 2020. Several donors to fight forest fires in the country have reminded the Brazil government to assure that the funds are used properly on April 14, 2021.

Oslo has by far been the biggest donor. But rainforest destruction has surged since Brazil's right-wing President Jair Bolsonaro took office in January 2019, weakening enforcement and calling for the development of the Amazon, and also changing the fund's governance.

Still, Brazil earlier in April sought \$1 billion in aid over a 12-month period from countries including the United States and Norway to help reduce deforestation by between 30 percent and 40 percent. Oslo, which in 2019 froze funds worth more than 5 billion Norwegian crowns (\$585 million), said talks with Brazil were ongoing.

"The conditions for a reopening and making these funds available is that deforestation decreases substantially and that agreement is reached regarding the governance structure of the Amazon Fund," Norway's Minister of Climate and Environment Sveinung Rotevatn said.

He also recently spoke with Brazil's Minister of Environment Ricardo Salles. "I noted that he says he wants to strengthen the police efforts against illegal deforestation. These are measures that have had a great effect in the past, and which can also be decisive in the time to come," Rotevatn said.

In addition to a rich biodiversity, tropical forests soak up heat-trapping carbon dioxide, making their preservation vital to the combat of man-made climate change.

Deforestation in Brazil's Amazon rainforest declined overall in the first quarter of 2021, preliminary data showed on Friday, and experts point to a concerning jump in destruction in March.

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2021/04/16/news/world/brazil-urged-to-stop-amazon-deforestation/864350/>



Reconsider nuclear waste disposal, Beijing urges Japan

The oceans are not Japan's trash can

Published 4 hours ago on April 16, 2021 02:30 AM

By [Xinhua](#)



BEIJING (Xinhua) — China strongly urges Japan to reconsider its decision on the disposal of nuclear waste, a Foreign Ministry spokesperson said Wednesday.

Spokesperson Zhao Lijian made the remarks at a daily news briefing when asked to comment on the international response to Japan's decision to dispose of Fukushima's radioactive water by releasing it into the sea. The international community including the Republic of Korea, Russia and the European Commission expressed deep concern over the issue.

Zhao said China strongly urges the Japanese side to face up to its responsibility, follow the science, fulfill its international obligations and duly respond to the serious concerns of the international community, neighboring countries and its own people.

Citing Japanese media report that the work of releasing nuclear waste into the sea will start in two years and last for 30 years and that the total amount of nuclear waste will exceed 1 million tons, Zhao said that the amount, duration, scope of affected areas and the risk level is unprecedented.

"The oceans are not Japan's trash can, and the Pacific Ocean is not Japan's sewer," said the spokesperson, adding that the price of Japan's disposal of nuclear waste should not be borne by the entire world.

16 APRIL 2021, FRIDAY



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