

DATE : 02 AUG 2019

DAY : Friday

DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

02 AUG 2019

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

El Nido to remain open during rehab

El Nido in Palawan will remain open to tourists despite its ongoing rehabilitation.

"We will not close El Nido... we will continue the rehabilitation by imposing a no swimming policy in certain parts of Bacuit Bay, including the El Nido Estero, Cabugao, Masagana and Corong-corong outfalls," Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu told a press briefing yesterday.

"Our plan is to come up with an interagency task force that will undertake an investigation and inspection of

the establishments including households close to the vicinity," Cimatu added.

He said the task force would be given 20 days starting Monday to submit the result of its investigation and inspection. The closure of erring firms will be based on the recommendation of the task force.

Cimatu said 90 percent of the establishments in El Nido are non-compliant with environmental laws and other regulations.

El Nido underwent initial

rehabilitation for six months, which started last November.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources said high coliform level in certain areas, violation of easement rules, operating without business permits and construction of establishments in prohibited areas were noted.

Interior Secretary Eduardo Año said charges would be filed against concerned barangay officials and government agencies. — **Rhodina Villanueva, Louise Maureen Simeon**

Cimatu: El Nido, Palawan to remain open for tourists

EL NIDO will remain open to all tourists even as its rehabilitation is ongoing, Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said on Thursday.

"The decision is that we will continue the rehabilitation. We will not close El Nido," Cimatu said in a joint news briefing with Interior Secretary Eduardo Año and Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo Puyat at Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

"The consensus of us here [is] that we will continue the rehabilitation because the last time, we did a six-month rehabilitation effort from the town mayor to do for El Nido and then it expired after six months and while we were looking at the result, we somehow received a complaint about the quality of the water," Cimatu told reporters.

Some swimming areas in Bacuit Bay and Corong Corong

Beach, however, would be off-limits for tourists, pending the rehabilitation process.

Closure was also ordered for specific areas found to have a high level of coliform and have easement problems.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources regional director in the area was tasked by Cimatu to form an interagency task force that will conduct investigation and

inspection of establishments in El Nido to determine if they are complying with environmental laws and other policies.

This will also include households that are within the vicinity of the tourist spot.

The task force is given 20 days, starting on August 5 until 25, to submit the results of its investigation and inspection.

"These include those who does not have permits, no ac-

creditations from the Department of Tourism (DoT)...or building resorts without the necessary permits from the government," Cimatu said.

While the whole of El Nido remained open to the public, individual establishments who fail to comply with the conditions will have to be ordered for closure, according to the Environment secretary.

DEMPSEY REYES



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

BusinessWorld™

51/9
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

02 AUG 2019

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

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MIMAROPA: EL NIDO, PALAWAN

'No swimming' policy in parts of El Nido as rehabilitation continues

THE DEPARTMENT of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said El Nido in Palawan will not be closed to tourists but a "no-swimming" policy will be implemented in some areas where water quality remains poor. "We will not close El Nido, but we will continue the rehabilitation by imposing a 'no swimming' policy in certain parts of Bacuit Bay, including the El Nido Estero Outfall, Cabugao Outfall, Masagana Outfall and Corong-corong Outfall," said DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu in a press briefing in Quezon City on Thursday. The popular holiday destination underwent a six-month rehabilitation program starting November last year, but Mr. Cimatu said there are still complaints on the high level of coliform bacteria in the waters. More establishments have also been reported to be operating illegally or in violation of laws. Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat, in the same press conference, noted that 119 establishments have already been closed for failing to comply with environment ordinances. Mr. Cimatu said a task force will be formed to conduct a 20-day investigation on establishments and residences starting August 5. "We will wait for the results and then will be closing individual establishments based on the recommendation of the task force," he said. — **Vince Angelo C. Ferreras**



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE



13
PAGE

UPPER
LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

02 AUG 2019

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

El Nido to remain open to tourists amid rehabilitation

THE El Nido in Palawan will not be closed for tourists but rehabilitation will continue in order for the province not to suffer the same fate as world famous island-resort, Boracay.

Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu said the non-closure of El Nido was the consensus reached during a meeting with the stakeholders.

He disclosed that after the six months rehabilitation of El Nido, there are still so much to be done that continuous rehabilitation is needed.

Although the whole island-resort will not be closed, there are some areas, particularly the swimming areas, will be

closed for tourists in view of the high level of fecal coliform.

"It is a 'no swimming zone' in three barangays in Bacuit Bay, and Bgy. Corong-Corong to preserve the area and prevent the tourists and locals from contracting diseases," Cimatu said.

He said an inter-agency task force was directed to conduct an investigation and inspection on the establishments, including the households near the El Nido resort, to determine if there are violations of environmental and tourism laws.

"We gave the task force members 20 days (specifically from Aug. 5 to 25) for them to submit their investigation and

inspection report. In the report, they should highlight ang mga non-compliant, violators of environmental laws, 'yung walang business permits at walang accreditation from the Tourism department," Cimatu said.

The task force, Cimatu added, must also find those violators in Timberland who constructed resorts without the necessary permits from the government.

"The instruction is that, the task force will make recommendations after their investigation and inspection, if there should be a closure of individual establishments and not the whole El Nido," Cimatu added.

Cory Martinez



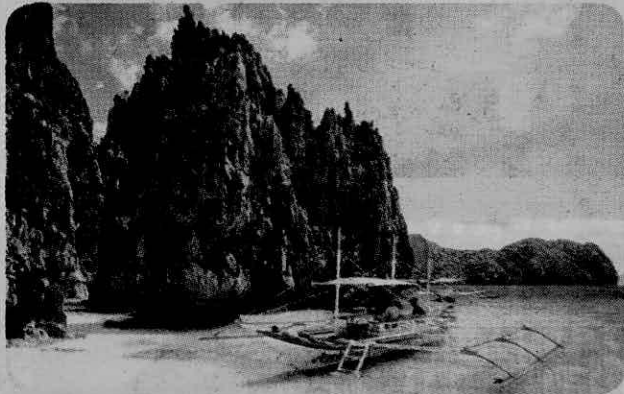
EL NIDO HINDI MUNA ISASARA

NAGKASUNDO ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) at Department of Tourism na hindi muna isasara ang El Nido resorts katulad ng ginawa sa Boracay kaugnay sa planong rehabilitasyon dito.

Sa ginanap na pagpupulong ng tatlong ahensiya sa AFP Officers Club sa Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City kahapon inihayag ni DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu na hindi na nila isasara ang El Nido na tinuturing na isang tourist paradise sa Palawan.

Subalit may mga lugar na hindi papayagan ang paliligo o swimming activities partikular sa Bacuit Bay na sinasabing lamalala ang suliranin sa algae kumpara sa Boracay Island bago ito ipinasara sa loob ng anim na buwan.

"Hindi na isasara ang El Nido para bigyang daan ang pagpapatuloy ng rehabilitation ng resort bagama't may mga off limits lamang na swimming areas sa Corong-Corong at Bacuit Bay dahil mataas ang pollution levels," pahayag ni



DILG Undersecretary Epimaco Densing III.

Masusing pag-aaralan ng DENR, DOT at DILG ang findings ng pagsusuri sa mga resort at establisimiyento na nasa loob ng nasasakupan ng El Nido.

Ayon naman kay Cimatu, 90 porsiyento ng mga establisimiyento sa El Nido ay non-compliant sa environmental law, ordinansa at simpleng mga batas.

Hiningan din ni Cimatu ng update ang bagong halal na mayor sa lugar upang alamin kung ano-ano ang mga hakbang na nagawa para itama ang mga nakitang violation.

Kabilang sa mga nakitang paglabag ay tungkol sa per-

mits, pagtatayo ng structure sa environmentally protected area, at polusyon sa tubig ng El Nido.

Sinuman o alinmang makitaan at mapatunayang may mga paglabag at hindi pa rin nagawa ang wastong pagsasaayos ay ipasasara.

Ayon naman kay DILG Secretary Eduardo Año, malamang hindi na ipatupad ang 20 meter easement rule mula sa karagatan dahil sa napakaraming establisimiyento ang sisirain sa beachfront sa sentro ng El Nido.

Kasalukuyang nagsasagawa na rin ng rehabilitasyon sa mga resort sa Coron, Panglao, Puerto Galera at iba pang mga dinarayong lugar. **VERLIN RUIZ**



TITLE: _____

PAGE 1/ _____

C 2 AUG 2019

DATE

DID YOU KNOW

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources pioneered the Heritage Tree Program in 2009. A heritage tree is any healthy native or endemic, exotic, rare, threatened and endangered species, with a minimum girth or circumference of 100 centimeters. The heritage trees need to be at least 50 years old and have historical, cultural or aesthetic value. At present, there are 29 heritage trees in Metro Manila, spread out over nine cities and one municipality. Most can be found in Quezon City and Manila.

—MARIELLE MEDINA, INQUIRER RESEARCH



NWRB, NAGLABAS NG BOARD RESOLUSYON PARA SA "PERMITTEES/GRANTEES" HINDI MAKAPAG-BAYAD NA UTANG

ANG National Water Resources Board (NWRB) ay nag-isyu ng Board Resolution No. 003-0107 na pinamagatang "Resolution Authorizing the Executive Director to Grant Staggard Payment on Accrued Annual Water Charges, Supervision and Regulation Fee and Penalties" na pina-pahintulutan ang Executive Director na magbigay ng pag-ka-kataon ang permittees/grantees na may pagkakautang, upang mabayaran nila ito ng paunti-unti sa loob ng isang taon.

Subalit, sa kabila ng nasabing Board Resolution maraming permittee/grantee ay hindi pa rin makapagbayad ng kanilang accrued water charges, regulation fees at penalties dahil sa iba't ibang kadahilanan, tulad ng kahirapan sa pananalapi, pagpapabaya at pagkaantala sa pagtanggap ng kanilang Statement of Account (SOA) para sa annual water charges and supervision at regulation fees.

Gayunpaman, ang kara-

mihan sa permittees/grantees ay nagpakita ng kanilang kagustuhang maisaayos at makapagbayad upang malutas ang kanilang mga obligasyon, kaya sila ay humihiling ng mas magaang na paraan sa pagbabayad sa mga naipon na obligasyon.

Dahil sa mga nasabing kadahilanan, ang mga sumusunod na panuntunan ay inirekomenda ng board

A. For Annual Water Charge (AWC)

1. Ang Permittees/grantees ay maaaring magpasayang bayaran ang alinman sa mga sumusunod na pamamaraan: Ang pagbabayad ng kanilang naipong obligasyon, simula sa petsa ng pag-apruba na maaaring bayaran ng hulugan kung saan nahati sa pantay-pantay na halaga


Halagang Dapat Bayaran Panahon ng Pagbabayad Paraan ng Pagbabayad

Php 30,000 - 100,000

Isang (1) Taon

a. Kada Buwan ng Pagbabayad

ANG INYONG LINGKOD



DR. HILDA C. ONG

Mahigit sa 100,000 Dalawang (2) Taon

- b. Tuwing Ikatlong Buwan
- c. Tuwing Bawat semestre o anim na buwan

2. Bayaran muna ang annual water charge para sa kasalukuyan taon bago bayaran ang dating utang


3. Kapag hindi nakabayad ng Annual Water Charge sa loob ng 3 sunud-sunod na taon, ay magresulta sa pagkansela ng kanilang water permit.

B. For Supervision and Regulation Fees (SRF)

1. Ang sumusunod na paraan ay ipatutupad:
 - a. Magbabayad ng installment na mahahati sa pantay-pantay na halaga, kada buwan;
 - b. Magbabayad tuwing ikatlong buwan
2. Lahat ng dapat bayarang fees ay dapat mabayaran bago mag-Setyembre 30 ng bawat taon, kapag hindi nakapagpatupad, papatawan

ng 50% na multa at may kargadagang surcharge na 1% kada buwan na babayaran pagkatapos ng 60 araw mula sa nabanggit na petsa.

3. Kapag hindi nakabayad ng Supervision and Regulation Fees, hindi papayagan ang grantee na ma-renew o kaya mag-apply ng bagong Certificate of Public Convenience (CPC) hangga't ang SRF at iba pang mga multa ay nababayaran ng buo.





An abundance of water

By Gen. Reynaldo V. Velasco (Ret.)

FORMER President Fidel V. Ramos once wrote "What greater needs of the people are there than those which would guarantee their survival and their enjoyment of good health, long life, and security than food and water? Water, most of all!"



We Filipinos are fortunate as our country has adequate water resources. According to the Philippine Development Plan, our country has a total of 421 principal and 18 major river basins and renewable water totaling 479 billion cubic meters (bcm) from which water can be drawn for beneficial use.

However, the abundance of water resources is not a guarantee that everyone will have adequate water where and when needed. Most Filipinos take water for granted despite water being very much part of our daily lives. Water is either being wasted, polluted, or devalued; the lack of concern for the commodity by those who have access to it is part of the problem of the shortage of adequate, safe and clean water.

This problem has become an urgent issue especially in Metro Manila and its environs where gaps in water services remain pointedly felt.

The privatization of MWSS

The real-life threatening situation due to lack of potable water back in the 1990s prompted then President Ramos to enact the Water Crisis Act. His issuance of Executive Order No. 311 on March 20, 1996 paved the way for the privatization of the

Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, a heavily indebted agency incapable of viable operations. The EO authorized MWSS to enter into arrangements involving private sector participation in aspects of MWSS operations or facilities. I always refer to the privatization of MWSS as a master stroke of a genius by no less than former President Fidel V. Ramos.

The successful legal framework of the PPP between MWSS and the concessionaires, Maynilad and Manila Water, is now being replicated in other parts of the country and also in our ASEAN neighbors like Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Under the Public-Private Partnership scheme, the first water infrastructure project to be inaugurated in the Duterte administration was completed. Started during the term of President Benigno S. Aquino III, the Bulacan Bulk Water Supply Project's two phases are now operational. It is an undertaking of MWSS' third concessionaire, the Luzon Clean Water Development Corporation, a consortium of San Miguel Holdings, Inc. and K-Water Resources.

Water supply issues

The problem of water shortage felt early this year demonstrated what would happen if no new water infrastructure projects are pursued.

MWSS concessionaires Manila Water and Maynilad currently provides for the water requirement of 6.8 million and 9.5-million people, respectively.

Imagine an ever-increasing water requirement for agricultural, industrial and domestic use dependent on a single water source—Angat Dam.

Angat Dam, constructed in 1967 and operationalized the following year underwent massive rehabilitation to ensure its structural integrity in case of a 7.2 magnitude earthquake. Being the source of 97 percent of raw water for Metro Manila and neighboring provinces, destruction of Angat Dam

would greatly affect energy, food and water supply.

As an alternative water source to Angat Dam, Maynilad in 2010 began sourcing raw water from Laguna Lake—the biggest freshwater basin in the country. Maynilad now produces 250 MLD of potable water, using supply drawn from the lake.

Wastewater concerns

Aside from water shortage, we are grappling with the challenge of treating our wastewater before this is discharged back to the environment. Critics have lashed at our concessionaires for the lack of sewerage systems.

Let me assure you that MWSS has directed both Manila Water and Maynilad to continuously intensify their respective campaign for proper wastewater management.

East Zone concessionaire Manila Water has a Used Water Master Plan to implement its wastewater management program.

Manila Water currently operates and maintains 38 sewage treatment plants from only one in 1997. The total capacity of the STPs is 308.87 MLD from only 40 MLD in 1997. It operates two septage treatment plants located in San Mateo and FTI with a total capacity of 1.40 MLD. Two of its largest sewage treatment plants to date are the Taguig North and Marikina North Sewage Treatment Plants, the most recent additions to its waste water facilities. Discharge from these treatment plants has consistently passed the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) effluent quality standards. Manila Water has a sewer network of 376.97 kms.

Likewise, West Zone concessionaire Maynilad has a Sewerage Master Plan to implement wastewater management within its service area.

Maynilad operates 22 wastewater facilities—up from only two in 1997—and manages over 588 kilometers of sewer lines. Its STPs and SpTPs have a combined treatment capacity of about

663 MLD of wastewater per day. More recent additions to its facilities are the Pasay and Paranaque STPs, the latter one being the first large-scale Biological Nutrient Removal-compliant facility in the country. Currently, Maynilad is building more new STPs and conveyance systems in Valenzuela, Cavite City, and in Tunasan and Cupang in Muntinlupa.

Water infrastructure roadmap

I began my stewardship of MWSS in February 2017 under heavy constraint because of the impending water supply problems.

A study by UP-NEC in 2011 which was the basis of the MWSS Water Security Infrastructure Roadmap 2016-2037 showed that existing water supply would be insufficient to meet projected demand unless water development projects are realized. Without buffer, the supply-demand projection showed that by 2021, supply would be unable to meet demand. By 2031, the deficit is projected at 1,448 MLD ballooning to 2,280 MLD by 2037.

It is thus imperative to break away from the very cautious posture of the past leadership that paid no attention to the impending problem despite identified infrastructure projects.

MWSS recognizes water problems will persist and the necessity of pursuing vigorously water infrastructure projects.

Under its water security program are water infrastructure projects that will provide alternative water supply to the existing Angat water system. MWSS has reoriented its priorities and adopted short-term, medium-term and long-term raw water sources that will provide potable and sustainable water supply in the next 5, 10 and even 50 years with an increase of at least 1,518 MLD by 2022 at the end of President Duterte's term.

Being fast-tracked under the new water security roadmap are the following projects: 150 MLD Putatan (2019); 100 MLD Cardona (2019); 188 MLD Sumag (2020); 50 MLD Rizal Well-

field (2020); 80 MLD Calawis Wawa (2021); 100 MLD Putatan 3 (2022); and 250 MLD Lower Ipo. These, aside from the 600 MLD Kaliwa Dam projects whose implementation was began in 2017 and is expected to be completed in 2023.

Identified as medium-term water source projects from 2023 to 2027 are the following: 420 MLD Wawa Dam; 250 MLD East Bay; 350 MLD Bayabas Dam; 550 MLD Angat Norzagaray-Phase 2; 250 MLD East Bay; 750 MLD Sierra Madre; and 1,800 MLD Kanan River Phase 1.

To complement the New Water Security Roadmap (2019-2022), there is a need to fast track the completion of Aqueduct 6 and Tunnel 4, both started during the Duterte Administration by the present MWSS Board and Management. The two projects are expected to be operationalized by January 2020.

MWSS also expects to complete by June 2022, Aqueduct 7 and Tunnel 5 which are now on stream to provide another 1,600 MLD to flow towards La Mesa. The completion of these aqueducts and tunnel system will optimize the flow of excess water from Angat to La Mesa Dam.

A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between MWC and Prime Metroline Infrastructure Holdings Inc. to pursue the development of a water supply source east of Metro Manila—the Wawa Bulk Water Supply Project.

The success of these projects' implementation needs the support of the private sector. Let us work together to ensure water conservation and security.

Let me end with a quote from former President Ramos: "Water will define our collective prospects for environmental sustainability over countless generations still to come."

Gen. Velasco is the Administrator of Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System. These remarks were delivered at The Wallace Business Forum Roundtable held July 30 at the Makati Shangri-la.



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

A6
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

C 2 AUG 2019
DATE

TITLE : _____

PAGE 1/ _____



Good sign Water level in Kalayaan Lake is on the rise after days of rain to dispel fears of a prolonged drought that had manifested in the form of water rationing in Metro Manila last June.

ROMAN PROSPERO

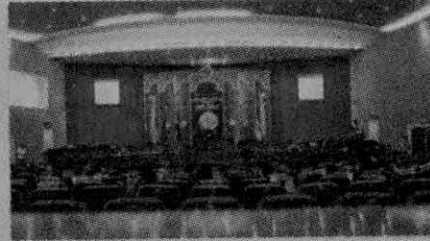


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BANGSAMORO AUTONOMOUS REGION
IN MUSLIM MINDANAO: COTABATO CITY

Bangsamoro parliament passes resolution on ad-hoc joint body for Sulu Sea, Moro Gulf

THE BANGSAMORO Parliament has passed a resolution calling for the creation of an ad-hoc body to identify zones of cooperation and ensure the equitable sharing of resources from the Sulu Sea and Moro Gulf between the region and the national government. Anchored on Section 18, Article XIII of Republic Act No. 11054, or the Organic Law for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARRM), the resolution provides for a joint body composed of representatives from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA), "and a corresponding number of representatives from appropriate agencies of the Bangsamoro Government." Based on the resolution, passed July 31, the ad hoc body will also "ensure cooperation and coordination between the National Government and the Bangsamoro Government on the exploration, development and utilization of non-living resources in the subject Zone, and the protection of



BW/TSBASMAN

the indigenous communities' traditional fishing grounds." Through the ad hoc body, the BARRM and national governments would formulate policies and regulations that apply for both the Sulu Sea and the Moro Gulf. The proposed body is supposed to start work within 30 days after the ratification of the Organic Law and will cease to operate after it has established the coordinates of the Bangsamoro territorial jurisdiction within the Bangsamoro waters and the zones of joint cooperation. The resolution was drafted by the following Parliament members: Amir Mawallil, Jose Lorena, Nabil Tan, Laisa Masuhud-Alamia, Don Mustapha Loong, Alzad Sattar, Adzfar Usman, Abdulmuhmin Mujahid, and Abraham Burahan. — **Tajallih S. Basman**

BUSINESSWORLD GRAPHICS: TONE DAÑAS



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INITIATIVES
SERVICE

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02 AUG 2019
DATE

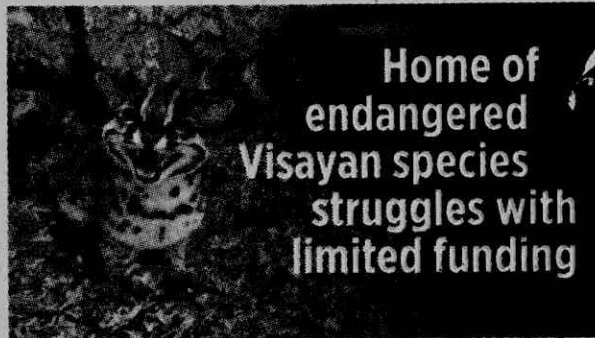
TITLE:

PAGE 1/

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Friday Feature

WESTERN VISAYAS: LAMBUNAO, ILOILO



Home of
endangered
Visayan species
struggles with
limited funding

BW/ERSSANTIAGUDO

A P30,000 monthly food budget would cover the standard nourishment needed by 54 animals — mostly endangered and vulnerable species endemic to the Visayas — housed at the Mari-it Conservation Park in Lambunao, Iloilo. The park's management struggles to raise that amount and is often forced to cut back on the animal's basic food requirements, according to JB Ian G. Bullo, the center's veterinarian. In some instances, he added, the park's staff would chip in their personal money to cover the feeding expenses. Mari-it Park is currently home to 16 Visayan hornbills, including the writhe and taritik hornbills; five Visayan leopard cats, and two Panay cloud rats, which are both vulnerable; 11 critically endangered Visayan warty pigs; and 20 endangered Visayan spotted deer. — **Emme Rose S. Santiago**

>> See full story on (<https://bit.ly/2YyfnBV>)



BW/ERSSANTIAGUDO

MAIN PHOTO:
Visayan leopard cats
are usually hunted to
be sold in the market
for breeding with
domestic cats to
produce Bengal cat.

LEFT PHOTO:
The Visayan writhing
hornbills, locally
called dulungan,
is one of the
most endangered
hornbills.



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

C 2 AUG 2019
DATE

Phase out single use plastic

By Jonas Reyes

BALANGA, BATAAN – First District Representative Geraldine B. Roman has filed House Bill 0139 during the 18th Philippine Congress's First Regular Session which will ultimately phase out single-use plastic products while promoting recycling and proper disposal of these plastic products.

Roman, who dubbed the bill as the "Single-Use Plastics Phaseout and Recycling Law," said that it aims to answer the problem of plastic pollution wherein it will prohibit the production, importation and utilization of these products by business establishments.

Examples of single-use plastic products are straws, cups, bottles, grocery bags, food containers and other products that could only be used once.

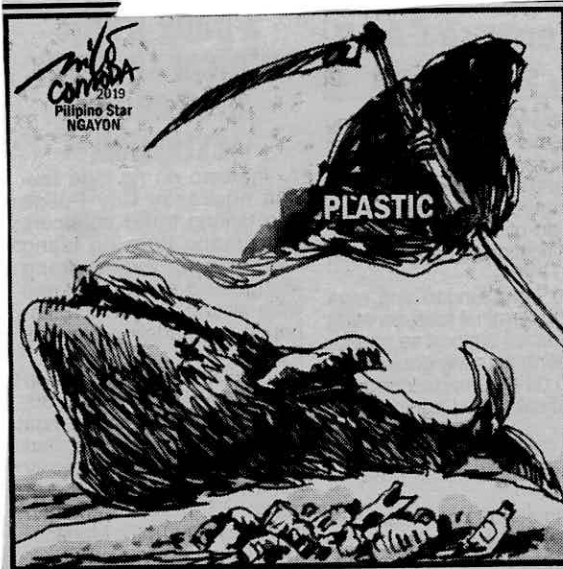
Roman said the scope of this proposed law applies to the manufacture, importation, sale and use of all single-use plastics in trade or commerce and business enterprises, as well as by retailers in the Philippines.

Part of House Bill 0139 is the recycling of single-use plastics as manufacturers are ordered to properly recycle these plastics produce in a manner consistent of the existing laws, rules and regulations. This part entails that the process of recycling will be compliant to the ecological laws of the country, and that no harmful substances are released to the environment.



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

C 2 AUG 2019
DATE



Editorial

Batas na naglilimita sa paggamit ng plastic nararapat nang isulong

NAGSISIMULA nang magtrabaho ang mga mambabatas na nahalal noong nakaraang Mayo 13. Marami sa kanila ang may mga inihahain ng panukalang batas na para sa kanila, makatutulong nang malaki sa mamamayan.

Sana, mayroong mambabatas na maisip isulong ang paglilimita sa paggamit ng plastic. Kung mayroon nang nakaisip ng panukalang batas ukol sa paggamit ng plastic, nasa tamang landas ang mambabatas. Marami ang pupuri sa kanya sapagkat hindi lamang ang sangkatauhan ang maililigtas niya sa pagdami ng plastic kundi pati na rin ang mga lamandagat.

Halos lahat ng ginagamit ngayon ng mga tao ay gawa sa plastic at pagkatapos gamitin, ibabasura na ang mga ito. Dahil maraming iresponsable sa pagtatapon ng basura, humahantong ang mga ito sa dagat.

Pagkatapos itapon sa estero o kanal, tatangayin sa dagat at kakainin ito ng mga isda kabilang ang balyena. Marami nang balyena na sumadsad sa dalampasigan at namatay. At nang suriin kung ano ang ikinamatay ng mga ito, napag-alaman na dahil sa mga nakaing plastic na basura. Iba't ibang uri ng plastic ang nakuha sa bituka ng mga kawawang balyena.

Noong nakaraang linggo, isang sperm whale na naman ang natagpuang patay sa dalampasigan sa Davao City. Ang balyena na tumitimbang ng 200 kilos. Nang biyakin ang tiyan, natagpuan sa bituka nito ang nylon rope at mga pira-pirasong plastic cups. Ang mga iyon ang nagbara sa bituka na hinihinalang dahilan ng pagkamatay ng balyena.

Noong nakaraang Marso 15, isang balyena rin ang natagpuang patay sa Mabini, Compostela Valley. Nang suriin kung ano ang dahilan ng pagkamatay, napag-alaman na dahil sa mga kinaing plastic ng basura na tumitimbang ng 40 kilos. Nakita ang 16 na empty bags ng bigas, 4 na banana plantation style bags, at iba't ibang plastic shopping bags.

Ang Pilipinas ay ikatlo sa mga bansa sa Asia na maraming plastic na basura. Nangunguna ang China at pumapangalawa ang Indonesia.

Sa Bangkok, Thailand ipinatutupad na ang pagbabawal sa paggamit ng plastic bilang lalagyan ng mga gulay at iba pang grocery items. Sa halip na plastic, dahon ng saging ang ginagamit doon.

Isulong ang batas na naglilimita sa paggamit ng plastic. Kung magkakaroon ng batas, maililigtas ang bansa sa pagkalunod sa plastic na basura at ganundin sa pagkamatay ng mga balyena.



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

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A6
PAGE

UPPER
LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

C 2 AUG 2019
DATE

TITLE :

PAGE 1/



Hellish welcome Piles of unsightly trash do not speak well of governance in Malabon City as nobody will take the sign above the sea of garbage seriously.

ROMAN PROSPERO



IRR on land use conversion drafted

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

The inter-agency task force on land use conversion has drafted the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) on land use conversion, Agrarian Reform Secretary John Castriciones said yesterday.

The task force was formed to speed up the process of converting agricultural lands into residential, commercial and industrial use, and report on the anomalies in the conversion process.

Castriciones ordered his department's field operations office to come up with proposals for the streamlining of land acquisition and distribution (LAD) processes.

"The agency is focusing on Executive Order 75, which ordered it to distribute all government-owned lands devoted

to or suitable for agriculture but are no longer used for the purpose for which these have been reserved," Castriciones said.

"This EO will boost the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program. It will fast-track the distribution of lands, particularly government-owned lands, to qualified beneficiaries," he added.

As of last month, the agency has released the implementing rules and regulations of EO 75, signed by Castriciones and Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra.

"Now that the IRR has been signed and released, we're now ready to proceed with the process of land acquisition and distribution," Castriciones said.

The DAR aims to finish the LAD program by 2022.



The sapient and the stupid

Basaha ang putos sa asin (Read the salt packaging),” a teacher told us one day in elementary school. He was referring to the common practice back then of using old newspaper pages and other printed materials to bundle up everyday goods like salt. But what he was really saying was a gem of an advice: to read everything we could get our hands on, even if it was soggy newspaper, because our access was wanting but our potential was yet unmapped.

I’ve never forgotten that. It was important counsel for us kids who had to share textbooks and were rarely allowed into the school library. Yet today, when information and insight flow freely from all directions, this advice is even more essential. Despite the overabundance of knowledge readily available, many people refuse to be well-informed, while those who do read and crave learning are smart-shamed by people around them.

Exhibit A: climate change deniers. Almost every week now, a new scientific report emerges about increasing global temperatures, drastic weather patterns, rising sea levels—and human activity as a primary factor in all of these. Yet we still have friends among us who point fingers at homosexuals or karma or God’s plan (or all three) to account for extreme weather. Just to reiterate the facts, pride parades don’t whip up typhoons, and nonbelievers don’t create heat waves. Our greenhouse gases do. We all are responsible.

A five-minute skimming of any science book or of “Climate Basics for Kids” could have explained that, but why waste five minutes reading when you could just spend the time lobbing insults on Facebook?

Right beside climate change deniers are



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those who refuse to recognize mental health issues, those who are quick to blame rape and harassment victims, and those who immediately believe health scares and “earthquake predictions” shared online. There is a wealth of data, logical arguments and firsthand insight to broaden their perspectives, if they would only care to sit down and read.

What’s worse is that those with limited world views can so summarily shut down those who are trying to expand theirs. We’ve seen smart-shaming and anti-intellectualism in various contexts. Someone makes an informed, rational argument, and they’re made to feel awkward with the subtly vilifying “Nosebleed!” Or someone corrects a misconception, and they’re cast out with “*Ikaw na ang matalino.*”

The saddest, most pivotal form of anti-intellectualism, however, happens at home. Alas, not everyone grows up in a Nido commercial where the whole household is invested in education and the surrounding community is supportive of it. More often than not, people who

spend time reading and learning are branded lazy for “doing nothing.” Eager learners are discouraged by their family because “reading is a rich man’s pastime,” or being knowledgeable is “not their place.” Parents reject their children’s attempts at logical conversations just because objective new information goes against traditional beliefs and norms.

I’ve seen this happen in my own circles—among my own classmates back in elementary school, among some kids I’ve tutored and even among my adult colleagues. There are brilliant, creative minds lying dormant because they’ve been pumped full of self-doubt and deterrence. You can’t help but root for them to successfully wade through the muck and finally shine, because you know they have a real capacity to accomplish great things.

But they are often held back by those who don’t believe in learning. So few are the role models who encourage us to enrich our minds. Our influences are instead overrun by loud bigots who would consider it an attack if you tried to ameliorate their ignorance.

Bertrand Russell summed it up nicely: “The fundamental cause of the trouble is that in the modern world the stupid are cocksure while the intelligent are full of doubt.” The litmus test, I think, is this: Are you confident that you know enough, or are you still keen to read the “*putos sa asin*” at your fingertips?

Suggested topics for further reading (or Googling):

- The Dunning-Kruger Effect
- The Impostor Syndrome
- Why we still get heavy rains if the climate has really gotten hotter

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Bulacan airport gets going ... but so do the scammers

The faithful have spoken

The Catholic community in the Philippines is taking a bold move in speaking up and sparking the difficult but important dialogue on climate change, this time in the business sector.

Faith-based action on environmental concerns has been a landmark stance of **Pope Francis**, unsurprisingly being one of the most revolutionary leaders that the Church had in recent times, urging the faithful in a 2015 encyclical called "Laudato Si"—Latin for "Praise be to You"—to take "swift and unified global action" against pressing matters of global warming, irresponsible consumerism and development, and environmental degradation.

In the Philippines, a group called the "Living Laudato Si" movement has been mobilized in response to this call. During the annual stockholders' meeting earlier this year, religious and clergy representing Catholic depositors and stakeholders of local banks stepped up to the mic and squarely questioned the financial institutions' lending policies to

contentious industries such as coal-fed energy and mining.

The group acknowledged important moves such as BDO Unibank's funding of 34 sustainable energy finance (SEF) projects worth P36.9 billion, comprising 285 megawatts of hydropower, 129 MW of biomass energy, 93 MW of solar and 62 MW of wind energy. China Bank, a sister company under the SM Group, reported it had issued P7 billion of loans for energy access and has financed P7.2 billion for renewable energy development. Ayala's Bank of the Philippine Islands, meanwhile, reported P9.67 billion for SEF projects, with cumulative disbursements amounting to P52.7 billion.

The crux lies, however, in continuing "dirty investments" such as funding coal plants. On its website, the movement bares that despite the passage of the Renewable Energy Act of 2008, the share of renewables in the country's installed generating capacity has actually decreased from 35 percent in 1997 to 32 percent in 2017.

These banks and others are among those poised to continue financing the construction of more than 20 coal-fired power plants and expanding existing ones in the next few decades such as those in Calaca, Batangas; Dinginin and Marileves in Bataan; Kauswagan, Lanao del Norte; Masinloc, Zambales; and Pagbilao and Mauban, Quezon.

"We do recognize that for the sake of socioeconomic development, a transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy cannot happen in the span of less than a year," the group said. "A just transition would need to consider the job security of thousands of employees and meeting the energy demand in affected communities and establishments."

"Nonetheless, the role of fossil fuels, especially coal, on climate change and environmental degradation has been repeatedly proven by reports of reputable international agencies," it added.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has warned that as early as 2030, cli-

mate change would become irreversible should countries maintain a "business-as-usual" attitude, which includes the burning of fossil fuels.

"By 2050, renewables must supply from around half to two-thirds of the world's energy needs to prevent climate change from worsening further—a clear sign of the need to divest from fossil fuels," it concluded. The question now is, will enough people listen? —DAXIM L. LUCAS



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

Companies step up level of climate ambition

Twenty-eight companies with a total market capitalization of \$1.3 trillion are stepping up to set a new level of climate ambition in response to a call-to-action campaign ahead of the UN Climate Action Summit on 23 September.

The companies have committed themselves to more ambitious climate targets aligned with limiting global temperature rise to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and reaching net-zero emissions by no later than 2050.

First movers include Acciona,

AstraZeneca, Banka BioLoo, BT, Dalmia Cement Ltd., Eco-Steel Africa Ltd., Enel, Hewlett Packard Enterprise, Iberdrola, KLP, Levi Strauss & Co., Mahindra Group, Natura & Co, Novozymes, Royal DSM, SAP, Signify, Singtel, Telefonica, Telia, Unilever, Vodafone Group PLC and Zurich Insurance, among others, collectively representing over one million employees from 17 sectors and more than 16 countries.

Of the 28 companies, BT, Hewlett Packard Enterprise, Levi Strauss & Co. and SAP already have 1.5°C-aligned reduction targets covering greenhouse gas emissions from their operations.

"Climate leadership has never been more important than it is right now, and it is inspiring to see so many diverse companies and brands boldly raising their ambitions," said Lise Kingo, CEO and executive director of the UN Global Compact. "Leading companies are already proving that 1.5°C-compliant climate targets are possible, and I encourage all businesses to seize this opportunity to position themselves at the forefront of this movement and contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals."

The commitments of the 28 companies heed the most recent report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which warned of catastrophic consequences should global warming exceed 1.5°C.

By sending strong market signals, these companies are showing governments that they need to urgently ramp up their national plans in line with the latest climate science.

"The UN Secretary-General has called on leaders to come to the Climate Action Summit in September with clear plans for major cuts to emissions on the pathway to a zero-net emissions economy by 2050," said Ambassador Luis Alfonso de Alba, the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Climate Action Summit. "It is very encouraging to see these climate leaders in the global business community taking action, both to help tackle the climate emergency and because taking climate action presents huge opportunities for early movers. By sending strong market signals, these companies are showing governments that they need to urgently ramp up their national plans in line with the latest climate science."



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE



02 AUG 2019
DATE

TITLE: _____

PAGE 1/ _____

CSC reminds govt offices of mandatory PWD lane

By **MICHAEL PUNONGBAYAN**

The Civil Service Commission (CSC) reminded all government offices last week, especially those providing frontline services, that they are required by law to provide express lanes for persons with disabilities (PWDs).

Such reminder was issued as the country observed National Disability Prevention and Rehabilitation Week from July 17 to 23.

The CSC said Memorandum Circular No. 20 series of 2017 signed by

Chairperson Alicia dela Rosa-Bala orders all government agencies to "provide express lanes for PWDs or in the absence thereof, priority shall be given to PWDs in all the transactions therein."

The circular is based on the provisions of Republic Act 10754 or the Act Expanding the Benefits and Privileges of Persons with Disability, and its implementing rules and regulations.

The CSC announced that it has also made the Career Service Examination (CSE) more accessible to

PWDs, as well as the elderly and pregnant women, as part of measures to promote equal employment opportunity in government.

Under the rules, partially and totally blind examinees can take the examination using either the Dictation or the Braille system, with the help of a suitable room examiner and proctor while those with low vision will be assigned test materials with increased font size.

The deaf or hard of hearing will be guided by a room examiner and

proctor with knowledge on sign language or by certified sign language interpreters.

Examinees who are PWDs, pregnant women, and senior citizens will be assigned to take the examination in a room located on the ground floor of the testing building for ease of movement.

The time limit for the examination shall be extended for one hour for the visually impaired and the deaf or hard of hearing, thus, four hours and 10 minutes for the CSE-Pen and Paper Test Professional.



TITLE:

NAKAIYAK ang kalagayang pangkalusugan ng mahal kong Pinas.

Kung totoo ang sinasabi ng Commission on Audit na nasa P55.7 bilyon ang nabubulok na gamot sa warehouse ng DOH, nakaiyak nga.

Kabilang sa mga nabubulok ang mga expired na at ang mae-expire pa lang pero imposible nang maipamahagi.

Kahit expired na ang iba, ipinamamahagi pa rin ng DOH gaya ng halagang P30 milyong ibibigay sa health development centers at ospital habang mahigit sa P367M ang malapit nang ma-expire sa taong ito yata.

Ayon sa COA, may nabulok na P10B noong 2015; P11.3B - noong 2016; P16B noong 2017; at P18.4B nitong 2018.

WALANG BODEGA

Nang matanong si Duque ukol sa problema, simple lang ang sagot nito, mga Bro.

Walang tamang bodega o warehouse ang DOH sa mga rehiyon o lalawigan o munisipyo para iimbak at gamitin sa tamang panahon ang mga gamot.

Kailangan umano ang mga bodega na may sapat na palamig o refrigeration para hindi masira ang mga gamot.

Pero ang hindi malinaw, eh, paanong nangyari na may mga nabulok na, expired na o malapit nang ma-expire?

Ano-anong gamot ba ang mga expired at malapit nang ma-expire?

Tila may malaking kabulukan dito na dapat talagang kalkalin.

SUPPLIER DRIVEN?

Kung may mga pangangailagang ng gamot, hindi problema ang storage at pagbibiyaha.

Pwedeng umarkila ang DOH ng mga saksyang refrigerated para ibiyaha ang mga ito at magagamit sa tamang panahon ang gamot.

Pero bakit nga inabutan ng expiration ang mga gamot o nabubulok na?

Ang mga nabulok, expired at malapit nang ma-expire na gamot ba ay pangangailangan talaga ng mga mamamayan o may ibang dahilan?

Ayon sa ating Uzi, hindi kaya supplier driven ang mararaming ga-



ni BENNY ANTIPORDA

P55.7B HALAGA NG GAMOT NABUBULOK SA DOH

mot na nae-expire o malapit nang ma-expire o nabubulok?

'Yun bang === pilit na nagbebenta ang mga supplier o drug manufacturer at binibili naman ang mga gamot ng DOH kahit hindi kailangan ng bayan.

MAGKANO?

Kung totoong supplier-driven ang marami sa mga nabubulok, expired at malapit nang ma-expira na gamot, hindi maiiwasan ng ating Uzi ang mahiwagaan.

Ang isang hiwaga ryan, eh, wala bang pangongomasyon sa bentahan-bilihan ng mga gamot?

Kaya maaaring sobra-sobra ang suplay o hindi talaga kailangan ang mga gamot pero binibili pa rin ng DOH.

Hanggang sa abutan na lang ang mga ito kabulukan o expiration o malapit nang expiration.

KULANG SA GAMOT

Alam ba ninyong maraming pampublikong ospital ang nagsasabing kulang na kulang o wala silang gamot?

Kaya napipilitang bumili sa mga parmasyutika sa labas ng ospital o kooperatiba sa loob ng ospital ang mga pasyente?

At lahat ay kailangang isurender ng pasyente ang reseta sa mga parmasyutika at kooperatiba dahil patakaran daw ito?

Hindi isinasauli sa pasyente ang mga reseta dahil titingnan daw ang mga ito ng mga doktor na pumirma.

Anak ng tokwa, malinaw na may mga milagrong ginagawa ang mga doktor at kaiba ito sa tila milagrong dami ng suplay ng DOH ng gamot kaya nabubulok na o malapit nang mabulok ang mga ito.

Ang isang tanong nga-yon: paano ipaliwanag ng DOH ang sinasabi nitong mahirap ibiyaha ang mga gamot samantalang nagagawan talaga ng paraan ito kung gusto?

At maaaring hindi ganong problema ang storage dahil magagamit agad ang mga gamot.

Alalahaning sinasabi ng mga doktor at ospital sa mga rehiyon, lalawigan, lungsod, munisipyo

at barangay na walang gamot o kulang ng gamot.

Derpor, kung maipamahagi ang mga gamot, magagamit agad.

SAYANG NA BUWIS AT IBA PA

Gawa nang gawa ng batas para sa pagbubuwis para sa kalusugan ang mga kongresman at tulak nang tulak ang Palasyo sa paggawa ng mga batas na pangkalusugan din.

Pero nagugulantang tayo sa natutuklasan ng COA na nabubulok ang mga gamot na binibili ng DOH gamit ang mga buwis ng sambayanan.

Maging ang Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office ay nagkokontribusyon din para sa pambili ng gamot.

Tama bang sabihin na may malaking kabulukan talaga sa DOH?

'Yun bang === pinepera ang pagbili ng gamot ng mga taga-DOH at kasabwat dito ang mga drug manufacturer at drug distributor?

Dapat kalkalin nang husto ang mga gamot na nabubulok o expired o malapit nang ma-expire.

Alamin kung talagang pangangailangan talaga ng mga mamamayan ang mga ito.

Alamin din kung hindi pangangailangan ang mga ito at isinailalim lang sa korap na bilihan at bentahan ng mga taga-DOH at mga drug manufacturer at distributor.

DEATH PENALTY

Kasabay ng pag-iimbestiga sa natuklasan ng COA na nabubulok, nae-expire at malapit nang ma-expire na gamot ang dapat na paggawa ng parusang bitay.

Bilyon-bilyong salaping bayan ang naaak-saya o sadyang sinasayang at pinagkikitaan ng mga korap at mandarambong.

Panahon nang mabitay ang mga mandarambong at makulong ang mga korap sa DOH at mga kasabwat nila sa labas.

Anomang reaksyon o reklamo ay maaaring iparating sa 0922840-3333 o i-email sa banti-porda@yahoo.com.