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DENR

IN THE NEWS

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DATE

Crackdown vs. illegal wildlife trade stays—DENR

By Rio N. Araja

ENVIRONMENT Secretary Roy Cimatu on Friday said that the Philippines will not tolerate illegal wildlife trade.

He said that the government has not changed its stance on wildlife protection, and would not ease its crackdown against illegal trafficking and trade of wildlife species.

“The Philippines is taking illegal wildlife trade seriously. We want to send a clear signal that the country does not tolerate illegal wildlife crime, trafficking and trade that is driving endangered species to the brink of extinction,” he said.

With a value of \$23 billion annually, illegal wildlife trade is the fourth most lucrative global crime after illegal drugs, human trafficking and illicit arms trade, he noted.

According to Cimatu, the Philippines has been labeled as a consumer, source and transit point for illegal trade of wildlife and their by-products, threatening endemic species populations, economic development and biodiversity.

He said the government would not waver in its commitment to end illegal wildlife trade.

“We are not going to stop. The fight against illegal wildlife trade is worth fighting,” he added.



DENR urges public to report restaurants selling *tawilis*

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) reminded the public yesterday that the closed fishing season for *tawilis* is strictly being enforced and will last until April 30.

DENR-Calabarzon urged the public to report establishments or restaurants selling *tawilis*. It warned the public that they may get stocks frozen since February.

Earlier, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) placed *tawilis* on the list of endangered species.

According to the IUCN, *Sardinella tawilis* is endemic to a single location in the Philippines – Taal Lake, Batangas.

Tawilis, which is also known by

its common name Bombon sardine, is one of a few marine species trapped within the lake that has evolved into a purely freshwater species. It is also the sole freshwater species of *Sardinella*.

But within Taal Lake, the IUCN noted there are major threats to the survival of *tawilis* due to "overexploitation, pollution and competition and/or predation with introduced fishes, resulting in continuing declines in habitat quality and number of mature individuals."

During the *Tawilis* Summit held last month at the University of Santo Tomas, the Philippine Society for Freshwater Science (PSFS) issued an official statement of support for the conservation and sustainable management of *Sardinella tawilis* in Taal Lake.

The PSFS said the closed fish-

ing season for *tawilis* during the months of March and April should be strictly enforced.

The group also noted the importance of the involvement of government agencies and stakeholders, such as the DENR, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, local government units and fisherfolk organizations in order for the law governing the catch of *tawilis* to be carefully implemented.

"The regular monitoring of Taal Lake should also be undertaken as well as coming out with annual progress reports to evaluate the effectiveness of the initiatives," PSFS said.

The group likewise recognized the big role academe plays in developing research programs that aim to remove the *tawilis* from the list of endangered species.



Mga barangay chairman na dedma sa misyon sa Manila Bay lagot sa DILG

Nakatakandang maglabas ng 'show orders' ang Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) laban sa mga barangay chairman na hindi umaksiyon o nagbalewala sa mga kautusan na may kinalaman sa "Mission Manila Bay" (MMB) ng gobyerno.

Ayon kay Undersecretary for Barangay Affairs Martin Diño, pinirmahan at ipinadala na niya ang kasulatan kay National Barangay Operations Office (NBOO) Director Karl Rimando ang 'show orders' laban sa mga barangay official.

"Dito malalaman nila na hindi nagbibiro ang DILG... lalong-lalo na sa kampanya natin against illegal dumping of garbage under Republic Act 9003 or the ecological solid waste... eto sumulat na ako kay (Director) Rimando at pinirmahan ko na tungkol dyan... na ilabas na ang show cause na 'yan agad... I hope next week ilabas na at kasama ang mga names ng barangay," babala ni Diño

Aniya, 5,700 barangays ang sakop ng direktiba na magsagawa ng 'clean-up drive' sa ilalim ng Manila Bay rehabilitation program. Mula sa numerong ito, 1,000 barangay ang diumano'y hindi sumusunod o ipinagsasawalang-bahala ang kautusan.

Sakop ng "Mission Manila Bay" ang region 3, 4A, at National Capital Region, na binubuo ng anim na probinsiya gaya ng Bataan, Pampanga,

Bulacan, Rizal, Laguna at Cavite. Sakop din nito ang 179 na siyudad at munisipalidad.

"Yung 1,000 barangays, ito 'yung hindi tumalima sa order ni Secretary (Eduardo) Año na magkaroon ng clean-up drive, kailangan kasi 'yan gagawa sila ng report, kung maaari may picture (taking) pa at 'yung ginawa nilang clean-up every weekend 'yan,' giit ni Diño.

Nagbanggit ang opisyal ng probisyon sa ilalim ng RA 9003 kung saan ang mga lalabag ay maaaring makulong mula anim na buwan hanggang anim na taon.

"Ang tanong may nag-implement na ba na barangay, may nag-implement na ba na siyudad, kaya dumumi nang dumumi itong Manila Bay ay dahil sa kapabayaang ng kapitan at mayor sa totoo lang, 'yan po ang naging problema d'yan,' ayon pa kay Diño.

Hindi lang Boracay at Manila Bay ang sasailalim sa rehabilitasyon dahil aniya, iiimplementa ang programa sa buong bansa.

"Kasunod nito ay buong Pilipinas na ipapalilis namin lahat ng metropolis kamukha ng Cebu, Davao... lahat nang namamatay na ilog, we will make sure na mabuhay ito dahil kawawa naman ang next generation natin... wala silang makikitang maayos na ilog," dagdag pa ng DILG undersecretary. **(Dolly Cabreza)**



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2.5 million trees in path of Baguio building boom

By Vincent Cabreza
@vincencabrezaINQ

BAGUIO CITY—The country's summer capital needs to protect 2.5 million trees that have survived the intensified construction boom and expanding urban sprawl which residents fear have overwhelmed the city's carrying capacity.

Most of the trees are clustered in few watersheds as well as protected forests, according to a report that was discussed during a meeting of the El Niño Mitigation Task Group on April 5.

A tree inventory was ordered by Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu on Feb. 16, a day after the draft final report on Baguio's urban carrying capacity indicated that the biodiversity of the city's forest cover was "very low and may affect its ecological services."

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) inventory showed the city's green and forest cover spans 1,600 hectares or about 30 percent of Baguio's 5,700-ha territory. The biggest concentration of trees is in Camp John Hay reservation, and forest parks near the Teachers' Camp and the Philippine Military Academy.

According to the Baguio urban carrying capacity report, the first to be commissioned by the National Economic and Development Authority, the forest cover "is below the target standard" that sets a 60-percent green cover against a 40-percent built-up area as the most ideal composition of a town or city.

The report said Baguio's "target of allotting 70 percent of [the city territory as] built-up areas is

detrimental to maintaining its ecological balance or stability," since urban land should not exceed 60 percent of land area.

The inventory showed only 492,974 trees were Benguet pine. The rest included alnus, eucalyptus or calliandra trees.

The most mature tree standing at Wright Park here is 198 years old. The oldest known pine tree at nearby Mines View Park would have been 238 years old had it not been cut last year.

Sick or dying

Both the DENR inventory and the Baguio carrying capacity report noted that many pine tree clusters were sick or dying. The DENR, for example, had allowed the developer of Camp

John Hay to cut more than 200 infested pine trees.

A 1998 research brief from the University of the Philippines Baguio's Cordillera Studies Center indicated that some pine tree pests may have been introduced when tourism officials planted foreign pine trees at a section of Burnham Park.

Degree of habitation

The inventory also mapped out development surrounding the forest areas to determine the "degree of habitation" there.

Cimatu had said he was alarmed by the "uncontrolled" building constructions around Baguio.

On April 2, a building project near the presidential Man-

sion was ordered stopped when the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) discovered it was part of a forest reserve.

Other building projects should be reexamined by the city government to determine if these titled properties also lie within watersheds, now that stemming Baguio's overdevelopment has become a government priority, said Nestor Donaal, EMB Cordillera operations chief.

Permanent TRO

The inventory included trees at Luneta Hill that were covered by a Supreme Court injunction against tree-cutting.

On April 10, the high court made permanent a temporary restraining order (TRO) it en-

forced on March 24, 2015, to stop a mall from cutting 182 trees that stood in the way of an expansion project.

The trees, however, were eventually displaced after a temporary environmental protection order over Luneta Hill was lifted by the Court of Appeals.

The permanent injunction may have a policy implication on how government addresses trees inside private properties, said Clarence Baguilat, a retired DENR Cordillera director.

"Would this discourage people from buying lands which could not be developed because of the presence of trees? It may also discourage them from planting trees in their properties," Baguilat said. INQ



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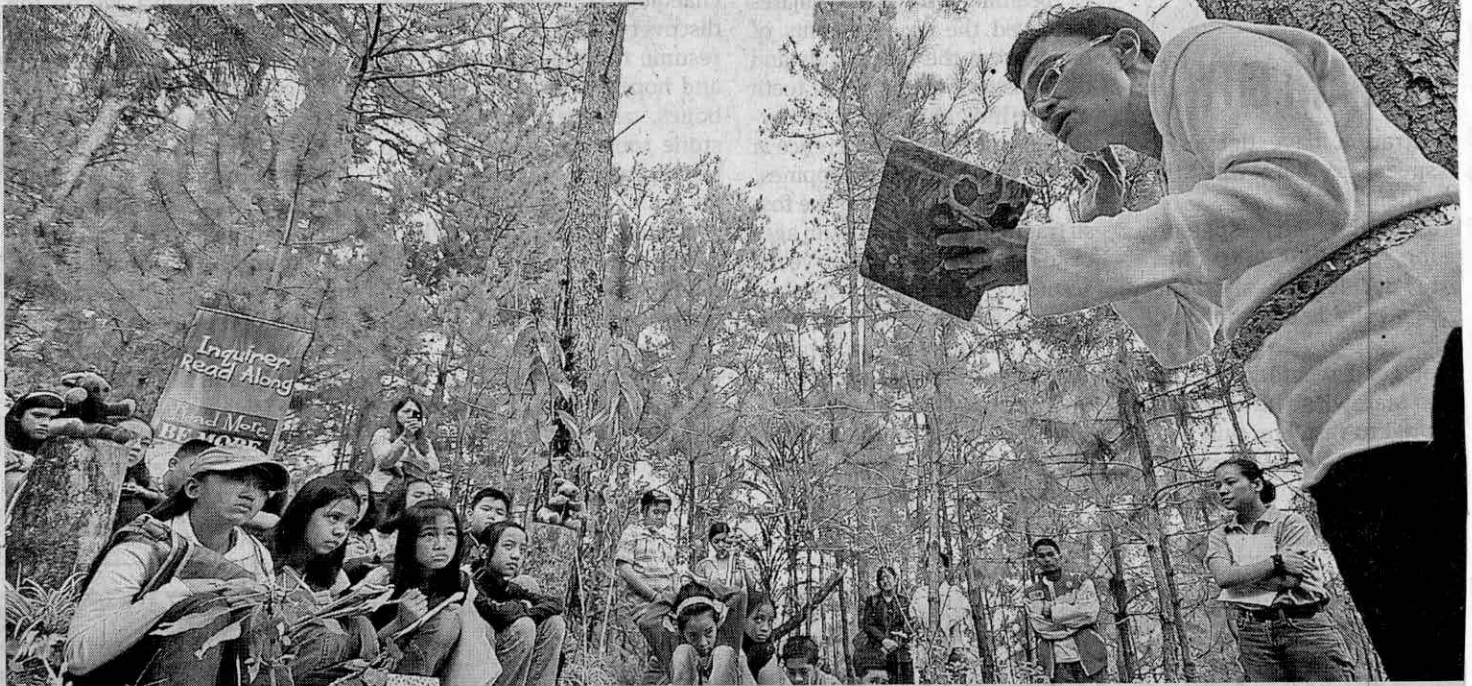
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Tree inventory ordered by Cimatu to address overdevelopment



PINE HEAVEN The lush pine forest inside Camp John Hay is one of the largest woodlands remaining in Baguio City. It once hosted the Inquirer Read-Along program. —EV ESPIRITU



Schools lead the way in environmental sustainability

WHAT do these universities — Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University-North La Union Campus (La Union), Western Philippines University (Palawan), and Naval State University (Biliran) — have in common?



ALL ABOUT
CHOICES

**LUDWIG O.
FEDERIGAN**

These universities were the winners of the 2017 National Search for Sustainable and Eco-Friendly Schools for the higher education (colleges and universities) category.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources, through the Environmental Management Bureau, launched recently the biennial 2019 National Search for Sustainable and Eco-Friendly Schools, the sixth edition and held every two years, in support of the Roadmap for the Implementation of Republic Act 9512, known as the "National Environmental Awareness and Education Act of 2008."

What is a sustainable and eco-friendly school?

A sustainable and eco-friendly school is described as an environment-friendly school that have initiated and integrated in their instruction, research, extension and/or administration, programs which are environmentally-related.

The government's principle that our school system is a vital part of our basic learning and that education is recognized as a powerful vehicle for change gives impetus that one can live in harmony with nature. After all, "education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world," the late Nelson Mandela once said.

The 2019 National Search has two main objectives: Encourage schools/academic institutions to become more actively involved in environmental issues at a practical and local level; and develop skills and understanding among the students, faculty and school administrators in initiating active responses and increasing community awareness and participation on environmental concerns.

The entries for the 2019 National Search (Higher Education Category) would be evaluated using the following standards:

A. Administration — clear articulation and integration of social, ethical, environment and climate change dimension in the institution's vision, mission and governance.

B. Curriculum and Instruction — the campus as "living laboratory" — student involvement in environmental learning to transform the learning environment.

C. Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change Program — physical operations and maintenance focused on supporting and enabling environment and climate change goals, including effective monitoring, reporting and continual improvement.

D. Research — dedicated research on sustainability topics and consideration of "quadruple bottom line" sustainability aspects in all other research.

E. Extension — outreach and service to the wider community, including partnerships with schools, government, non-governmental organizations and industry.

F. Student Engagement.

Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University-North La Union Campus, La Union

The Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University, particularly their North La Union Campus, believes that colleges and universities have their own distinct roles to fulfill and perform as social institutions. Hence, it aims to alleviate the poor standard of urban population, and enhance ecological stability through instruction, research, extension and produc-

tion approaches.

With the aim to achieve ecological sustainability, the university launched Operation Smile (Sincerity, Mission Focused, Innovation, Leadership, Excellence) with the initiatives on waste management, electricity conservation, water conservation, paper conservation and greening program.

As part of the university's initiative in promoting environmental and climate change awareness within the community, it launched the Professor in the Barangay (PIB) Program which aims to provide voluntary services to the *barangay* and communities through seminars, workshops and symposiums on ecosystem management, climate change adaptation and mitigation, solid waste management, disaster risk reduction and management.

**Western Philippines University,
Palawan**



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School lead the way in environmental sustainability

The Western Philippine University is a stronghold of environmental protection and sustainable development in Palawan, considered as the "last biological frontier."

As a regional winner for the college category in Mimaropa (Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon and Palawan) for the 2013 and 2015 National Search for Sustainable and Eco-Friendly Schools, the university didn't rest on its laurels and continued its programs on waste management through a materials recovery facility (MRF), and labeling of all garbage bins strategically located within the campus; water conservation by regularly and repairing all leaking pipelines; paper conservation through the Recycled Paper Dress Fashion Show where students could showcase their creativity and resourcefulness in recycling old and used newspapers; pollution prevention by developing its own PCB Management Program; and greening program by maintaining a nursery and a clonal facility for the propagation of indigenous trees.

Naval State University, Biliran

The Naval State University perfectly embodies an eco-friendly learning environment with a scenic and panoramic landscape. The university is one of the leading institutions geared towards environmental sustainability in Eastern Visayas.

The university had a rigid review of its curriculum to ensure that sustainable education was present and integrated. Subjects such as Watershed Management and Reforestation, Environmental and Natural Science, which tackles and advocates for the conservation and protection of the environment, are offered.

With its commitment to promote an eco-friendly learning environment, instructors are encouraged to integrate and interrelate environmental issues in their lessons. Hence, students' projects, outputs and researches would generate concepts, inventions, innovations and interventions that would contribute to sustainable development, and environmental conservation and protection.

Other special awards include:

- The Nestlé Water Leadership Award will recognize and promote solutions, practices and initiatives of schools in water management.

- The Energy Leadership Award will recognize schools that promote practices and initiatives in electrical safety, energy efficiency and conservation.

- The LandBank Green Leadership Award will be given to the three national first prize winners per category.

Sources: 2019 National Search for Sustainable and Eco-Friendly Schools
2017 National Search for Sustainable and Eco-Friendly Schools



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Crisis over plastic

**“
Most
of us
Filipinos
are
unaware
there is
a crisis.
We do not
know...
the rest of
the world
consider us
Filipinos
as one of
the most
prolific
plastic
polluters in
the planet.**

Hearing about the death was bad enough. Finding out more on how death came about was worse.

Reading the stark sentence – a “whale died from eating more than 80 plastic bags” – is shocking. But then, what’s another catastrophe in a world full of catastrophes?

But the gruesome death of this particular whale is different and forces us to stand and howl, summoning grave concern. It is also a death the world holds Filipinos responsible for.

How graphically gruesome was this death? Fortunately, a *National Geographic* article ably conjures up vivid, nightmarish images that it is worth reproducing.

“When Darrell Blatchley, a marine mammal expert and the curator at the D’ Bone Collector Museum in Davao City, brought the whale back to the lab to open it up for a necropsy, he found something shocking: more than 88 pounds of plastic waste jammed into its belly.

“Plastic was just bursting out of its stomach,” he said. “We pulled out the first bag, then the second. By the time we hit 16 rice sacks – on top of the plastic bags, and the snack bags, and big tangles of nylon ropes, you’re like – seriously?”

“The plastic trash was so densely packed into the dead whale’s stomach that it felt as ‘hard and compacted as a baseball,’ he said, only many times bigger – more like two dense basketballs of trash, about eight percent of the juvenile beaked whale’s total weight. Some of it had been in the stomach so long it had started to calcify.



OUT AND ABOUT

Nick V. Quijano Jr.

“The curvier beaked whale, a young male about 15 feet long and weighing 1,100 pounds, likely died of starvation and dehydration brought on by the plastic stuffing its belly. Whales absorb water from the food they eat, and there was no sign that any food had made it into its intestines for many days. Its body was destroying itself

from the inside: Its stomach acid, unable to break down the plastic waste, had worn holes through its stomach lining instead.”

The dead young whale in Davao isn’t alone. Blatchley has recovered 61 whales that died in the Davao Gulf. Of those, he estimates plastics were the cause of death for about 45 of them.

In other parts of the world, a pregnant sperm whale also washed up, dead, on a sandy beach outside Porto Cervo, an Italian resort town. The whale too was a horrifying sight of kilos of plastic jammed into her belly.

As more and more dolphins, whales, birds, and fish are found dead with their stomachs full of plastic, the worldwide scourge of man-made plastics is upon us. It is a crisis.

Sadly, most of us Filipinos are unaware there is a crisis. We do not know, for instance, the rest of the world consider us Filipinos as one of the most prolific plastic polluters in the planet.

Alongside China, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam, we have been found to have been dumping more plastic into oceans than the rest of the world combined, says a 2017 report by the Ocean Conservancy Group.



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Crisis over plastic

In fact, scientists insist one key solution at stopping plastic from engulfing further the world's oceans is to get our country and other Southeast Asian countries to immediately do something drastic about plastic waste.

Given the dire situation, scientists say our country's waters are particularly treacherous for many marine animals and, in many of our waterways, rivers are thick with plastic trash. Our seas and rivers are nothing but big garbage dumps.

“

Among the urgent things we can do are giving up plastic bags, skipping straws, passing up plastic bottles, avoiding plastic packaging and plastic plates and cups.

An example is the biologically dead Pasig River. It's now listed among the top 10 rivers in the world that convey plastic waste to the sea, disgorging nearly 72,000 tons of garbage during the monsoon.

Environmental warriors acknowledge our country has many laws in place aimed at curbing plastic pollution, though they wish for a national ban on plastics. But enforcement is wanting, and managing waste disposal across the country's more than 7,000 islands is challenging, and plastic-wrapped items, particularly household and food products packed in sachets, are for sale nearly everywhere.

True, government often calls for recycling and many local governments have outright bans on plastic bags. It is not enough.

In fact, recycling is not as effective as finding better ways on how to dispose plastic garbage. As one scientist points out, “There

is not enough value in plastics to make that (recycling) work. It's cheaper to fund a solid waste management system than to subsidize collecting plastic.”

Adding more woes to recycling is the popularity of sachets – tear-off packets holding a single serving of shampoo, toothpaste, coffee, or other products. Sold by the millions to poor people who can't afford to buy more than one serving at a time, “sachets blow around Manila like leaves falling from trees,” says an environmentalist. Sachets too are not recyclable, so no recyclers will retrieve them.

In fairness, multinational food companies, facing public rebuke of its shameless capitalist ethos, are now trying out alternatives to sachets and straws.

Other hopeful trends abound. Local supermarkets are giving a try at packing fresh produce in banana leaves instead of plastic. Ordinary citizens are also heeding calls to pick up three pieces of plastic from beaches during their summer holidays.

But all of these are still inadequate unless we seriously do something about plastics in the course of our daily lives. Among the urgent things we can do are giving up plastic bags, skipping straws, passing up plastic bottles, avoiding plastic packaging and plastic plates and cups, recycling and not littering, even as we educate the poor.

Doing these ordinary things just might alter the course of our children's future and their bleak future of drowning in plastic.

Email: nevqjr@yahoo.com.ph



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Environmentalists tell Nestlé: Stop using plastics

Environmental groups on Thursday demanded that global giant Nestlé end its dependence on single-use plastic, citing waste audit reports that named the multinational company as one of the top sources of plastic pollution. Interrupting the company's annual general meeting in Switzerland, activists from Greenpeace and Break Free From Plastic Movement said the company should immediately invest in alternative delivery systems based on refill and reuse. The protest came a day after Filipino activists trooped to Nestlé's Philippine headquarters in Makati City to deliver an "invoice" that detailed the impacts of single-use plastic packaging to human health and environment. "People can see with their own eyes the damage plastic pollution is doing to our oceans, waterways and communities," said Greenpeace international executive director Jennifer Morgan. Greenpeace said Nestlé produced 1.7 million tons of plastic in 2018. —JHESSET O. ENANO



Water recycling law necessary – Tolentino

Environmental lawyer and senatorial Atty. Francis Tolentino said a water recycling law is needed as a long-term solution in addressing the nation's water crisis.

He made the statement amid the lack of water supply in many parts of the country due to El Niño.

Tolentino said water recycling is an immediate solution to the crisis.

“May mga kompanya na sa bansa na may mga pasilidad para sa water recycling. Subalit marami pa rin ang wala. Kung kaya nga dapat na maisa batas ang pagkakaroon ng mga malalaking establisimentong mga ▶4

kagamitan at pasilidad para sa water recycling,” says Tolentino. (There are companies that now practice water recycling but there are still many who don't. We need to have a law that will make it mandatory for big establishments to have water recycling facilities.)

“Malaki ang pangangailangan ng mga higanteng malls at hotels halimbawa para sa tubig. Ang pagkakaroon ng water treatment at recycling facility para sa mga negosyong mataas ang demand para sa tubig ay makatutulong upang makabawas sa bigat ng demand upang madala ang ibang suplay sa mga komunidad at kabahayan.” (Big malls and hotels have huge demands for water. If they have water recycling facilities, this will lessen the load on water concessionaires and make them focus their supply on communities and residential areas.)

Tolentino added that the government should also grant incentives to enterprises that will install water recycling facility in their establishments. Through this, businesses will be encouraged to invest in the said facility.

“Tax discounts ang insentibong-naiisip ko. Subalit marami pang mga insentibo ang maaring mailaan ng pamahalaan. Sa mga kompanya naman, maari ding maging bahagi ng kanilang corporate responsibility policy ang pagtatatag ng water recycling system bilang tulong nila sa pagsagip at pagpapanatili sa kalikasan ng bansa.” (I am thinking of proposing tax discounts for incentives. The government can offer more incentives. Companies can even consider making it part of their corporate responsibility policy the institution of a water recycling system as a way of helping conserve our resources.)