

DATE : 12-24-19

DAY : Tuesday

DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



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Metro Manila producing more garbage every year—DENR

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

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METRO Manila's estimated 12 million plus population is producing more garbage every year. This year, it is again expected to exceed its thrash annual output.

The National Capital Region produced over 66,000 cubic meters of waste in the first half of 2019 alone, exceeding its year ago level of 58,112.31 cubic meters of waste, according to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Hence, Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu again called on the public to practice proper solid-waste management through the so-called 3Rs, or reduce, reuse and recycle, especially during the Christmas season.

In a news statement, Cimatu said the holiday season produces the biggest volume of garbage in the country, especially in Metro Manila. The baseline target for the year, he noted, had already been surpassed as early as June.

"Because of this, we really need to cut back on our consumption and waste and get back to basics to make life easier and to help the environment in the process," he added.

In this season of giving, Cimatu recommended the use of eco-friendly wrapping papers and gift bags, such as those made from bamboo, rattan, abaca and buri leaves, as these can be reused.

"The best way to reduce wrapping waste is to wrap a gift in something that's part of the gift like a reusable

tote bag," Cimatu pointed out.

Since many gifts end up lost, broken or forgotten, Cimatu suggested giving the gift of memory or experience like going to nature parks, or visiting an orphanage, or home for the elderly or hospice.

"Well thought presents, such as those that a family member actually needs or has always wanted are also more meaningful and don't go to waste," he also pointed out.

In hosting gatherings and parties, Cimatu advised people to use washable dinnerware and cutlery instead of paper plates and plastic cups, spoons and forks.

To avoid food wastage, Cimatu urged the public not to buy extra, cook just enough for everyone and make sure to have more

vegetables than meat.

Cimatu noted that meat products have larger carbon footprints per calorie than grains, or vegetable products.

He said studies have shown that animal agriculture puts a heavy strain on the Earth's finite resources, such as land, water and energy, thus causing deforestation, biodiversity loss, and water and air pollution.

The Philippines, with its estimated population of over 100 million, produces around 40,000 tons of garbage every day or 14.6 million tons of garbage annually. Metro Manila produces slightly less than a quarter of that figure with around 9,000 tons every day.

The Philippines has been implementing Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act for more than 25 years.



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LGUs pledge P2.5M to protect and conserve Palawan mountain

THE protection and conservation of Mount Mantalingahan Protected Landscape (MMPL) in Palawan province will be getting the much-needed boost from local government units (LGUs).

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said five municipalities in southern Palawan have pledged a total of P2.5 million for the protection and conservation of what can be considered the largest protected area of the province.

The MMPL is a protected area by virtue of Presidential Proclamation 1815 dated June 23, 2009.

It is included in the tentative list of Unesco World Heritage Sites and is vying to be inscribed as such for its exceptional biodiversity and endemism. Like all other biodiversity-rich areas, the MMPL faces various threats, including illegal logging, mining and plantation expansion, including slash-and-burn farming. The enforcement of environmental laws remains a major challenge because of insufficient number of forest protection officers currently deployed in the area.

The local government units of Brooke's Point, Quezon, Rizal, So-

fronio Española and Bataraza each committed to allot P500,000 from their respective funds to support forest protection activities and stricter enforcement of environmental laws in the main protected area and its buffer zone during the 15th en banc meeting of the Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) of MMPL held in Puerto Princesa City, on December 16.

The meeting was attended by other members of the PAMB, which include the *punong* barangays, representatives from the academe, nongovernment organizations, National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, Philippine National Police, Palawan Council for Sustainable Development and other indigenous peoples groups.

The commitment was made by the five LGUs after the Biodiversity Assessment and Monitoring System report highlighted the urgency to step up forest protection efforts in MMPL, which include procurement of equipment, supplies and materials, and augmentation of monitoring and patrol personnel.

Currently, there are only three park rangers under the Protected Area Management Office protect-

ing the MMPL which covers a total of 120,457 hectares.

"Ideally, it should be one forest ranger per 500 hectares. For MMPL, we are in need of 240 more rangers to cover the entire area," Protected Area Superintendent Mildred Suza explained.

The financial support coming from the LGUs will help address the limited number of forest protectors, as well as the grant of other benefits to boost the morale of the forest protection officers or *bantay gubat* volunteers.

DENR Mimaropa Regional Executive Director Henry Adornado said besides regular compensation, the allocated funds could also provide the forest guards medical and accidental insurance should unfortunate incidents happen while they are on patrol.

"The rangers' job to protect Mount Mantalingahan against poachers and other violators expose them to serious threats and danger. They are constantly risking their lives every time they monitor the mountains. It's about time we take action to ensure their safety and protection," Adornado, who is the concurrent chairman of the PAMB of the MMPL. *Jonathan L. Mayuga*



Boracay pushes waiving capacity limit

By Jun N. Aguirre

MALAY, Aklan – A little over a year after Boracay Island was reopened to the public following its rehabilitation, more and more tourists have visited the resort island to increase the number of arrivals and surpassing the maximum capacity set by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Given this influx of visitors, acting Mayor Floribar Bautista said that he has requested the Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force to waive the capacity tourism limit for Boracay.

“I told the task force during previous meetings to waive the capacity limit because in the first place, it is hard for the task force to monitor the capacity limit. Complementing the increasing number of tourists are also the increasing number of construction of resorts in Boracay,” Bautista said.

The task force based in Manila has yet to reply officially to Bautista’s request.

According to a study conducted by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) of

the DENR, Boracay can only accommodate around 54,945 people each day. The DENR has pegged 35,730 for residents and 19,215 for tourists.

The said number excludes the number of stay-in workers working at the different resorts and companies of this resort island.

However, the report indicated that Boracay’s current population around of 70,700 is already more than enough for the daily maximum capacity of this resort island.

Data from the Department of Tourism showed that from January to November this year, there have already been around 1.7 million tourist who visited Boracay. The local government of Malay is targeting around two million tourists this year.

In 2017 prior to the Boracay closure, Boracay has registered around 2,001,974 foreign and local tourists. In 2018, Boracay reached 537,743 because of the six months closure of this resort island.

Boracay has been closed to tourists for six months to undergone environmental rehabilitation upon the orders of President Rodrigo Duterte.



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'REMOVE ILLEGAL BARRICADE' - DIDIPIO IP COMMUNITY TO VIZCAYA LGU



Didipio, Nueva Vizcaya-- Following the Department of Interior and Local Government's (DILG) order to dismantle an illegal blockade that has been choking fuel and supplies in Didipio, at least 1,200 residents of the barangay and its IP leaders marched yesterday calling for the provincial government's adherence to the notice.

In the second half of 2019, Nueva Vizcaya's local government unit set-up checkpoints to control the ingress and egress of vehicles leading to OceanaGold Philippines' mining site, which caused a temporary disruption of its operations. In Didipio, OceanaGold employs 1,500 people and generates around 3,000 additional jobs through cooperatives, local suppliers and contractors.

The illegal blockade has since affected jobs in the mining site and local businesses.

Community members have expressed their gratitude to DILG for listening to and acting on their complaints. According to the residents, they experienced harassment and their access to roads have been impeded by those man-

ning the blockade, some of which are organizations not even based in Didipio.

They have likewise said that the illegal barricade has negatively impacted their source of livelihood and employment.

DILG's letter, issued late November, mentioned that "no authority or permit from the Philippine National Police (PNP) or the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) has been obtained" by the LGU prior to the set-up of the blockade.

DILG maintains that it is the topmost governing agency exercising supervision of LGUs and has 'enjoined' the Nueva Vizcaya LGU to "remove or dismantle the checkpoints" unless they decide to secure appropriate permits from the PNP and the AFP.

In June 20, 2019, the Department of Environmental and Natural Resources-Mines and Geosciences Bureau (DENR-MGB) gave OceanaGold interim approval to operate pending the renewal of its 25-year Financial and Technical Assistance Agreement (FTAA).

"Sinasabi nilang naghihirap daw ang mga taga Didipio dahil sa operasyon ng OceanaGold, kaya tutol daw ito sa renewal ng FTAA. Ang totoo at katulad ng nakikita ninyo ngayon, may-orya ng mga taga-Didipio at sa mga karatig barangay ay pabor sa operasyon ng OceanaGold." [People say that OceanaGold's operations have made life difficult for us in Didipio. But what is apparent and true right now is that majority of us in Didipio and the neighboring communities favor OceanaGold's operations].

"Ang totoo, lahat ng residente ay malaki ang naging benepisyo sa operasyon magmula sa employment hanggang sa mga proyekto nito," [In truth, all residents have experienced the many benefits from the mining operation be it employment or through its projects] said a statement from the community.

The FTAA is executed between a foreign-owned mining contractor and the government of the Philippines for the large-scale exploration and development of gold, copper, nickel, and other minerals.



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SC VOIDS 28 CALT IN BAGUIO

IBALOY CLANS SEEK HELP TO PROTECT ANCESTRAL LANDS

BAGUIO CITY—Ibaloy clans here have asked fellow indigenous peoples (IP) to help protect their ancestral landholdings following a Supreme Court ruling that affirmed the city's exemption from ancestral land titling.

During an assembly at the Ibaloy Gardens in Burnham Park here on Dec. 20, the clans asked the IP communities to rally behind them against the decision which, they said, "expressly excludes the city of Baguio from the application of the general provisions of the Ipra (Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997, or Republic Act No. 8371).

The decision, issued by the court's Second Division on Sept. 25, nullified 28 certificates of ancestral land title (CALT) and their derivative titles benefiting three Ibaloy clans by citing Section 78 of the law that protects and enforces indigenous peoples' rights.

This section says that the Baguio ancestral lands are to be honored by the government provided these were landholdings recognized by the American colonial government, which designed and built the summer capital at the start of the 20th century.

'Native title' doctrine

Otherwise, proprietary land rights are to be governed by the city's 1909 charter, it says.

The Ibaloy clans have slammed the decision because

Baguio is the subject of the "native title" doctrine, which is the foundation for Ipra and the indigenous rights provisions of the 1987 Constitution.

Also called the "Cariño doctrine," it was the 1909 landmark ruling by the US Supreme Court, which legitimized the rights of Ibaloy herdsman Mateo Cariño over Baguio lands that became Camp John Hay.

Judith Maranes, one of the clan elders representing the Molintas family, said the court ruling affects all IP tribes because it "denies the rights of IP communities whose dwellings and existence are in reservations."

This is because some of the CALT voided by the court included land claims inside Wright Park, a forest reserve and a wooded property within the compound of the presidential Mansion.

Disenfranchise

A statement released by the clans shortly after the meeting described the decision as evidence that the government "continued to disenfranchise [IPs] of our claims," and had violated their right to equal protection by the state.

"We feel that the tribunal's decision ... has denied our very existence and has entirely undermined the significant provisions of Ipra," they said.

—REPORTS FROM VINCENT CABREZA AND VALERIE DAMIAN INQ



Christmas nosegay: Climate change is a travesty

First word

THE abject failure of two United Nations (UN) climate summits in 2019 — one in New York City in September and the other in Madrid this December — underscores the collapse of the UN's climate action agenda, and the certitude that in 10 years, planet Earth will still be around. There will be no climate apocalypse.

As my greeting to readers and all our people during this happiest day of the year, I have strung together two recent articles on the climate issue into a nosegay that declares in incontrovertible terms that the threat of climate change is indeed a travesty.

The articles in my nosegay are: 1) "Alex Epstein's clear thinking on climate and energy" by Rupert Darwall (Dec. 10, 2019); and 2) "A sensible US policy decision," (*Issues and Insights* editorial, Dec. 16, 2019).

Clear thinking on climate and energy

I reproduce below the persuasive article of Rupert Darwall:

"For many decades the human species has been at war with the planet," UN Secretary General António Guterres declared at the start of the Madrid climate conference last week. 'And the planet is fighting back.'

"Alex Epstein, the youthful pro-fossil-fuel campaigner and author of *The Moral Case for Fossil Fuels*, disagrees. What Guterres sees as humanity's war on nature, Epstein regards as our successful effort to protect ourselves from raw, brutal nature — from famine, disease, natural disasters, and shortened lifespans, an effort that has, in the modern age, provided human beings with a hitherto undreamt-of quality of life. And it is energy — overwhelmingly from coal, oil, and natural gas, powering our machines and technologies — that has given rise to this unprecedented human flourishing.

"Epstein's human-centered optimism sets him apart from both sides of the climate and energy debate. As he points out in a recent talk at the University of Texas at Austin, if there is a climate crisis, it's not showing up in the numbers that matter most. Climate-related deaths are way down from earlier periods in history. Several years during the



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1930s, for example, saw more than 3 million climate-related deaths — equivalent to 10 million if adjusted for today's population. By contrast, 2014 saw only 30,000 climate-related deaths, and 2018 just 5,625.

"A few years ago, when Sen. Barbara Boxer angrily questioned what Epstein was doing at a hearing of the Senate environment and public works committee, Epstein responded: 'To teach you how to think more clearly.' Clear thinking is vital, given current American public opinion on climate and energy. A November Pew Center survey finds 67 percent of respondents saying that the federal government is not doing enough to reduce the effects of global warming. Similarly, an AP-NORC (Associated Press-National Opinion Research) Center survey conducted last year found 71 percent of Americans saying climate change is a reality. Nearly half say that the science on climate change is more convincing than five years earlier.

"And yet, most are unwilling to make sacrifices remotely commensurate with the costs of decarbonizing America's hydrocarbon-fueled economy. Fifty-seven percent of respondents were willing to pay \$1 a month, but 68 percent would balk at paying as much as \$10 a month, or \$120 a year, to forestall this supposedly looming catastrophe.

"These results suggest that, for a large portion of Americans, belief in the dangers of man-made climate change could be tokenistic, a product of one-sided media coverage that cultivates and encourages a socially acceptable view of the issue. Another possible interpretation is that many Americans believe that the costs of climate change have nothing to do with their own personal choices — they will somehow be insulated from the higher taxes and energy prices that would follow from the aggressive environmental policies that they claim to support.

"If Americans believe that draconian efforts to fight climate change will impose no serious costs, they should ask Germans how that effort is going. When Germany embarked on its Energy Transition, the envi-

ronment minister, former Communist Jürgen Trittin, claimed that its monthly cost would amount to no more than a scoop of ice cream. Now German households face the highest electricity prices in the world, and Trittin's Christian Democrat successor reckons that the country's green energy revolution could cost 1 trillion euros (\$1.1 trillion). This is the path that climate activists would take America down.

"The case for energy realism could be lost even before it's made, though. According to Pew, 77 percent of Americans believe that alternative energy should be prioritized over fossil fuels. And for many, wind and solar energy appear to be 'free,' given their heavy public subsidies.

"This is where Epstein's work is so crucial. He has produced an excellent four-minute explainer on the false promise of wind and solar energy and why they can never replace fossil fuels. His views may prove shocking to younger Americans, particularly the college-educated, who are increasingly exposed to only one side of the debate — even on the internet, where Google returns search results that skew in one direction. Search for 'fracking,' for example — the technology of American energy independence — and out comes 'What is fracking and why is it bad?' followed by a BBC News story, 'What is fracking and why is it controversial?' And these are followed by hit jobs from Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth.

"Epstein engages with the idealism of students and climate activists, and he lays out a compelling challenge: if we want more people to enjoy long, healthy, opportunity-filled lives, the world needs more fossil fuels, not less. This is especially true for those living in the developing world. Even today, more than 1 billion people live without electricity — 634 million of them in Africa. They lack adequate light and proper refrigeration, essential for food hygiene; they must cook using wood and animal dung, with the attendant dangers to life and health of fire and indoor air pollution. Africa is energy-starved: excluding South Africa, approximately 1.1 billion people on the continent consume on average a pitiful 26½ lbs of coal per year, less than one-twentieth the per capita amount used in India's power stations. An empowered Africa would burn more coal and emit more carbon dioxide.

"Energy and climate, Epstein reminds us, are complex problems; solutions can never be cost-free. In his realistic and practical approach, and his rejection of utopian schemes, he echoes the warnings of Friedrich Hayek about man's fatal striving to control society, which the Austrian economist described in his 1974 Nobel Prize address, *The Pretence of Knowledge*. 'If man is not to do more harm than good in his efforts to improve the social order,' Hayek cautioned, 'he will have to learn that in this, as in all other fields where essential complexity of an organized kind prevails, he cannot acquire the full knowledge which would make mastery of the events possible.' These words resonate today as a warning against those claiming certitude about the earth's climate — and demanding control of America's energy policy."

'A sensible US policy decision'

And here is the *Issues and Insights* editorial:

"The United Nations' 25th Conference of the Parties climate summit ended Sunday with participants unable to agree on what are the media are calling 'key' emissions targets. Some participants are blaming America's absence for the failure. The more sober-minded, though, are grateful President Donald Trump has no time for the global warming nonsense.

"Even with the canonized Greta Thunberg threatening to put the world's national leaders 'against the wall' if they don't 'do their job and to protect our futures,' the principals could work out nothing more than, 'a partial agreement to ask countries to come up with more ambitious targets to cut greenhouse gas emissions in order to meet the terms of the 2015 Paris accord.'

"The US had no official representatives at the summit, though a delegation of congressional Democrats did travel to Madrid, where Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi assured the delegates, feckless poseurs whose greatest achievement has been to convince the world that they're important people doing important work, that 'we are still in.

"As a member of the legislative branch, she has no authority to conduct foreign affairs, a duty left exclusively to the executive branch. So like the rest of the summit, the Democrats'

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Christmas nosegay

appearance was all for show.

"Outside the madness demonstrated by a few true believers, efforts to 'fight global warming,' particularly at official levels, are a cover for other objectives. The climate alarmists hope to:

"- Replace free-market capitalism with a socialist or collectivist economic model that they control.

"- Show their moral superiority by claiming to be on the right side of

the argument (which is why empty-headed celebrities are always so eager to demonstrate their support for the climate crusade).

"- Punish success, whether it's national (produced by free-market economic systems), corporate (produced by hard work and savvy business decisions), or individual (produced by perseverance and character), and vilify and manage

Western consumption habits.

"- Save the reputations of researchers who have staked their academic lives on the man-made global warming narrative.

"- Control the behavior of others.

"- Feed their oversized egos by making sure they're seen associating with the 'right' people.

"Trump has promised to pull the US out of the Paris climate accord, which has attracted the wrath of the domestic and international left, but is a sensible policy decision. No nation should handicap its economy

and burden its citizens based on the sketchy conjecture that man is overheating his planet. Americans should be thankful they have a president who isn't concerned about his reputation among elitists who haven't changed their behavior since high school, yet are running, and ruining, our halls of government, foundational institutions, and once-respected academies."

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

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