

11 SEPTEMBER 2020, FRIDAY



DENR

NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Cimatu aims to increase the width of Manila Bay beach

Published September 10, 2020, 7:55 PM

by [Ellayn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu said beach nourishment in Manila Bay may help increase the width of the beaches as they are “very narrow.”



Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu
(RTVM / MANILA BULLETIN)

This was part of the DENR’s response to a letter sent by the office of Manila Mayor Isko Moreno last Sept. 7, seeking the agency’s clarification on the safety of dolomite to public health.

In his response dated Sept. 8, Cimatu pointed out that beach nourishment is the practice of adding sand or sediment to beaches to combat erosion and increase beach width.

Beach nourishment, he explained, should be applied in Manila Bay because “Manila Bay is not considered prone to coastal erosion as it is mostly protected by seawalls, but the beaches are very narrow.”

He cited that under the writ of continuing Mandamus issued by the Supreme Court on Dec. 18, 2016, a marching order was given to 13 government agencies, including the DENR to spearhead the clean up, rehabilitation, and preservation of Manila Bay “to make it more suitable for swimming, skin diving, and other forms of contact recreation and for protection of coastal communities.”

“After dredging and clean up of the Bay, it was agreed upon by members of the different agencies involved in the rehabilitation of Manila Bay that the initial beach nourishment in Manila Bay will be applied in segment between the area fronting the US Embassy and the Manila Yacht Club to mimic a sort of a ‘pocket beach,’ the northern portion protected by the compound of the US Embassy and the south side sheltered by the Mall of Asia compound,” the letter read.

Cimatu further explained that the “small nourishment project or in phase is rather preferred than a single large project covering the whole bay because aside from the bigger cost it will allow some beach and bay animals to survive and reproduce,” adding it “will cause lesser project footprint.”

He said the “white sand” is an added aesthetic value of the Bay and to mimic the beaches of Boracay and Panglao.

“White sand was considered to be added placing sandy manufactured dolomite to the beaches of Manila Bay, which can also increase the recreational value of the place while securing/replenishing the beach against shore erosion,” the DENR chief said.

Cimatu reiterated that the dolomite sand used for the Manila Bay project is “not known as health hazard.”

He also defended the use of dolomite sand or “ground sand” in the beach nourishment, saying “abundant supply of natural sand is not available around Manila Bay.”



“Sand bars and sand spits with natural sand are in remote locations and extraction in these areas are more disruptive to the environment. Besides, beach mining is illegal. An advantage of dumping ground sand is that it is free of silt and clay particles, and has denser particle packing than natural sand,” Cimatu said.

“It also offers higher flexural strength, better abrasion resistance, higher unit weight, and lower permeability,” he added.

He also said that dolomite can “neutralize acid in marine waters, which is essential in stream and even bay restoration projects and act as soil conditioner.”



DENR sees world inquiring about Manila Bay program should it gain success

Published September 10, 2020, 1:22 PM

by [Dennis Principe](#)

If you think that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources is being ambitious about its ongoing Manila Bay rehabilitation program, well, think again.

While the current task of the DENR is to bring back Manila Bay to its former glory, its embattled Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said he won't be surprised if the project gets worldwide attention should they end up successful.

"We're trying to clean up Manila Bay. Who knows, time will come, we might end up cleaning the whole world because people will ask us how did you do it in your country. 'Yan po ang ipinagmamalaki namin sa DENR (That's what we're proud of here at DENR)," said Antiporda. While Antiporda admits the Manila Bay is still way above the standard coliform level of 100 Most Probable Number (MPN), he proudly disclosed the DENR's achievement of lowering the coliform level which reached a high of 1.3 billion MPN.

"As of now lumalaro pa ho tayo sa 35,000 to 45,000 MPN (As of now we are between 35,000 to 45,000 MPN). But we started from as high as 1.3 billion MPN. Bumaba tayo into millions, then hundreds of thousands then ngayon thousands na lang. Looking forward na maibaba na natin ito to 200 (We went down into millions, then hundreds of thousands then now, only in thousands. Looking forward to bringing it down further to 200)," Antiporda said.

Initially, environmental groups and even the Department of Health raised concerns about the project of the DENR to fill a portion of the Baywalk with supposed "white sand" which the DENR said is not actually sand but dolomite boulders. The DoH, however, on Wednesday clarified their statement.

"Dolomite in its bulk state is not a known health hazard and dolomite in dust form, like any other dust particles, can lead to symptoms such as chest discomfort, shortness of breath, and coughing for this is our body's normal reaction to irritants," the DoH said in a statement.

Antiporda assures the type of dolomite they are using is not in dust form.

"What is there in Manila Bay is ano eh, finished product na wala nang alikabok (finished product without dust). This is a 5 mm dolomite stone, it is 100 times bigger than dolomite dust kaya imposible ho natin na masinghot 'yan (that's why it is impossible to sniff it)," clarified Antiporda.

Fisherfolk group Pamalakaya described the plan as "artificial rehabilitation focusing on aesthetic appearance rather than addressing the environmental degradation problems" of Manila Bay.

But Antiporda said the ongoing project is a result of a thorough evaluation conducted by concerned agencies within the Environment Department.

"Babalik tayo sa gabundok na basura diyan sa Manila Bay kung ganiyan po ang kaisipan na nagsasabing hindi po natin kaya. (We will end up going back to a waste-filled Manila Bay if we have that type of thinking that we cannot manage it). Ang Boracay po nung inumpisahan naming (when we started rehabilitating Boracay), people thought that the President (Duterte) and even our Secretary Roy Cimatu is crazy. But we did it," explained Antiporda.

Antiporda, meantime, is confident they won't put to shame presidential spokesperson Harry Roque's offer to be the first to swim once the rehabilitation program of Manila Bay is completed.



“Malamang po mag-unahan pa sila ni Secretary Cimatú na lulusong po sa dagat na iyan para patunayan na malinis na po siya (Chances are him (Roque) and Secretary Cimatú would race against each other towards those waters and prove how clean it is),” said Antiporda.

Antiporda also disclosed they are on track to complete the current Manila Bay “sanding” project in time for the commemoration of the International Coastal Cleanup Day on Sept. 19.



DENR assures engineering aid to prevent erosion in Manila Bay

By Marita Moaje September 10, 2020, 4:39 pm



MANILA – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Thursday assured they are applying engineering interventions in the Manila Bay beach nourishment project to protect and prevent erosion or washing out of the crushed dolomite boulders being laid in the area.

DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda gave the assurance during an interview aired over state-run PTV4, as he addressed critics of the project to provide their recommendation and help the government.

"We will do our best na talagang gawing effective lahat yan and at the same time i-reinforce pa yan (We will do our best to make it effective and even reinforce it)," he said.

Antiporda is referring to the geotextile tubes being installed in the area parallel to the sea wall of the Manila Bay, which will serve as a protective barrier to prevent erosion of the "white sand" or the crushed dolomite boulders.

He admitted, though, that whatever development applied or done in Manila Bay can be affected by calamities such as storm surges.

"We cannot overcome the power of nature when it comes to storm surge and it is exaggerated if they say that what about in case of a storm surge or a tidal wave? That is nature and we cannot claim that we can overcome those, the DENR is not like that," Antiporda said in a mix of English and Filipino.

On the possible health risks on the use of crushed dolomite in Manila Bay, Antiporda said the Department of Health (DOH) already made a clarificatory statement on this with Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire referring to dolomite dust.

"Dolomite in its bulk state is not a known health hazard and that dolomite in dust form, like any other dust particle, can lead to symptoms such as chest discomfort, shortness of breath, and coughing for this is our body's normal reaction to irritants," DOH said in a statement.

An earlier statement by the DENR stated that the dolomite material used in Baywalk is 2-5mm or 100 times bigger than dust, therefore does not get suspended in the air.

"In terms of the general safety of the public who will be enjoying the shoreline once permitted, DOH assures that no untoward incidents will occur as a result of this endeavor," the DOH added.

For those questioning the timing of the project, Antiporda said the project was already funded, bid out, and started since last year.

Had it not been for the Covid-19 pandemic, he said the project could have been finished last July.



Antiporda said they also heeded the call of President Rodrigo Duterte to return part of the DENR budget for the fight against the pandemic.

“Those who are saying that we are insensitive because the budget for this project could have been used to buy food, the DENR heeded the President’s call to return some funds to be used for the pandemic, and the DENR returned some PHP1.096 billion to the Department of Budget and Management and another PHP66 million to the national government,” he said.

Antiporda also called on the public to be circumspect in information being spread by critics who do not want to see development in the country. (PNA)



DENR orders new study on safety of dolomite rocks amid Manila Bay issue

Published September 10, 2020 4:09pm

By TINA PANGANIBAN-PEREZ, GMA News

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Thursday ordered the conduct of another study to determine if crushed dolomite rocks are safe or not.

Crushed dolomite rocks are being used for the Manila Bay nourishment project that the DENR hopes to complete by September 19, 2020.

“Para lang ma-satisfy natin ang taongbayan, immediately nagpakuha na tayo ng samplings doon. And siguro within one or two weeks, matapos po yan,” DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda told GMA News.

Antiporda also said that a study on dolomite rocks was also conducted last year.

The study, he said, showed that the dolomite rocks that the DENR is using do not contain harmful heavy metals as claimed by critics of the project, which include among them a toxicologist.

“We required the contractor already to give us the analysis of the source of the dolostones. And this result was made by a third party. Nothing to worry about ang taongbayan. Third party gumawa nito. And walang heavy metal content,” Antiporda said.

Environmental group Oceana, on the other hand, expressed willingness to collect dolomite samples from Manila Bay and have them tested.

“Hingi muna tayo ng request sa government kung i-allow tayong mag-gather ng samples. But test, Department of Health should do it,” Oceana Vice President Atty. Gloria Ramos said in a webinar on Thursday.

Dr. Rommy Quijano, a toxicologist, said dolomite rocks [may release heavy metals](#) such as mercury, arsenic, zinc, and cadmium, which can lead to diseases affecting the nervous and immune systems like lupus. —**KBK, GMA News**

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/755048/denr-orders-new-study-on-safety-of-dolomite-rocks-amid-manila-bay-issue/story/>



Lahat ng concern agencies, eksperto kinonsulta sa Manila Bay white sand project – Antiporda



September 10, 2020 @ 7:05 PM 10 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Lahat ng concern agencies maging iba't ibang eksperto ay kinonsulta ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sa Manila Bay white sand project para masiguro na ligtas ito at walang magiging problema.

Ito ang sagot ni DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda nang tanungin kung nakonsulta ba ang nasabing proyekto sa mga eksperto.

Giit ni Antiporda na may sariling eksperto ang DENR ukol sa mga usaping ito.

“Just like the non-government organizations. We have our own experts also in DENR even in the governments as a whole,” ani Antiporda.

Dagdag pa ng tagapagsalita ng DENR na mayroon silang sariling biologist at geologist na kinonsulta bago aprubahan ang Manila Bay white sand project.

“May Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) kami. May Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau. Meron din kaming Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB). Kumpleto naman,” aniya pa.

Sinegundahan din ito ni DENR-EMB Director William Cuñado at sinabing wala namang nakalulusot na proyekto na hindi binubusisi ng maayos.

“I understand that everything what we are doing undergoes consultation,” ani Cuñado.

Iginiit din ni Cuñado na mayroong bihasang mga tao ang DENR at sila ang mas nakaaalam sa pagsusuri ng nasabing proyekto.

“The DENR is the best people who can say that this is a good one or not a good one,” aniya.

“If all these people giving comments, if they care about the environment, we care more on the environment because that’s our work,” dagdag pa nito.

Samantala, ayon naman kay DENR-MGB Director Wilfredo Moncano na 10 government agencies kasama sa konsultasyon, pag-aaral, at pagpapalano sa white sand project sa Manila Bay.



Kasama umano rito ang:

- Metropolitan Manila Development Authority
- Department of Environment and Natural Resources
- Department of Education
- Department of Health
- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Public Works and Highways
- Local Water Utilities Administration
- Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System
- Philippine Ports Authority
- Department of Budget and Management
- Philippine Coast Guard
- Philippine National Police Maritime Group
- Department of the Interior and Local Government



Despite opposition from various groups, the DENR's project to cover the Manila Bay beachfront with crushed dolomite continues on Tuesday, Sept. 8, 2020. Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said the project covers three hectares.

Tina Panganiban-Perez

DENR officials say all concerned agencies, experts consulted for Manila Bay white sand project

Published September 10, 2020 5:04pm

By JOVILAND RITA, GMA News

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) consulted all concerned agencies and experts before starting the white sand project at the Manila Bay, its officials said on Thursday.

Asked if the DENR sought the opinion of experts on health, tourism, and historic heritage protection for the project, Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said that they have their own experts.

“Just like the non-government organizations. We have our own experts also in DENR even in the governments as a whole,” Antiporda said.

He told GMA News Online that the DENR has marine biologists and geologists whom they consulted before approving to cover the Manila Bay shoreline with artificial white sand, which is dolomite.

“May Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) kami. May Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau. Meron din kaming Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB). Kumpleto naman,” he said.

DENR-EMB Director William Cuñado told GMA News Online that all of the projects of the department undergo consultation.

“I understand that everything what we are doing undergoes consultation,” Cuñado said. The DENR is planning to fill 500 meters of the Baywalk on Roxas Boulevard with white sand under the Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program.



Environmentalists, fisherfolk groups, and experts earlier [criticized the DENR's project](#), calling it an artificial rehabilitation, waste of money, and hazardous to health.

However, Cuñado said that DENR has the best people to assess the project. He noted that the DENR already tapped a third party company to analyze the composition of the dolomites for Manila Bay.

“The DENR is the best people who can say that this is a good one or not a good one,” he said.

“If all these people giving comments, if they care about the environment, we care more on the environment because that’s our work,” he added.

DENR-MGB Director Wilfredo Moncano told GMA News Online that more than 10 government agencies are involved in discussing, preparing, and studying projects for the rehabilitation of the Manila Bay.

“What I know is that the Inter-Agency were all members of the Mandamus Agencies or those ordered by the Supreme Court to clean Manila Bay,” Moncano said.

“These groups represented by their personnel were the ones who discussed, prepared, and did the study,” he added.

Moncano said that the MGB is also part of the Inter-Agency Committee for the Rehabilitation of Manila Bay.

A writ of continuing Mandamus was issued by the Supreme Court on December 18, 2008 directing the following government agencies to spearhead the rehabilitation, clean-up, and eventual preservation of Manila Bay:

- Metropolitan Manila Development Authority
- Department of Environment and Natural Resources
- Department of Education
- Department of Health
- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Public Works and Highways
- Local Water Utilities Administration
- Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System
- Philippine Ports Authority
- Department of Budget and Management
- Philippine Coast Guard
- Philippine National Police Maritime Group
- Department of the Interior and Local Government

— **BM, GMA News**

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/755062/denr-officials-says-all-concerned-agencies-experts-consulted-for-manila-bay-white-sand-project/story/>



DENR welcomes Cebu government's action

Published 4 hours ago on September 11, 2020 03:00 AM

By [Francis Wakefield](#)



The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Thursday welcomed the cease-and-desist order issued by the Cebu provincial government against two mining firms for alleged unauthorized mineral extraction.

The two firms were responsible in providing white sands under Manila Bay "White Sand" Beach Nourishment Project.

DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said the order will allow Cebu provincial officials to also revisit their policy on allowing local business and protecting legitimate business interest in their province.

It will also give the city the chance to review the 40-year existence of the dolomite industry of Alcoy town, according to Antiporda.

The DENR official said the town has a good track record of environmental compliance and provided not only Cebu, but also other nearby provinces with this resource.

The cease-and-desist order issued by Cebu Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia prevents Dolomite Mining Corp. and the Philippine Mining Service Corp. in Alcoy town, of further extracting, processing, selling and transporting dolomite, associated mineral deposits, and other quarry resources.

The order also stated that the extraction of dolomite minerals from Alcoy violate the Cebuano's constitutional right to a balanced and healthful ecology.



DENR exec hints getting back at Cebu governor

By Jonathan L. Mayuga

September 9, 2020

The Manila Bay Interagency Task Force will look for other sources of dolomite, or even white sand, from other areas now that the Cebu Provincial Government has issued a cease-and-desist order to mining companies commissioned to deliver the white sand-like backfilling materials for the P389-million beach “nourishment” project in Manila Bay.

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units (LGUs) Concerns Benny D. Antiporda said they welcome Cebu Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia’s decision but was quick to add that the governor may have to do some explaining about the business problems in Cebu, including mining.

“It’s Cebu’s problem, not ours. We will look for other sources of dolomite, or white sand. There’s a lot of other sources from where we can get it,” Antiporda said. He said the DENR may even look for “white sand” in mouths of rivers if needed just to proceed with the project.

The P389-million contract for the project that covers the extraction of garbage and other sediments and their disposal started last year.

The overlaying of the controversial white sand, which turned out to be crushed dolomite, is the next phase along with the construction of sand trap and breakwater to prevent beach erosion and keep the sand intact.

Various cause-oriented groups have called on the Duterte administration to put a stop to the project pending social, environmental, and health studies, especially at a time when the country is facing a crisis posed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

But Antiporda said neither Garcia’s cease-and-desist order nor the barrage of criticisms by detractors of President Duterte will not stop the project, which he defended as above board and free of any irregularity.

“There will be some delays, of course, but who will be shamed by this? Cebu,” he said, adding that the governor may have some explanation to do to President Duterte. Garcia’s order, the DENR official said now opens the door for the DENR to look into the province’s environmental problems.

Antiporda maintains that there’s no anomaly or irregularity involved in the project. “There’s no overpricing and there’s no corruption in this project, I assure you,” Antiporda said, defending the Department of Public Works and Highways which is the main agency in charge of the engineering intervention.

So far, he said 120 meters of the beach’s shoreline has been covered. This means that around 380 meters are still left to complete the 500-meter target.

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/09/09/denr-exec-hints-getting-back-at-cebu-governor/>



House assures DENR of support

posted September 11, 2020 at 02:10 am by **Maricel Cruz and Willie Casas**

Several ranking lawmakers have expressed House support to the P384-million Manila Bay project and that they see no valid objection to it, with one of them asserting that the use of dolomite to beautify the shoreline could even help clean the bay waters.



SAND AND SUNSET. Workers spread white sand (dolomite) on a stretch of the Manila Bay shoreline as part of the rehabilitation project of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources aimed at enhancing the view of the world-famous Manila sunset. **Norman Cruz**

But Cavite Rep. Elpidio Barzaga, chairman of the House committee on natural resources on Thursday said he would press for an investigation if the issue were referred to his committee.

“As long as there is an issue, we shall act on it. The investigation will provide the oppositors and the DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources) to present their sides as part of due process,” Barzaga said.

Anakalusugan party-list Rep. Mike Defensor, a former environment secretary and now chairman of the public accounts committee, also vowed House support for the Manila Bay project which sought to transform the shoreline into a white-sand beach using Cebu province’s crushed dolomite rocks.

Deputy Speaker and Camarines Sur Rep. LRay Villafuerte said dolomite could even help clean Manila Bay’s waters as proven by certain golf courses.

“I think we should give the secretary a chance,” Villafuerte said referring to DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu.

Earlier, Barzaga, Defensor and Villafuerte supported DENR’s project during the House committee on appropriations deliberations Tuesday on the proposed budget of the department under the P4.506 trillion National Expenditure Program (NEP) of the Duterte administration for 2021.

The Makabayan Bloc in the House filed Resolution 1194 directing the chamber to look into “the suitability and sustainability to the Manila Bay Reclamation Program” of the shoreline filling project. Those who opposed the project – lawmakers and environmental groups alike – complained about its cost and timing as well as raised health concerns.

Cimatu defended before a House budget briefing the use of dolomite, stressing that the project underwent a technical study.

“We are really very sure of the safety of the use of dolomite in that area,” Cimatu said, rejecting warnings from the Department of Health.



“Dolomite in its natural state is not a known health hazard,” Cimatu said, recalling also that the Manila Bay’s beautification project was an offshoot of the mandamus issued by the Supreme Court for the government to clean up the area.

Cimatu’s statement drew the backing of Manila Mayor Isko Moreno who said that the dolomite being spread in the Manila Bay project was not harmful.

Workers started spreading white sand along a portion of the baywalk on Sept. 3, 2020 as part of the Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program.

Domagoso said he got the information from the Mines and Geosciences Bureau following complaints from environmental groups warning of the alleged dangers of the white sand project by the DENR.

The Department of Health also clarified Wednesday that the dolomite used in the baywalk beautification project was “100 times bigger than dust” and would not pose danger to the “general safety of the public.”

“How can I act on something that is not illegal, that is not harmful?” Domagoso told an online news forum.

Geologist Mahar Lagmay raised the warning that the artificial white sand could also be washed away during typhoons or high tide.

Domagoso rejected that claim and said he was “very thankful” for the rehabilitation of the capital’s bay, having been assured by the DENR that “engineering works” were in place to keep the sand in place.

But if the sand is washed away, the mayor said he was willing to spend money to replenish it “10 years, 5 years from now... but not in this pandemic.”

Domagoso said he would not spend a single cent for the project as he would rather use the city’s funds for vaccines, equipment and “anything that will help a patient who got infected with coronavirus.”

Domagoso urged other local governments to heed a Supreme Court mandamus to rehabilitate the bay.

The P384-million Manila Bay rehabilitation started 2 years ago and funds cannot be diverted for the pandemic, the DENR earlier said.

At least three senators asked the agency to halt the white sand project over reports that it could be harmful to health.

Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda welcomed criticisms of the Manila Bay beautification project, but pointed out that the DENR would pursue the program.



Solons Back White Sand Project

Thursday, September 10, 2020 Ryan Ponce Pacpaco



Environment Sec. Roy Cimatu

THE chairman of the House committee on natural resources on Thursday said he sees no valid objection to the transformation of the Manila Bay shoreline into a white-sand beach using Cebu province's crushed dolomite rocks.



Cavite Rep. Elpidio "Pidi" Barzaga Jr.

"I'm fully convinced that there is no valid objection as far as this project is concerned." Cavite Rep. Elpidio "Pidi" Barzaga Jr., a CPA-lawyer by profession and panel chairman, said on the beach enhancement project, which also aims to help improve flood control and prevent soil erosion in the Baywalk area of Manila Bay. Anakalusugan party-list Rep. Mike Defensor, a former secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), said the beautification project of Manila Bay shoreline has the support of the House of Representatives.

"Hindi ko alam kung saan nanggagaling kung may oposisyon man. Pero dito sa Kongreso, may suporta (itong Manila Bay beautification), umasa kayo sa suporta namin," Defensor, chairman of the House committee on public accounts, said.

Deputy Speaker and Camarines Sur Rep. LRay Villafuerte said dolomite will even help clean Manila Bay's waters.



Anakalusugan party-list Rep. Mike Defensor



“Nakakalinis po siya ng tubig, ginagamit sa aquarium ‘yan. Ginagamit po ito sa sand area sa golf. Safe po iyan. Hindi first time na gagawin ‘yun ng DENR. Excited na ako pumunta sa Manila Bay. Ang huling punta ko was 40 years ago.” Villafuerte said. “I think we should give the secretary a chance.” Barzaga, Defensor and Villafuerte supported DENR’s project during the House committee on appropriations deliberations last Tuesday on the proposed budget of the department under the proposed P4.506 trillion National Expenditure Program (NEP) of the Duterte administration for 2021.



Deputy Speaker and Camarines Sur Rep. LRay Villafuerte

Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda welcomed criticisms on the Manila Bay beautification project, but assured that the DENR will continue with the implementation of the program.

“Well, first of all that is their prerogative. We welcome the criticism and all the actions they will do. But again one thing we can tell them is tuloy-tuloy po ang trabaho namin base na rin sa kautusan ng ating Korte Suprema na ipagpatuloy po ang inuutos na mandamus na linisin po ‘yang Manila Bay,” said Antiporda.

“And at the same time, tuloy rin po ‘yung pagpapaganda namin d’yan dahil nakikita naman po natin iilan lang po ang nagsasalita na karamihan po ay hindi po alam ang buong buod ng kanilang sinasabi, especially ‘yung usapin sa health hazard, ecosystem, sa historical heritage,” Antiporda said.



Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda

Environment Sec. Roy Cimatu defended before a House budget briefing the use of dolomite, stressing it is not a health hazard and the project underwent a technical study.

“We are really very sure of the safety of the use of dolomite in that area,” Cimatu stressed during the budget briefing following previous warnings from the Department of Health (DoH) regarding its possible health hazards.

“Dolomite in its natural state is not a known health hazard,” Cimuta said, recalling also that the Manila Bay’s beautification project was an offshoot of the mandamus issued by the Supreme Court (SC) for the government to cleanup the area.

He said there was no any complaint received from several private establishments and resorts using dolomite.

Source: <https://journal.com.ph/news/nation/solons-back-white-sand-project/>



Isko Moreno sees no reason to stop Manila Bay white sand makeover

By: [Consuelo Marquez](#) - Reporter / [@ConsINO](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 09:46 AM September 10, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — Manila Mayor Isko Moreno on Thursday said he sees no reason to stop the controversial Manila Bay white sand project, saying there should be a valid reason to stop it which he said, is part of the bay's rehabilitation process.

“What will be the major reason to stop? And what are we going to gain when we stop? It is long overdue. Let us be fair to environmentalists who fought for this for 20 years.

Nakipaglaban ang environmentalists na linisin ang Manila Bay and fortunately for them, Supreme Court decided on the matter,” Moreno said over ABS-CBN News Channel when sought for his reaction on calls to stop the Manila Bay white beach project.

“There must be a valid reason to stop this project. Let us go back to its principle, this is a rehabilitation of the entire Manila Bay and you are just talking only of Manila alone. Manila Bay is composed of so many provinces and municipalities and cities. This is just the beginning,” he added.

Last week, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) defended the dumping of crushed dolomite on Manila Bay's shoreline, saying it would discourage littering. The white sand project is part of the P389 million beach enhancement for the bay.

Moreno also reiterated that the Department of Health (DOH) has already issued a clarification that dolomite sand is safe.

“Let me confront and let's be straightforward. Ang dolomite makapaminsala? Ang sabi hindi. Sino may sabi? Hindi ako, hindi DENR, DOH ang may sabi,” he said.

(Let me confront and let's be straightforward. Is dolomite dangerous? They said no. Who said that? Not me, not DENR, DOH said that.)

The DOH on Wednesday clarified that only dolomite dust can cause health risks when inhaled. Environment chief Roy Cimatu also assured that the crushed dolomite used in the project is not hazardous, noting that only dolomite dust generated during crushing and screening pose risk to the public's health.

/MUF



Mayor Isko maglalaan ng pondo para sa pagpapaganda ng Manila Bay



September 10, 2020 @ 2:07 PM 16 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Handa ang lokal na pamahalaang lungsod ng Maynila na maglaan ng pondo para sa pagpapaganda sa dalampasigan ng Manila Bay na sakop ng siyudad sakaling kailanganin ito.

Ito ang sinabi ni Manila Mayor Isko Moreno Domagoso makaraang kwestiyunin ng ilang “environmental groups” na tatangayin lamang ng alon mula sa Manila Bay ang mga inilatag na “artificial white sand” ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sa dalampasigan nito bilang bahagi ng isinasagawang rehabilitasyon ng nasabing look.

Positibo naman ang pananaw ng Alkalde dahil naniniwala ito na pinag-aralang mabuti ng mga propesyunal tulad ng mga “engineer” ang isinagawang paglalalatag ng white sand sa Manila Bay upang mapanatili ito at hindi basta-basta matatangay ng alon.

Sakali naman na mabawasan ang mga inilatag na white sand sa Manila Bay dahil sa mga hindi inaasahang pangyayari ay handa namang tumulong ang lokal na pamahalaan na maglaan ng panggastos dito upang mapanatili ang ganda at kaayusan na inaasahang magiging atraksyon sa publiko partikular na sa mga turista.

Nilinaw naman ni Domagoso na handang gumastos ang lokal na pamahalaang hinggil sa pagpapaganda ng baywalk sa Manila Bay ngunit hindi ngayong panahon ng pandemya dulot ng COVID-19 dahil hindi aniya ito prayoridad sa ngayon.

“But if the sand is washed away, I’m willing to spend money to replenish it 10 years, 5 years from now, but not in this pandemic. I will continue to spend every single cent that is available for this pandemic,” ani Domagoso.

“This is just the beginning. That’s why we’re very grateful. Alam naman natin na napakadumi na ng tubig ng Manila Bay,” dagdag pa ng alkalde.

Kaugnay nito, matatandaan na umabot na sa halos 4,000 tonelada ng mga basura ang nahakot ng lokal na pamahalaang lungsod ng Maynila sa pamamagitan ng Department of Public Services (DPS) sa paligid ng Manila Bay dahil sa tuloy-tuloy nilang clearing operation dito kabilang na sa itinuturing na Baseco beach at mga estero sa lungsod. **JAY Reyes**

Source: <https://www.remate.ph/mayor-isko-maglalaan-ng-pondo-para-sa-pagpapaganda-ng-manila-bay/>



Dolomite sand, hindi ilegal at hindi mapanganib – Yorme

By [Danilo Garcia](#) (Pilipino Star Ngayon) - September 11, 2020 - 12:00am



Ipinaliwanag ng ahensya na dahil sa mas malaki ng 100 beses sa alikabok, hindi nasususpende sa ere ang dolomite sand na itinatambak sa Manila Bay habang nagpapatupad naman umano ng mga 'health and safety standards' ang mga manggagawa.

The STAR/Miguel de Guzman

MANILA, Philippines — Matapos makakuha ng klaripikasyon mula sa Department of the Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) at Department of Health (DOH), sinabi ni Manila City Mayor Isko Moreno na hindi siya maaaring umaksyon laban sa isang proyekto na hindi naman ilegal at hindi mapanganib sa kalusugan ng publiko.

"How can I act on something that is not illegal, that is not harmful?" ayon kay Moreno.

Ito ay makaraan na makumpirma ng alkalde buhat sa Mines and Geosciences Bureau ng DENR na mas malaki ng 100 beses ang dolomites sand sa alikabok.

Nagpalabas din ang DOH ng pahayag na nagsasabi na hindi naman makasasama sa kalusugan ang dolomite sand kabaligtaran ng una nilang nabanggit.

Ipinaliwanag ng ahensya na dahil sa mas malaki ng 100 beses sa alikabok, hindi nasususpende sa ere ang dolomite sand na itinatambak sa Manila Bay habang nagpapatupad naman umano ng mga 'health and safety standards' ang mga manggagawa.

"Therefore, in terms of the general safety of the public, who will be enjoying the shoreline once permitted, DOH assures that no untoward incidents will occur as a result of this endeavour," pagtitiyak pa ng DOH.

Sa komento ng geologist na si Mahar Lagmay na aanurin lang ng tubig ang mga buhangin lalo na kung may bagyo, sinabi ni Moreno na kaila-ngan munang mapatunayan ito.

"Kung may kapabayaan talaga, halimbawa inanod, eh di magmumukha silang katawa-tawa," punto pa ng alkalde.



Isko 'di priority budget sa Manila Bay makeover

By Abante Tonite — Last updated Sep 10, 2020

NEWS



Sa kabila ng pasasalamat ni Manila Mayor Isko Moreno sa rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay, tiniyak nito na hindi siya gagastos ng pondo para sa white sand make-over nito.

Hindi umano prayoridad ng alkalde ang nasabing proyekto dahil sa pandemic. Ang pera umano ng lungsod ay gagastusin niya sa pagbili ng gamot at equipment para sa mga pasyente ng COVID-19.

Gayunman, sinabi ni Moreno na magandang atraksiyon para sa mga investor ang rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay maaaring magtayo ng hotel at restaurant sa lugar. (Juliet de Loza-Cudia)



'Not my priority': Isko Moreno refuses to use funds for Manila Bay makeover

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Sep 10 2020 10:07 AM | Updated as of Sep 10 2020 10:19 AM



Workers spread white sand along a portion of the Baywalk in Manila Bay on Sept. 3, 2020 as part of the Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program by the DENR. The white sand, which comes from Cebu, will be spread from the banks of the bay near the US Embassy to the Yacht Club. *Jonathan Cellona, ABS-CBN News/File*

MANILA — Manila Mayor Isko Moreno said Thursday that while he was “very thankful” for the rehabilitation of the capital’s bay, he would not shell out money for its white sand makeover.

Some environmental groups and scientists earlier said waves could wash away the artificial white sand dumped in Manila Bay and that authorities would have to shell out money to replenish the crushed dolomite there.

Moreno said the environment department told him that “engineering works” were in place to keep the sand in place.

But if the sand is washed away, the mayor said he was willing to spend money to replenish it “10 years, 5 years from now... but not in this pandemic.”

Moreno said he would use the city’s funds for drugs, equipment and “anything that will help a patient who got infected with coronavirus.”

“I will continue to spend every single cent that is available for this pandemic,” Moreno told ANC. “It (white sand) is not my priority.”

The revamped beach, he said, could be a “good attraction” that would lure tourists and investors to hotels and restaurants around the bay.

“This is just the beginning. That’s why we’re very grateful,” Moreno said. “Alam naman natin na napakadumi na ng tubig ng Manila Bay.”

Manila personnel collect daily trash from the area, some of which are waste from fish pens in neighboring cities and provinces, he said. Moreno urged other local governments to heed a Supreme Court mandamus to rehabilitate the bay.

The P389-million Manila Bay rehabilitation started 2 years ago and [funds cannot be diverted](#) for the pandemic, the environment agency earlier said.

At least 3 senators have asked the agency to [halt the white sand project](#) over reports that it could be harmful to health.

Stopping the project requires a “valid reason,” said Moreno, who noted a health department statement that dolomite, in its “bulk state,” was not a known health hazard.

“Kung iyan ay makapaminsala at mapapatunayan ng mga siyentipiko, ipapaaresto ko sila lahat,” he added.



“These lawmakers, I understand their feelings, but remember, they’re part also of the approval of the 2020 budget. It was presented to them,” the mayor said.

“Kung iyan ay makapaminsala at mapapatunayan ng mga siyentipiko, ipapaaresto ko sila lahat,” he added. (If that is harmful and can be proven by authorities, I’ll have those responsible arrested.)



‘What if it is black sand?’ Moreno asks amid flak on Manila Bay ‘white beach’ project

By: [Consuelo Marquez](#) - Reporter / [@ConsINO](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 10:58 AM September 10, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — “What if it is black sand?”

Manila Mayor Isko Moreno raised the question on Thursday as critics, including lawmakers, slammed the government’s project to transform Manila Bay into a “white beach.”

The mayor then reminded lawmakers that they approved of the 2020 budget and had looked into the funds to be used by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) for Manila Bay’s white sand makeover.

“So these lawmakers, I understand their feelings. But remember, they are part of the approval of the 2020 budget last year and it was presented to them one way or another,” Moreno said over ABS-CBN News Channel, reacting on lawmakers’ call to temporarily stop the white sand project in the bay.

“Third, timeliness. Eh two years ago pa ito e. Hindi ito nasimulan nang isang linggo, isang buwan o nung January, this is two years ago, so it didn’t happen overnight. It’s just that your attention or some other individuals’ attention was called when it is white sand. But what if it is black sand?” Moreno added.

(Third, timeliness. This happened two years ago. This did not start for a week or one month or last January this year, this is two years ago so it didn’t happen overnight. It’s just that your attention and some other individuals’ attention were called when it is white sand. But what if it is black sand?)

Manila Bay’s “white sand,” which is crushed dolomite, is part of the 2019 Manila Bay Rehabilitation program aimed at curbing pollution in the bay.

Three senators previously asked the DENR to stop the white beach project after the Department of Health (DOH) said dolomite dust could cause respiratory illnesses when inhaled.

The DOH however later clarified that dolomite, in bulk state, is not a known health hazard.
/MUF

Source: https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1333648/what-if-it-is-black-sand-moreno-asks-amid-criticisms-on-manila-bay-white-sand-project-2?utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Facebook&fbclid=IwAR3sU8Qq9L2cAd_Qi81sG8omA5g3bLzTXZVVfhgII-y-ol6HvpYLzicyjIQ#Echobox=1599707311



MANILA BAY WHITE SAND AT ANG MGA INGGITERO



September 11, 2020 @ 12:27 AM 6 hours ago

HAY, ang tao nga naman, hindi malaman kung saan dapat lumugar ang gobyerno dahil sa kaunting bagay na 'di naaayon sa kanilang panlasa, agad silang nakaangil.

Kaya naman, sa halip na umpisahan na ang mga balaking proyekto, patuloy itong nababalam dahil sa walang patumanggang pagkontra ng mga oposisyon sa gawain ng gobyerno.

Kabilang sa mga tumutuligsa sa mga plano ng gobyerno ang grupo ng makakaliwa, dilawan at cause-oriented, public and private groups na walang ginagawa kundi bantayan ang bawat kilos ng ating gobyerno.

Tulad na lang itong proyekto ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources na 'white sand' sa Manila Bay, kung tutuusin first time sa history ng Pilipinas na magkakaroon ng isang mini-beach na style-Boracay Island na nasa sentro pa ng Kalakhang Maynila, (hindi po ba ang ganda?).

Pero ang masakit po rito, kaliwat-kanan ang pambabatikos ng iba't ibang grupo na kesyo mapanganib ang inilagay na 'white sand' sa baybayin ng Manila Bay.

E, loko pala kayo... anong akala ninyo sa mga taga-DENR, katulad ninyong bobo na pasok nang pasok nang hindi muna pinag-aaralan kung uubra ba o hindi ang inyong gagawing proyekto?

Siyempre, bago sinimulan ng DENR ang proyektong 'yan naturalmente na daraan 'yan sa masusing pag-aaral lalo pa't isa itong karagatan na anytime pag-nagkamali ka ay pwedeng mag-collapse ang itinayo at inilagay na materyales.

Ang gusto ko lang malaman sa mga oportunistang ito, kung ilang beses bang dapat na ipaliwanag nina DENR Sec.Roy Cimatu at DENR Usec. Benny Antiporda na ang nilagay na "white sand" sa Manila Bay ay hindi mapanganib sa mga taong magbabalak mamasyal sa mini at Boracay Island-style beach sa Manila Bay.

E, anak ng kulugo, ayaw yata ng mga taong ito na makita na kahit papaano ay napaganda ng DENR ang kahabaan ng Roxas Boulevard na minsan nang ginawang beerhouse sa panahon ni ex-Manila Mayor Lito Atienza.



Kung ang pinagbabatayan naman ng mga oportunistang ito na mapanganib ang paglagay ng white sand sa pampang ng Manila Bay, sa palagay ba nila na ilalagay lang nang basta-basta ito ng DENR nang hindi pinag-aaralan kung makasasama o makabubuti ba ang kanilang proyekto para sa mamamayang Filipino?

Pakisagot lang mga oportunistang, sumagooottttt kayooooo...

Ang isang dahilan kaya bumabagal at nauudlot ang pagkilos ng ating gobyerno sa mga proyekto ay dahil na rin sa mga taong pakilamero na hindi yata mabubuhay sa mundong ibabaw kung hindi naka-pambabatikos sa gobyerno.

Hindi ba kayo nasisiyahan sa mga nakikita ninyong pag-unlad sa ating bansa?

Ika nga ni Usec. Antiporda, 'yung mahihirap nating mga kababayan na hindi maka-afford na makapunta sa Boracay Island dahil sa kahirapan, may tsansa na silang makaranas ng white beach dahil nariyan ang mini-Boracay sa Manila Bay.

oOo

Anomang puna o reklamo i-text sa 09189274764, 09266719269 o i-email sa juandesabog@yahoo.com o juandesabog48@gmail.com.



DENR needs to coordinate with Cebu gov't: Palace

By Azer Parrocha **September 10, 2020, 3:56 pm**



BEACH NOURISHMENT. An excavator spread dolomites along the shoreline of the Manila Bay as part of the “beach nourishment” project on Sept. 6, 2020. Malacañang on Thursday (Sept. 10, 2020) said it respects the decision of the Cebu provincial government ordering two mining companies to stop supplying dolomites for the project due to non-consultation with the local government units. (PNA photo by Avito C. Dalan)

MANILA – Malacañang on Thursday said it respects the decision of the Cebu provincial government to order two mining companies to stop supplying dolomite sands being used for the “beach nourishment” project at a portion of Manila Bay’s shoreline.

Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque made this remark after Cebu Gov. Gwen Garcia issued a cease and desist order against two mining companies for transporting dolomites saying the provincial government of Cebu and municipality of Alcoy were “not informed “of the beautification project in Manila Bay.

Roque said the solution to the issue is for the provincial government of Cebu and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to “open their lines of communication”.

“*Ang DENR kinakailangan makipag-ugnayan sa lokal pamahalaan ng Cebu (The DENR needs to coordinate with the provincial government of Cebu),”* he said in a virtual presser.

According to Roque, it is not the first time that the Cebu provincial government and DENR will be working together since they also did so when Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu was assigned to oversee the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) response in Cebu following the spike in the number of infections there.

“*Kung meron po silang mga concerns makipag-ugnayan lang kay Secretary Cimatu dahil hindi naman po iba na si Secretary Cimatu. Noong nagkaproblema ang siyudad ng Cebu, si Secretary Cimatu naman ang tumulong. Tingin ko po, buksan lang ang lines ng communication (If they have concerns, they should just coordinate with Secretary Cimatu because he’s not a stranger to them. When Cebu had a problem with Covid-19 cases, Secretary Cimatu was assigned to help them. All they need to do is open their lines of communication),”* he said.

He emphasized that the cease and desist order issued by the Cebu provincial government is a “separate issue” from questions over the legality of the Manila Bay beautification project.

“*Yung pagtigil po ng supply ay hiwalay po sa issue na ang legality ng ginagawa ng DENR (The decision to suspend the supply is separate from the legality what DENR is doing now),”* he said.

Roque also expressed confidence that the DENR will comply with the local government code which requires consultation with local government and public before dolomites are extracted.

“*Sa tingin ko po, DENR naman ang project proponent diyan at wala nang iba, lahat po ng probisyon ng batas ay nasunod pero susunod din sila sa sinasabi ng local government code na kinakailangan yung patuloy na pagsupply ng dolomite ay merong pagpayag ng lokal na pamahalaan (I think that the DENR, as the project proponent, was able to follow the provisions of the law but they will also follow the local government code that the continued supply of dolomites must be approved by the local government first),”* he said.



On Tuesday, Garcia, through Executive Order (EO) No. 25, ordered the Dolomite Mining Corporation (DMC) and the Philippine Mining Services Corporation to "immediately cease and desist from further extracting, processing, selling and transporting of dolomite, associated mineral deposits, and other quarry resources".

The EO said both the provincial government of Cebu and the municipality of Alcoy were not informed of the beautification project in Manila and that there was also no public consultation prior to the issuance of ore transport permits (OTP) by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) in Central Visayas.

It also said there was no Environmental Impact Study performed on the use of dolomite in the Manila Bay white sand project.

The Manila Bay white sand project was met with criticism from environmental groups and senators who urged to suspend the project for violation of several laws.

Malacañang, however, said the project will prevent soil erosion and flooding. (PNA)



DENR, Cebu provincial gov't should thresh out dolomite supply issue' — Roque

Published September 10, 2020, 4:51 PM

by [Genalyn Kabiling](#)

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the provincial government of Cebu should keep their communication lines open in the wake of the controversial dolomite supply for Manila Bay's rehabilitation project, Malacañang said Thursday.

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque has proposed that the two entities to discuss any concerns and issues after Cebu halted the extraction and transport of dolomites used for the beach enhancement of the Manila Bay.

The DENR earlier started to cover the Manila Bay shoreline with crushed dolomite rocks from Cebu as part of its attempt to beautify the area. Some groups have criticized the government for pursuing the "white sand" project instead of addressing the environmental problems of the bay.

"So ang solusyon po dito, ang DENR kinakailangan pong makipag-ugnayan sa lokal na pamahalaan ng Cebu. At ang pakikipag-usap naman po ng DENR sa Cebu, ganundin po, kung mayroon po silang mga concerns, makipag-ugnayan lang kay (Environment) Secretary (Roy) Cimatu dahil hindi namang ibang tao na si Secretary Cimatu. Noong nagkaproblema po ang siyudad ng Cebu, si Secretary Cimatu din naman po ang tumulong (The solution is the DENR should coordinate with the local government of Cebu. If Cebu has concerns, they can coordinate with Secretary Cimatu because he is not a stranger. When Cebu had a problem, it was Sectary Cimatu who helped)," Roque said during a televised press briefing.

"Tingin ko po, buksan lang ang lines of communication (I think, they should open the lines of communication)," he said.

Roque said the Palace respects the decision of Cebu to stop dolomite mining. He recognized that the Supreme Court has previously ruled that the consent of local government units must be obtained for any project and activity that may impact the environment in their area.

If Cebu is opposed to the dolomite mining, Roque acknowledged that it is unlikely the DENR will get more supply of the rocks from Cebu.

Roque however said Cebu's decision against dolomite mining was separate from the issue of legality related to DENR's Manila Bay rehabilitation project,

He expressed confidence that DENR, as proponent of the Manila Bay project, has complied with the provisions of the law. He said the agency is also expected to follow the rules that dolomite supply must have the approval of the concerned local government unit.

The Palace earlier backed the Manila Bay rehabilitation project, saying it will not only help improve its beach appearance but also address the problems of soil erosion and flooding in the area.

On Tuesday, Cebu Governor Gwendolyn Garcia issued an order directing two mining companies to stop extracting, processing, selling and transporting dolomite and other quarry resources. The move aims to prevent more damage to the environment in the municipality of Alcoy.

Garcia claimed that they were not informed about the beautification project in Manila Bay. No public consultation was supposedly conducted for the transport of the dolomite rocks from Cebu to Manila.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/09/10/denr-cebu-provincial-govt-should-thresh-out-dolomite-supply-issue-roque/>



More crushed dolomite rocks from Cebu to be shipped to Manila Bay shores

By: [Dale G. Israel](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Inquirer Visayas](#) / 05:34 PM September 10, 2020



Cebu Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia. (Dale Israel/Inquirer Visayas)

CEBU CITY — More crushed dolomite rocks from Alcoy town, south Cebu are set to be shipped out to give the shores of Manila Bay a white sand beach appearance.

But Cebu Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia said the province would do its best to stop the transport of 10,500 wet metric tons of dolomites supposedly to cover a 500-meter stretch of the shore.

In a press conference on Thursday afternoon, Garcia said the cease-and-desist order she issued against Dolomite Mining Corporation (DMC) and that of the Philippine Mining Services Corporation (PMSC) was meant to stop the shipment of the synthetic fine sand to Manila.

The governor has sent the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office in Alcoy to conduct an ocular inspection of the mining site.

The inspection is part of the investigation launched by the provincial government following the transport of 3,500 wet metric tons of crushed dolomite rocks for the aesthetic transformation of Manila Bay.

Garcia threatened to sue all those involved in the mining of dolomite rocks in Alcoy. The Mines and Geosciences Bureau in Central Visayas (MGB-7) earlier issued two Ore Transportation Permits (OTPs) to PMSC authorizing the shipment of dolomites to Manila valued at P1.64 million.

Three OTPs are pending before MGB-7.

Garcia clarified that she did not stop the operations of the DMC and PMSC, whose activities in Alcoy were covered under a Mineral Production Sharing Agreement (MPSA) with the government for 25 years.

She said she only wanted to stop the domestic sale of dolomite rocks made by the two sister mining companies which are not covered by the MPSA.

“So Usec. (Benny) Antiporda, it is not the system of the province that sucks. It is how PMSC going beyond what was allowed under MPSA issued,” Garcia said in reaction to statements of the environment officials in Manila.



Garcia said she would issue a clarificatory executive order which would specifically stop the operations of DMC and PMSC done outside the program stipulated in the MPSA and the government.

The MPSA, she said, specifically detailed the export of the dolomite extracted in Alcoy town to Japan and South Korea with specific years and volume of minerals to be extracted from a specific area.

She suspected that the domestic sale of dolomite triggered the quarrying of more minerals than what was stated under the MPSA.

The Capitol, Garcia said, is investigating the volume of extracted dolomite outside the agreement.

Since the activities on the domestic sale of dolomite are outside the MPSA, she said the quarrying does not have an assessment on its impact on the environment in Alcoy, which is a critical area because it is the natural habitat of the endangered and endemic siloby birds or the Cebu Black Shama.

Garcia said the provincial government, the Municipality of Alcoy, and the barangays were deprived of its share of the profits from its natural resources since the domestic sale is outside the MPSA.

The governor said she already knew of the domestic sale of dolomites since August 2019 after she assumed office and issued a memorandum to stop all quarrying activities in the entire island of Cebu.

Last week, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) started pouring "white sand" on a 500-meter stretch of Manila Bay's naturally gray shoreline as part of the rehabilitation program launched by Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu in January 2019 to save the bay from decades of pollution and urban blight.

LZB



Gwen demands LGU share in dolomite revenues

By [Caecent No-ot Magsumbol](#)(The Freeman) - September 11, 2020 - 12:00am

CEBU, Philippines — Because the company engaged in processing and transporting dolomite from Alcoy, south Cebu for the controversial Manila Bay “nourishment project” is selling the minerals domestically, Governor Gwendolyn Garcia has demanded that it give the Capitol, the town, and the barangay their fair share in its revenues.

In addition, the governor also said Philippine Mining Service Corp. (PMSC) should secure a waste disposal permit from the Capitol and submit its program of works.

PMSC processed and transported crushed dolomite extracted by its sister-company, Dolomite Mining Corp. (DMC), for the Manila Bay project.

But Garcia revealed that under the mineral production sharing agreement (MPSA), PMSC is only allowed to extract and process dolomite and export them to Japan and Korea mainly for the production of steel and glass.

Because PMSC is now engaged in domestic sale of such products, Garcia said it should give the local government units their due.

“What does this mean? I am insisting that they share because what we collect, that will go to our province’s coffers -- shared by the barangay, by the LGU, and by the province,” Garcia said in Cebuano.

She said the supposed share of the government from the revenues will be distributed to the province, town, and barangay in a 40-30-30% sharing scheme.

Garcia said the 40 percent could have been used to build roads.

“Where do we get funds? Be it sand and gravel or dolomite, if that’s processed by a company, how much will it earn? Probably, thousands. And yet not even a cent goes to the host barangay,” she lamented.

“I am only looking after the interest of the people because we have yet to do a lot, especially in light of this pandemic, its devastating effects to the lives and livelihoods of the people,” she added.

‘Nothing wrong with Cebu system’

Reacting to DENR undersecretary Benny Antiporda’s earlier statement that the dolomite controversy is an opportunity for Cebu to correct what he thinks was a flaw in its business system, Garcia countered that there is nothing wrong with Cebu province’s processes.

She said it is PMSC that is “trying to get away with its obligations and responsibilities on the domestic sale of dolomite.”



Garcia traced the dolomite extraction operations in Alcoy to 40 years ago. This activity is reportedly covered by a mineral production sharing agreement issued to DMC.

The last MPSA issued to DMC was in 2005, when Garcia was the sitting governor.

Accordingly, the use of that MPSA was only for DMC's sister company, PMSC, to extract and process the dolomite and export it to Japan and Korea. There was a work program submitted for this purpose.

"Yes, Usec Antiporda, we are not disputing this. It is clear that the purpose for the issuance of MPSA was for export," Garcia said.

However, after discovering that dolomite can be a substitute for sand and gravel, PMSC allegedly started selling it locally. As to when this started, the governor has yet to check as she said she was not the governor from 2013 to 2019.

When Garcia returned as governor last year, among her marching orders was to halt all quarrying of sand and gravel in the province. That was the first time, she said, that she discovered PMSC was transporting dolomite as a substitute for sand and gravel.

Garcia said provincial officials had met with company representatives but up to this day, the firm has yet to heed its obligations, secure necessary permits and submit plans, until the Manila Bay controversy exploded.

PMSC secured two ore transport permits carrying 7,000 wet metric tons of dolomite in total and has three other pending permits from the Mines and Geosciences Bureau.

But Garcia has since issued an executive order early this week stopping the three other dolomite shipments from Alcoy to Manila.

"The order focuses on stopping the transport from Alcoy to Luzon for the Manila Bay," Garcia said, adding that the order was not to halt the entire operation.

Garcia said PMSC's export activity for raw materials for steel and glass continues, thus, workers need not worry about their jobs being affected.

Environmental impacts

Because of dolomite's newfound market in the local front, Garcia said the provincial government is trying to shield the environment and the barangay concerned from the impacts of its extraction.

Dolomite is 75 percent calcium and more than 20 percent magnesium.

"Another concern, its impact being an additional volume. What is the impact of this? This is additional mining in Alcoy because there is now domestic market. Have you made a study about this?" she said.



The barangay where the quarry operations are being undertaken is reportedly home to the Nug-as forest, where endangered species of black sama or siloy birds inhabit.

Garcia also expressed fear that an incident similar to the Naga landslide two years ago may happen.

"I don't want another Naga landslide where we only act when lives have been lost," she said.

Garcia said she will issue a clarificatory EO reflecting that it's not PMSC's whole operation that is being halted.

"I hope this clears the confusion here. Maybe partly may fault. Forgive me if I have not answered your requests for interviews. You know what our family is going through right now. It's very hard. But I am trying to find the energy because this is about Cebu and the Cebuanos," she said. — **JMD (FREEMAN)**



Environmental Ombudsman urged to probe Manila Bay 'beach' project

Published September 10, 2020, 3:39 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

Environmental group Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment (Kalikasan PNE) on Thursday urged the Environmental Ombudsman to investigate alleged irregularities in the Manila Bay "beautification" project, including the controversial use of synthetic white sand along the baywalk.

According to Kalikasan PNE national coordinator Leon Dulce, the P389-million beautification project represents just 0.83 percent of the entire P47-billion Manila Bay rehabilitation program.

"All kinds of red flags are therefore raised when a complete waste of taxpayer's money that cannot be seen in any of the Manila Bay rehab and development blueprints, and does not have any environmental clearance, suddenly pops out of nowhere," Dulce said.

The Environmental Ombudsman was established in 2013 to prioritize the prevention, investigation, adjudication, and prosecution of public officials that violate environmental laws and subsequently cause adverse environmental harm.

Under the Environmental Ombudsman program, anyone can file a complaint against a government official, employee, office or agency who refused to protect the environment or conserve natural resources.

In a forum on Thursday, Oceana Philippines vice president Gloria Estenzo Ramos said various individuals and organizations have started to submit their position paper to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Manila Mayor Francisco 'Isko Moreno' Domagoso, Office of the Ombudsman, Executive Department, and the Senate to stop and investigate the beautification activities, particularly the white sand filling along the baywalk.

Ramos pointed out that DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda's statement that the project only has a certificate of non-coverage "is an admission that it (the project) did not go through the environmental impact assessment process mandated by law, which is a gross violation."

The certificate of non-coverage refers to a document issued by the DENR stating that the proposed project is not covered by the Philippine Environmental Impact Assessment System, therefore, the proponent is not required to secure an environmental compliance certificate or ECC prior to the commencement of activities.

"May mga plano na mag-file ng suits but we have to gather all of these documents and we need to get also expert opinion kasi ganun 'yung pag-file mo ng kaso kailangan solid 'yung evidence mo. Itong certificate of non-coverage is a solid evidence of non-compliance and willful violation of the national laws. (There are those planning to file law suits but we have to gather all these documents and get expert opinion first to have a solid evidence. This certificate of non-coverage is a solid evidence of non-compliance and willful violation of the national laws)," Ramos explained.

"Right now what we are doing is (we are) exhausting all available remedies to stop the project and those in our government must not forget that we have accountability mechanisms. If they will be held liable for the damages in Manila Bay, that is their personal liability. They have to answer for all those damages. I really hope they think twice, re-assess, and stop this project," she said.



The DENR is looking into finishing the project by Sept. 19, in time for the International Coastal Cleanup 2020.

Meanwhile, Liza Osorio, managing trustee of the Philippine Earth Justice Center, said the parties to the 2008 Supreme Court-issued writ of continuing mandamus can file a petition to immediately stop the dumping of “white sand” along the shore of Manila Bay.

“Under the rules of procedure for environmental cases, the court may actually motu proprio or by itself or through any appropriate agency ensure the execution of the writ of continuing mandamus,” she said.

The Supreme Court mandamus directed 13 agencies, which include the DENR, to clean up, rehabilitate, and preserve Manila Bay.

“Baka pwede yung route na ‘yun ang gamitin kaysa mag-file ng another case kasi mas matagal pa ‘yun. (Maybe that route can be explored instead of filing another case because that will take longer),” Osorio pointed out.

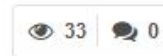
“The point where you can say that Manila Bay has been cleaned up is when the quality of water is raised higher when it is possible to swim and safely use the waters of Manila Bay dahil ‘yan ang (that is the) indicator that Manila Bay is already clean,” she said.



White sand' DENR project pinakalkal sa Ombudsman, COA

By Abante News Online — Last updated Sep 10, 2020

NEWS



Dapat maparusahan ang mga nasa likod ng pagtambak ng mga synthetic white sand sa Manila Bay dahil sa kabi-kabilang kontrobersya ng proyekto, kasama ang pinsala sa kalikasan at umano'y iregularidad sa pondo para dito.

Ayon sa koalisyong Oceana Philippines, nagpasa na sila ng position paper sa Commission on Audit, pati na rin sa Ombudsman, para mapanagot sakaling mapatunayang nagkasala ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sa proyekto.

"Ang objective is mapatigil pero kung di mapatigil, those responsible for the damage should be held accountable," lahad ni Oceana PH vice presidente Gloria Estenzo-Ramos.

RELATED POSTS



Jeepney driver namigay ng sayote sa mga pasahero

Sep 10, 2020 0



COVID puntirya ang utak

Sep 10, 2020 0



British study: Virus lalong kakalat sa biritan

Sep 10, 2020 0

Ito rin ang sentimyento ng Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment, na hinimok naman ang Environmental Ombudsman Team para agad na maimbestigahan ang umano'y lumobong gastos sa dolomite rock sa Manila Bay na pinondohan ng P389M.



“The potential for large-scale corruption, dereliction of duty and ecological harm is completely unacceptable in these times of pandemic crisis,” ayon kay Leon Dulce, national coordinator ng nasabing grupo.

Matatandaang pinatigil na ng Cebu government ang operasyon ng mining company na tinapik ng DENR para humakot ng dolomite rock sa kanilang lalawigan dahil sa posibleng pinsala na ginawa nito sa kanilang kalikasan.
(RP/Tina Mendoza)



Bay 'nourishment' project continues to draw flak from lawmakers, groups

By [Jovee Marie de la Cruz](#) and [Jonathan L. Mayuga](#)

September 10, 2020



Excavators fill the 500-meter stretch of the famed baywalk on Manila Bay with white sand as part of the bay's rehabilitation efforts. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources is working double time to finish the project in time for International Coastal Cleanup Day on September 19, 2020

Lawmakers are urging the leadership of the House of Representatives to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, into the suitability and sustainability of the Manila Bay rehabilitation program, even as an environmental lawyer revealed that proponents of the controversial beach "nourishment" project could face criminal and civil liabilities.

Buhay Rep. Lito Atienza, Probinsyano Ako Rep. Jose C. Singson Jr. and the Makabayan bloc branded the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) project "inappropriate and unnecessary at this time."

The DENR started dumping crushed dolomite along Manila Baywalk to mimic white sand as part of Phase 1 of the project. The Palace has defended the project, saying it would benefit Filipinos' "mental health," while DENR said it would help discourage citizens from littering in Manila Bay.

Missing the solution

Atienza, a former secretary of the DENR, questioned agency's ongoing dumping of synthetic white sand from crushed dolomite boulders onto the Baywalk area of Manila Bay.

"What good will covering the Baywalk with artificial sand do when the waters of Manila Bay remain as polluted as ever? Let us address the real problem. Up to now, the sewage lines of all households in Metro Manila still lead and empty out into the Manila Bay, instead of into the wastewater treatment facilities that the two water concessionaires—Maynilad Water Service Inc., and Manila Water Co.—should have built over the past 23 years," he said.

"These two have continuously failed to deliver the wastewater treatment facilities, which they are obligated to build as part of their concession agreement with the government. But what's worse is that since 1997 when the contract started, these two big corporations have been charging consumers for this non-existent service and even been able to borrow money from foreign banks on sovereign guarantee, in the name of the Filipino people," Atienza added.

He stressed the waters of Manila Bay will remain polluted as long as the waters are not cleaned by the two water concessionaires.



Singson, for his part, said “The government should be prioritizing the health and safety of everyone amid the Covid-19 pandemic instead of spending on unnecessary beautification projects disguised to promote the mental health of a few who may be lucky enough to pass by the Manila Baywalk project vis-à-vis the general population of over a hundred million Filipinos. While this representation recognizes and puts equal value to the general well-being [e.g., physical, mental, social and emotional] of everyone, specific and/or surgical solutions to address the pandemic should be of the utmost importance.”

Makabayan bloc said an investigation must be conducted amid the people’s opposition, raising its impact to the environment, public health and judicious utilization of public funds.

Possible raps

Gloria Estenzo Ramos, vice president of oceans advocacy nongovernment organization Oceana Philippines asserted that proponents of the projects could be held liable for initiating the beach nourishment project.

Ramos said various cause-oriented groups and environmental advocates are stepping up the filing of a Writ of Kalikasan, not only to stop the Manila Bay Interagency Task Force from further dumping dolomite sand in Manila Bay but also hold the proponents and make them pay for damages.

“We will exert all remedies to stop this project,” said Ramos, who insisted that a number of laws were violated in pushing through with the beach nourishment project.

Envi Ombudsman

The environmental group Kalikasan-People’s Network for the Environment (Kalikasan-PNE), meanwhile, called on the Environmental Ombudsman to look into the alleged irregularities in the controversial P389-million Manila Bay beach nourishment project.

“We urge the Environmental Ombudsman to immediately probe the alleged bloating of costs and cutting of regulatory corners in the Manila Bay dolomite dump,” Leon Dulce, national coordinator of Kalikasan PNE said in a news statement.

The Envi OMB team was established in 2013 to prioritize the prevention, investigation, adjudication, and prosecution of public officials that violate environmental laws and subsequently cause adverse environmental harm.

“This P389-million project represents just 0.83 percent of the entire P47-billion Manila Bay rehab program. The potential for large-scale corruption, dereliction of duty, and ecological harm is completely unacceptable in these times of pandemic crisis,” he said.

Image credits: [Nonie Reyes](#)

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/09/10/bay-nourishment-project-continues-to-draw-flak-from-lawmakers-groups/>



People gather at a pedestrian overpass to see the controversial sand made of crushed dolomite boulders along the shoreline of Manila Bay while viewing the sunset on September 6, 2020.

The STAR/Miguel de Guzman

Urban poor families fear eviction amid Manila Bay cosmetic rehab

[Franco Luna](#) (Philstar.com) - September 10, 2020 - 11:50am

MANILA, Philippines — Urban poor families along the waterways of Manila Bay fear possible eviction over the hotly-contested "white sand" beach project, which could potentially leave them nowhere to go amid the coronavirus pandemic.

In a statement sent to **Philstar.com**, Kabalikat sa Kaunlaran, a people's organization of residents of Baseco Compound in Port Area, Manila said that a looming eviction would displace 230,000 informal settlers' families living in the area.

This comes amid calls for the government to halt its project to build an artificial "white sand" beach on the shore of Manila Bay, which environmental groups have also said violates at least five environmental and cultural laws.

Kabalikat sa Kaunlaran president Jeorgie Tenolete said: "The fear of eviction among Baseco families have always haunted us every time that the government does cosmetic rehabilitation in the Manila Bay. It simply says that poor people and their houses are eyesores and therefore these must go away."

"Based on our understanding and experience, reclamations will make us more vulnerable to disaster...Also, beautification projects always come along with the reclamation plan. Last year, families from the 20-meter easement were notified of relocation by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the same agency that gave the go signal the dumping of dolomite 'white sand.' I hope eviction will not happen at this time of pandemic," Tenolete said.

'Urban poor families doing their part for Manila Bay rehab'

Joining other environmental groups, Kabalikat sa Kaunlaran also contested the notion that the state of the bay is due to the activities of urban poor families.

Figures from the World Bank and the National Solid Waste Management Commission in November 2019 suggest that the 300,000 informal settler families targeted for relocation, around 1.38 million people, only contributed 5.01% of solid waste in the bay.

"When the government is asked why [they] relocate families living along the Manila Bay, they will always tell us that the urban poor pollutes the Bay because we have no trash cans, we have no toilets, and that the only way to end the vicious cycle of us polluting the Bay or waterways is through relocation. This statement is difficult to accept because we have been doing our share to help clean and rehabilitate the Bay," Mayeth Betasolo, the group's secretary said.



The group highlighted that ever the residents have long felt that their days in Baseco were numbered ever since the Duterte administration launched its Manila Bay rehabilitation, saying that in 1,000 families are in danger of displacement in the Baseco compound alone.

Non-profit NGO Urban Poor Associates added in the statement that the residents are not against the Manila Bay Rehabilitation Project, only the threat of eviction. The organization pointed to other unlawful evictions that have taken place during the coronavirus-induced lockdowns, saying it may happen again.

"In 2010 we planted 1,000 mangrove trees in Aplaya, Baseco. No one believed us that Mangroves could grow and thrive along the shores of Baseco shore. But after ten years after, our Mangroves have grown tall and sturdy. For the past ten years, we made sure that we took good care of our Mangroves," Betasolo said.

"We believe that this is the right and genuine way to rehabilitate the Manila Bay. Also, to help reduce the waste along the bay, we gathered the water lilies and made use of them for our livelihood projects. We have produced slippers, bags and plate mats out of dried water lilies."

Tenolete also highlighted that his group, along with Urban Poor Associates proposed as early as 2012 a Baseco people's development plan that would have alleviated the living situation of the 13,000 families in the area at the time.

However, he said, the number has since skyrocketed to 22,000 families, all now at risk of eviction.

The housing and development plan, a copy of which was acquired by **Philstar.com**, covers the area's 54 hectares and included a master list of families in Baseco.

"I hope the government will not only see us as polluters but as citizens who through our small initiatives and contributions definitely help in the rehabilitation of the Manila Bay," Tenolete said.



Baseco dwellers fear mass eviction anew

By Roderick Abad

September 10, 2020

An organization of slum dwellers at the Baseco Compound in Tondo, Manila expressed fears of a possible mass eviction amid government efforts to rehabilitate the nearby Manila Bay.

Kabalikat sa Kaunlaran President Jeorgie Tenolete said that they are apprehensive every time the government initiates “cosmetic rehabilitation” with a reclamation plan in the bay area known worldwide for its sunset.

“Last year, families from the 20-meter easement were notified of relocation by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the same agency that gave the go signal the dumping of dolomite ‘white sand,’” Tenolete said. “I hope eviction will not happen at this time of pandemic.”



AMID DOH, DENR CLAIMS

Toxicologist insists crushed dolomite bad for health

Published September 10, 2020 2:40pm

By JOVILAND RITA, GMA News

A toxicologist on Thursday contradicted the statements of the Department of Health (DOH) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) that crushed dolomite, like the one used in the Manila Bay beautification project, poses no health risks.

In a virtual forum by Oceana Philippines, Dr. Rommy Quijano said in justifying its controversial Manila Bay project, the DENR ignored scientific findings showing the potential health hazards of crushed dolomite.

“Yung sinasabi nila na walang potential health defects ‘yan ay hindi totoo ‘yun. Tingin ko, dahil nga ginawa nila yan (Manila Bay project) na wala man lang consultation, dyina-justify na lang nila ang kanilang action,” he said.

“Hindi ko maintindihan bakit pati ang DOH ay nagsabi na ligtas naman daw ‘yan. Samantalang noong una, nagsabi ang DOH na, ‘yun nga, dahil sa respirable dust ay maaaring magkaroon ng respiratory disease,” he added.

The DENR and the DOH claimed that crushed dolomite is safe, citing its size of 2 to 5 millimeters or equivalent to 2,000 to 5,000 microns or 100 times, which is bigger than dust.

It means, according to the DENR, that the crushed dolomite cannot be suspended in air and thus be inhaled by a person.

“Huwag nilang sabihin na walang dust ‘yan dahil maski naman ang mga malalaking bato kung kunin mo yan sa lupa tiyak na meron maliliit na dust din na mabubuo diyan,” Quijano said.

“Maaaring malanghap ng mga tao hindi lamang ng manggagawa kundi pati ‘yung mga tao na maaaring lalapit diyan lalo na kung malakas ang hangin,” he said.

Sought for reaction, DENR Environment Management Bureau (EMB) Director Willian Cuñado told GMA News Online that dolomite rocks only pose health hazards during quarrying and processing.

“The health issue with the dolomite is not in the product anymore. It's already in the process during quarrying and processing. For the product itself, there will be no more health issue,” Cuñado said.

“The dolomites that we are bringing in Manila Bay that is already the product with very very minimal...all the dust and particulates are already removed in the processing,” he added.



Meanwhile, Quijano said dolomite rocks may release heavy metals such as mercury, arsenic, zinc, and cadmium, which can lead to diseases affecting the nervous and immune system like lupus.

Cuñado was quick to deny this: “The dolomite composition is calcium and magnesium...So if you look at heavy metal compositions, there is no heavy metal present on the dolomite. We have already checked that,” he told GMA News Online.

According to Cuñado, a third party company already conducted an analysis on the composition of the dolomite that will be used on Manila Bay to make it appear that its shoreline is covered with white sand.

Environmentalists and fisherfolk groups earlier [criticized the DENR’s project](#), calling it artificial rehabilitation and a waste of money. --**KBK, GMA News**

Source: https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/755021/toxicologist-insists-crushed-dolomite-bad-for-health/story/?utm_source=GMANews&utm_medium=Facebook&fbclid=IwAR3vfT371IQkW4N0E0j3mTVBILLIlgDsCTMLWAmxwAKomfJWvd2tBYEi_HE



ABS-CBN News

September 8 at 9:50 AM · 🌐

Sigurado ang geologist na si Dr. Carlo Arcilla na mawawala rin sa baywalk ng Manila Bay ang itinambak doong artificial white sand.



Kapag dumating [ang bagyo] at may isang nataon kahit hindi malakas dumaan ng Manila Bay, tanggal lahat 'yan... Sigurado itong mawawala. **Within this time, next year, wala na iyan.**

UP NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF GEOLOGICAL SCIENCES

DR. CARLO ARCILLA

on the dumping of "white sand" on a stretch of Manila Bay's rocky shore
September 8, 2020



Athena Beatriz Aurelio and 15K others

8.3K Comments 4.7K Shares



Radio Singko 92.3 News FM

11h · 🌐

Tatagal nga kaya ang white sand project ng DENR sa Manila Bay?

Para sa isang geologist sa #WagPo, malabo itong mangyari dahil magaan na materyal lang daw ang dolomite na madaling tangayin kapag bumagyo 🌊.

photos: Dr. Carlo Arcilla/Facebook

“
Ang mangyayari kasi ryan, 'pag nilagay mo 'yan lalo na 'pag may bagyo o storm surge, madadala siya. Kung higher ang density, mas mahirap siya dalhin ng alon.
'Yung beautification efforts wala namang masama 'doon pero 'yun nga, depende sa timing...siguro after one year wala na 'yan diyan.
”

DR. CARLO ARCILLA
DIRECTOR, PHILIPPINE NUCLEAR RESEARCH INSTITUTE
SEPTEMBER 9, 2020

News5Everywhere @news5ph News5.com.ph

👍👎👏 272

324 Comments 22 Shares



Radyo Singko 92.3 News FM

11h · 🌐

...

"Imbes na solusyong tutugon sa batayang pangangailangan ng taumbayan ngayong panahon ng lunos at pagdurusa, palamuti't pulbura ang siyang inihahain sa atin!"

Ito ang naging reaksiyon ni Sen. Leila De Lima sa "white sand" makeover sa Manila Bay.

NEWS 5

“
 Anong akala ninyo sa buhangin na iyan—may mahika na sa isang iglap ay kayang punuan ang kumakalam na sikmura ng mga Pilipino, may kapangyarihan na isalba ang nalulunod na mga pangarap at kinabukasan ng bayan?
Ano ba talaga ang prayoridad niyo?! Kailan ba kayo matututong makinig sa hinaing ng taumbayan?! Bigas na isasaing ang kailangan, hindi puting buhangin!
 ”

SEN. LEILA DE LIMA
 SEPTEMBER 9, 2020

News5Everywhere @news5ph News5.com.ph

👍👎👏 1.6K

1.2K Comments · 49 Shares



News5

11h · 🌐

"It is a waste of people's money."

Ganyan tinawag ni Oceana Philippines Vice President Atty. Gloria Ramos ang "white sand" makeover sa Manila Bay sa programang #WagPo ng One PH.



👍👎👏 Ryan McClane Rogel and 2.3K others

1.6K Comments 122 Shares



Ersatz Boracay in Manila Bay

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:08 AM September 10, 2020

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources started dumping last week “white sand” on a portion of the Manila Bay beach, near the Baywalk strip along Roxas Boulevard, ostensibly as part of a “beach nourishment” program.

That initial justification, however, has grown lamer by the day, as more details about the project emerge and more questions are raised by a bewildered public.

There’s DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda’s hilarious defense that the “white sand”—crushed dolomite boulders imported from Cebu, it turned out—was a way to bring the Boracay experience to Metro Manila residents, and as a means to encourage Filipinos to better care for the environment: “Ilalapat natin sa kanila ’yung white sand. Dito po ay mararamdaman nila na kahit paano ay para bang nasa Boracay na rin sila.” It will tell the people, he added, “na it’s about time for us na pangalagaan ang ating kapaligiran at panatiliin nating malinis.”

Presidential spokesperson Harry Roque offered a different rationale: The makeover, estimated to cost P389 million, would improve Filipinos’ mental health amid the stifling quarantine measures and the COVID-19 pandemic, he asserted. And it would make Manila Bay “one of the most picturesque sceneries in the whole world” as its world-renowned sunset would be framed against a “white beach.”

DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu, asked to comment on concerns expressed by the Department of Health that inhaling dolomite could lead to respiratory illnesses, stoutly defended the program during the House deliberations on the DENR budget last Tuesday. The dolomite particles were three times bigger than regular sand and won’t go up in the air, the former military chief of staff maintained. (The DOH later backtracked and supported Cimatu’s line.) Also, the crushed dolomite would supposedly help lower the acidity of the notoriously toxic waters of Manila Bay.

But while Antiporda, Roque, and Cimatu are waxing poetic about the beautification project, environmental groups, academics, and legislators are seeing red.

Oceana Philippines blasted the white-sand dumping for being “a total waste of people’s money”; the sand would be simply washed away by big waves and would mix with the black sand that is a natural element of Manila Bay, it pointed out.

Geologist Dr. Carlo Arcilla of the UP National Institute of Geological Sciences seconded that view and projected that the sand would be gone in just a year: “Kapag dumating [ang bagyo] at may isang nataon kahit hindi malakas dumaan ng Manila Bay, tanggal lahat ’yan... Sigurado itong mawawala.”

The project is unnecessary, protested Greenpeace Philippines, as the “white sand” would simply sit on top of the “uncleaned environment” in the area caused by the unabated urban trash and raw sewage disgorged into Manila Bay every day by the millions of residents of Metro Manila and nearby provinces.

Was careful study done before the project got greenlighted? DENR Undersecretary Jonas Leones admitted during the House deliberations on the DENR budget this week that the “beach nourishment” project was not part of the Manila Bay Sustainable Development Master Plan adopted by the National Economic and Development Authority. Neither was it included in the Manila Bay rehabilitation plan posted on the DENR website.



Rep. Ruffy Biazon pressed the DENR for a copy of any study on the feasibility and scientific justification for the project, but the agency was unable to produce any. The DENR may have also violated its own rules when the Mines and Geosciences Bureau in Central Visayas issued a permit to transport the crushed dolomite from the municipality of Alcoy in Cebu to Manila, without prior consultation with the town or the provincial government of Cebu. Cebu Governor Gwendolyn Garcia has ordered a halt to the mining operations in Alcoy.

Per Sen. Nancy Binay’s blunt assessment: “Walang public consultation, walang environmental clearance, hilaw ang EIA/EIS, at malinaw na bara-bara at ’di comprehensive ang plano.” The DENR may have good intentions in pursuing the rehabilitation of Manila Bay, but the nature of this particular project, let alone the timing — in the middle of the worst public health crisis and economic downturn in the country’s history, with millions of citizens begging for aid and when every cent of public money should count and cannot be frittered away on ill-considered expenditures (President Duterte on several occasions now: “Wala na tayong pera”)—smacks of a glaring obtuseness and detachment from reality.

Education Secretary Leonor Briones, for instance, said that if the DepEd got instead the millions allocated for the project, they would have gone to purchasing gadgets and producing modules for students and teachers forced to do their classes online. Now, all that money may end up washed out to sea along with the ersatz Boracay beach in Manila Bay.



Venom beach

Published September 10, 2020, 9:23 AM

by [Gemma Cruz Araneta](#)

LANDSCAPE

At low tide, a sliver of white sand appears where Manila Bay meets the American embassy. In a wink, it is filled with naked street children and their scantily clad elders — dwellers of parks and sidewalks who want to escape the heat. They have probably heard of Boracay and want to know how it feels. But, unbeknown to many, Manila does have an expanse of whitish sand in the BASECO Compound of Tondo, covered with plastics and all manner of detritus. The late Mayor Alfredo S. Lim had planned to turn it into a “masa” resort, had flying voters not stolen the elections for a politico from San Juan del Monte.

Despite the efforts of heritage advocates who rallied behind “Save Manila Bay!” and government focus groups like the Manila Bay Advisory Committee of the Supreme Court (now headed by Chief Justice Diosdado Peralta), the agencies mandated to clean up this historical body of water, with the most dazzling of sunsets, have hopelessly failed in their mission. The bay remains a cesspool, the basin for the city’s sewage; but swimmers at that sand bar behind the American embassy don’t care a fig. They are lucky to have herd immunity. When Manila’s Finest (the police) try to enforce the local ordinance that forbids dipping, the “beach people” refuse to leave and taunt them to shoot.

It looks like they are going to have their beach, after all. By the 19th of this month, retired general Roy Cimatu, the sitting secretary of environment and national resources, will have finished his pet project – a totally man-made white beach that costs a mean P397.9 million. Tons of crushed white dolomite from Cebu have been transported at warp speed to Manila’s baywalk, not to create a Copacabana in Asia but, ostensibly, for flood control and, of course, to clean up the filthy waters of Manila Bay. That remains to be seen.

Did you know that the Archdiocese of Manila has a Ministry of Ecology? It was among the first to complain about Secretary Cimatu’s dolomite beach because, “coastal communities were not informed and consulted...” Green Peace Philippines denounced the DENR for wasting taxpayers’ money on a project harmful to the environment. The Pamalakaya, an association of fisher folk, voiced their protest; why not create aquatic resources by growing mangroves and sea grass as provided by the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998 (Republic Act 8550)? The president of OCEANA Philippines, Gloria Estenzo Ramos, has accused the DENR of violating its own environmental impact assessment procedures, but Undersecretary Benny Antiporda cavalierly replied that it is only a “beach nourishment” project, so there is no need for all that.

Our tireless Undersecretary of Health Maria Rosario Vergeire warned that dolomite sand and dust can cause respiratory ailments, eye irritation, and gastronomical discomfort. I wonder if Secretary Cimatu consulted Prof. Jay L. Batongbacal of the University of the Philippines’ Institute of Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea. He also said that crushed dolomite will cause respiratory ailments and is a potential carcinogen. He quoted LeHigh Hanson, Inc., and LHoist North America, two companies that have made extensive studies about dolomites and similar substances. When the dolomite was mined in Alcoy, Cebu, there were animad versions about its negative impact on endemic species protected by the Wildlife Conservation Act .



People are aghast at the expense specially because the country is still battling with the COVID-19 pandemic and we have more urgent needs than a dolomite beach, even if Sec. Cimatú insists that the project will nourish the environment, that it has been on the drawing board since September, 2019, with a budget properly earmarked. It looks like it is too late to even complain. Sec. Cimatú is glommed on his ideas of "beautification." All that pizzazz will not control Manila's famous flood waters; it bodes badly for the environment. Will it survive a Manila Bay storm surge? We will know soon enough. Put on your masks and face shields when you go to venom beach at the bay walk.

(ggc1898@gmail.com)



The Dolomite Beach Club

[CTALK](#) - [Cito Beltran](#) (The Philippine Star) - September 11, 2020 - 12:00am

The Dolomite Beach Club near Roxas Boulevard, “officially” known as the DENR white sand beautification project, has reaped a whirlwind of protests from all sides including media. But stepping back from all the emotions and politics, I see a great case study on the right way and the wrong way of doing high-profile, high-challenge projects such as the white sand project of the DENR. First of all, was the idea a good idea per se? Imagine a reclaimed area featuring white sand, walkways, beach volleyball courts, food carts that tourists and families could go to see the epic Manila Bay sunset? Very unusual to say the least, given Manila Bay is not known for white sand beaches and the fact that the DENR’s mandate was to clean up Manila Bay, not build a “beach club.” But in a country and a metropolis where public parks are going “extinct,” such an idea would not necessarily be unwelcomed. It would not be too far from a similar idea that then mayor Lito Atienza introduced called “The Baywalk.”

So why did The Baywalk thrive while the Dolomite Beach project is being bludgeoned? The Baywalk slowly evolved bench-by-bench, food cart by food cart and only when the clamor for more rose to the surface did Lito Atienza go full blast. It grew on the curiosity and support of customers and tourists. It was one of those hit places that was built on word of mouth and media mileage.

The Dolomite Beach project, on the other hand, was shocking in concept. Shocking that nothing was previously said about it, and shocking because it was being done when the country and the world was at war against a deadly virus. Most shocking of all was that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources was spearheading a project that at face value seems to violate major rules regarding environmental protection.

The biggest mistake was making it a “government project.” I suspect that if the Dolomite Beach idea had been presented by a private company, or a group of resort developers, the heat would not be as intense as it is right now. The public attitude towards private corporations investing on new or wild ideas has generally been neutral if not full of curiosity. Filipinos have patronized man-made ice skating venues, public aquariums, “private” zoos and marine parks, now they are lining up at the latest drive-in movie. To be honest, the Dolomite Beach project would have been a non-issue if a private company did it.

Following the Baywalk experience, it helps to subdivide the pie or distribute parts of the project among other stakeholders, developers, etc. If the plan was a really good plan, then “partners would defend it in any arena and not end up being defended by the Lone Ranger.” So, they had no strategy, they had bad timing and they failed to test the waters or float the idea so to speak. Aside from patience being a virtue, there is wisdom in the counsel of many. In this case, if the bright boys talked to environmentalists and shared the vision and made them part owners, the resistance would have been less.

Last but not the least, create the need, the want, the demand before you make a “new” product with low public acceptance.



* * *

Members of Congress are in a hurry to auction off the TV and radio frequencies that ABS-CBN lost after their congressional massacre for a franchise renewal. It will be worth watching and monitoring who will line-up or bid for those frequencies, particularly for radio, given that the next campaign and elections are in the horizon. Any local politician will tell you that acquiring one of those frequencies is like winning the political lottery because having a radio station in your district gives you so much reach and influence over voters and residents. Owning the local radio station also reduces your campaign and publicity costs.

In addition to that, radio frequencies, channels and stations have more market value, appreciate in value and are cash convertible and worth more than blue chip stocks of major corporations. Some people who sold off their frequencies/stations made such profits they retired early! Politicians don't even have to buy any of the frequencies, they simply have to make themselves available and present when an interested party applies for a congressional franchise. Time and again former congressmen have told me that deals are made, either in cash or in kind, so that franchises and frequencies can be had.

Incidentally, it seems that the revenge that politicians sought to inflict on ABS-CBN has ended up as a hollow victory over their principal targets and a grave injustice for several thousand innocent employees. A number of well known talents of ABS-CBN have seamlessly transferred to other stations, particularly radio, and from what I've been hearing many other programs and talents will be reappearing on other channels both TV and cable as "block timers" as well as on the internet. It is reported that the Lopez family had long divested their shares in ABS-CBN so they were laughing all the way to the bank while politicians were busy making their case against the network. Several of the top anchors already saw the sword of Duterte being drawn a long time ago and had prepared for a low profile but financially secure and comfortable life.

That unfortunately is not the case for several thousand employees, who have unjustly lost their jobs, their livelihoods and their careers. Their only sin was to be an employee of ABS-CBN and they are paying the highest price from the worst injustice inflicted upon innocent employees.

* * *

E-mail: utalk2ctalk@gmail.com



White beach may help but the real problem is pollution

Published September 10, 2020, 9:40 AM
by [Manila Bulletin](#)



Manila Bay is in the news again. It is being provided with a patch of white sand along 500 meters of the baywalk, actually not sand but crushed dolomite boulders, a variant of limestone, that is coming all the way from Cebu, according to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). The project has a budget of P389 million.

Senate President Vicente Sotto expressed concern that the white sand or crushed boulder would just wash out to sea after some time. Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian cited a geologist's concern about this possibility of storms and high tides washing away the artificial sand. DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda assured there are engineering interventions prepared by the department to prevent this.

Vice President Leni Robredo said the white sand beach project was a "misplaced priority" at a time when the government is in need of funds with which to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, including aid to the poor suffering from the government restrictions. Government quarters were quick to dismiss her statement as the usual political opposition.

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque defended the project, saying it will be good for the people's mental health, as it will distract them from the global health crisis. It will also help the country's tourism program as it will boost Manila Bay's popularity in the world.

The Manila Bay has long been an important part of the country's history. It was where United States Admiral Dewey defeated the Spanish fleet in the Spanish-American War in 1898, effectively ending Spain's 350-year colonial period and heralding the rise of the new world power, the US.

More recently, in 2008, the Supreme Court, acting on a complaint filed in 1999 by the Concerned Residents of Manila Bay, ordered that it be cleaned up of all its dirt and sewage. The court ordered various government agencies led by the DENR to rehabilitate the bay, so that it should again be fit for "swimming skin-diving, and other forms of contact recreation."

The problem of Manila Bay is pollution. Sewage from all over Metro Manila flows through the Pasig River into the bay, along with sewage and agricultural wastes from the provinces of Bataan, Pampanga, Bulacan, Rizal, Laguna, and Cavite. Because of the pollution, Metro Manilans are banned from swimming in the bay.



After he did a good job of cleaning up Boracay, DENR Secretary Cimatu was directed by President Duterte to do the same in Manila Bay. The job is more than ten times bigger but it can be done if the DENR can concentrate on it, using all possible resources.

A white beach may help improve the view in Manila Bay, but we hope to see substantial action from the DENR and other government agencies on the real problem – pollution of the bay's waters.



Plant mangroves, not cancerous fake sand

[GOTCHA](#) - [Jarius Bondoc](#) (The Philippine Star) - September 11, 2020 - 12:00am

Plant mangroves on the entire 190-kilometer coastline of Manila Bay. That will rehab the murky waters not cancerous artificial white sand on a half-kilometer seafront along Roxas Boulevard, Manila.

Alibis for the government's P400-million fake sanding are silly. It's "sea nourishment," an environment undersecretary blabbers. Viewing the "white beach" unquantifiably boosts people's mental health during pandemic, the presidential spokesman yatters.

If so, then consider this: Planting mangroves all along Bataan, Pampanga, Bulacan, Metro Manila and Cavite will green the shoreline. Fish, shells, crabs, birds and edible flora will also thrive. That's food, scenery, fresh air, clean sea for millions.

It can be done; it's being done. A stone's throw south of the bogus white sands is a genuine mangrove forest. It is the core of the 175-hectare Las Piñas-Parañaque Critical Habitat and Eco-Tourism Area. The bayside LPPCHEA hosts 11 endemic species of mangroves. Fruit-bearing native trees and bamboos intersperse. Eighty bird species feed and roost there, some from as far as Siberia. Protected are the rare Black-Winged Stilt, Chinese Egret and Philippine Duck.

The nature park is low-maintenance. For two decades now Sen. Cynthia Villar leads volunteers in sowing mangrove propagules. Picked from mature trees, they're first grown in tubs to sturdiness. Even without human intervention, elongated pointed seedlings snap and drop onto the seabed to multiply.

Effects are immense. Fish, mollusks and crustaceans spawn in the mangrove patch. "The more mangroves, the bigger the fish population in our area," Villar beams. Livelihood of 300,000 surrounding fisherfolk is sustained. The LPPCHEA spurs nature and educational tourism.

Mangroves are natural shields against land avulsion, storm surge and flood. Says a 2012 Cambridge University report: "(They) slow the flow of water as the surge moves inland and lessen the waves, lowering water levels and reducing damage behind the mangroves."

In 2013, the Ramsar Convention named LPPCHEA among the world's most vital wetlands. Like Tubbataha Reefs in the Sulu Sea and the Underground River in Palawan, it is an earth heritage site.

Many other mangrove plantations enrich coastal towns. In San Pascual, Batangas, Chevron's propagation saves rare Olive-Ridley Turtles. Pangasinan Gov. Amado Espino III maintains the beach forest in Bolinao. Former Quezon governor David Suarez led yearly replanting. In Silay City, Negros Occidental, a Japanese NGO lined the shore. In Bohol, German and Swiss businessmen handle various towns.

Largest replanting is in Prieto Diaz, Sorsogon, started in the 2000s by then-governor Raul Lee and environmentalist Rustum Mirasol. Now spanning 700 hectares, the mangrove forest holds all 26 Philippine species. Once a smoky, dreary seaside of charcoal makers, it is now a world attraction. Townsfolk host brisk tourism from high school biology students, college majors and scientists from all over.



Manila Bay mangrove replanting is just for starters. Government needs to enforce sewage treatment laws. No factory, restaurant or home waste should directly be expelled to canals, sewers and rivers onto the sea. Non-biodegradable plastic trash should be banned. Squatters need relocating for creekside cleanup.

Gawad Kalinga builds low-cost houses at P125,000 apiece. How many units could have been built from government's P400-million white sand-fill along 500 meters of baywalk? Answer: 3,200 family dwellings.

The environment department says its white sanding will go on. Kilometers more are to be dumped with the crushed dolomite. That would waste billions of pesos – when President Duterte says there's no more money for pandemic "ayuda."

Backwash will only disperse the synthetic sand and contaminate the 1,994-square-kilometer bay, says earth activist Greenpeace. It's mere whitewash of government's failure to rehabilitate the water body, adds Pamalakaya fishermen's group.

Dolomite powder is harmful to humans. Health U-Sec. Rosario Vergeire says it can impair breathing when inhaled, cause diarrhea when ingested and irritate the eyes and skin. Those are but the minor effects.

Maritime law expert Dr. Jay Batongbacal cites two US studies, by Lehigh Hanson Inc. in 2012 and Lhoist North America in 2018, of worse injury. Prolonged, repeated exposure to the silica can cause lung cancer, chronic respiratory disorder and silicosis. For this, project opponents can seek from the courts a Writ of Kalikasan, and even damages.

The dolomite was taken from Cebu and dumped in Manila without local government consent. It's fine with Manila city hall, but Cebu officials are alarmed. "It feels like we were robbed because we didn't know about it and the procedure was improper," says provincial board member John Borgonia, chairman for environment. Uncompensated, the substance came from conservation areas in Alcoy and Dalaguete towns.

Officials broke the law in not assessing first the environmental impact. Gloria Estenzo-Ramos, president of Oceana-Philippines, cites Presidential Decree 1586 and the Fisheries Code of 1998.

To all that, the beach whitening officials say they exempted themselves from legal requirements. As well from the 2008 Supreme Court ruling for 13 state agencies to clean up Manila Bay. They seem bent on ruining government's reputation.

* * *

Catch Sapol radio show, Saturdays, 8 to 10 a.m., dwIZ (882-AM).

My book "Exposés: Investigative Reporting for Clean Government" is available on Amazon: <https://tinyurl.com/Amazon-Exposes>
Paperback: <https://tinyurl.com/Anvil-Exposes> or at National Bookstores.

* * *

Gotcha archives: <https://tinyurl.com/Gotcha-Archives>

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/opinion/2020/09/11/2041538/plant-mangroves-not-cancerous-fake-sand>



EDITORIAL - Unahin muna ang sa bituka bago ang pagpapaganda

(Pilipino Star Ngayon) - September 9, 2020 - 12:00am



Hindi na biro ang nakikitang kalagayan ngayon dulot ng pandemya. Dapa ang ekonomiya. Maraming tindahan at establisimiento ang nagsara. Maraming nawalan ng trabaho. Maraming namamalimos na jeepney driver sa kalsada. Maraming nagpapaospital. Maraming nangangailangan ng tulong para makauwi sa kanilang probinsiya. Maraming estudyante ang problemado dahil wala silang gadgets, laptop at computer para sa blended learning. At kung anu-ano pang pangangailangan na ang ilan dahil sa pagka-stress ay nakakaisip nang gumawa nang masama.

Pero habang marami ang nag-iisip kung paano at kung saan hahanap nang kakainin at pupunan ang mga kakulangan sa buhay, narito ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) at pinagaganda ang Manila Bay bilang bahagi umano ng beautification project.

Para masunod ang kanilang planong pag-rehabilitate at pagpapaganda sa Manila Bay, nilagyan nila ng puting buhangin ang dalampasigan ng lawa. Ang tone-toneladang buhangin ay nanggaling pa sa Cebu. Ayon sa report, ang puting buhangin ay mula sa giniling na dolemite at inorder pa sa Alcoy, Cebu. Ang dolemite ay isang uri ng bato.

Ang beautification project ng Manila Bay ay may pondong P389 milyon.

Sabi ng DENR noong nakaraang taon pa ito pinlano at ngayon lamang naisagawa. Pinagkasundan umano ito bago itinuloy. Nagsimula ang pagreporma sa Manila Bay noong 2018. Pinalalim ang bukana ng lawa at inalis ang mga burak. Halos lahat ng mga dumi galing sa mga pabrika at establisimiento ay sa Manila Bay isinusuka.

Maganda ang hangarin ng DENR na maging malinis at kaaya-aya ang Manila Bay. Pero hindi ito katanggap-tanggap ngayong may pandemic crisis at kailangan ng pondo para sa mga nangangailangan. Hindi angkop na gawin ito sa panahong maraming problema ang bansa. Makakapaghintay naman ang pagpapaganda. Sana, hindi muna itinuloy at ang pondo ay ginamit sa mas kapaki-pakinabang. Nilaan na lang sana sa mga nangangailangan ng tulong. Ang P389 milyon na pondo para sa beautification ay marami nang mapapakain. Sana inuna muna ang para sa bituka.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/opinyon/2020/09/09/2041015/editorial-unahin-muna-ang-sa-bituka-bago-ang-pagpapaganda/amp/>



Swimming in debt

By Val A. Villanueva

September 9, 2020

When President Duterte steps down in 2022, one of his legacies to the country would be a pool of debt amounting to P13.7 trillion.

The amount catapults the debt-to-GDP ratio to a 17-year peak, a direct result of the government's near-term borrowings intended for containing the Covid-19 pandemic and stimulating the economy.

Between January and July of this year, the government has already scrounged from local and foreign sources some P1.86 trillion which is almost equal to total government borrowings for the past two years. In July, public debt obtained from the sale of treasury bills and bonds totaled P1.38 trillion, according to records from the Bureau of the Treasury. On the other hand, the sum of external borrowings from program and project loans and offshore bond issues reached P481.2 billion.

The country's debts after the Duterte presidency would eclipse the P5.94 trillion combined debts of six presidents, starting from the P526 billion debt incurred during the 21.7-year reign of ousted dictator Ferdinand Marcos Sr.; P344.1 billion during Corazon Aquino's 6.25-year term; P839.8 billion in Fidel Ramos' six years in office; P955.9 billion in 2.58 years under Joseph Ejercito; P2.4712 trillion in Gloria Arroyo's 9.42-year administration, and P808.6 billion in six years with Benigno Aquino III as president.

Don't get me wrong. There is nothing inherently wrong in a country that borrows in order to preserve financial liquidity and fuel growth. For developed nations experiencing economic slowdown, taking out loans at low interest rates is more preferable than raising taxes. For developing nations such as the Philippines, doing so is an indispensable shelter for gaps in domestic resources and for implementing programs that can help reduce poverty and cultivate longer-term growth. But the caveat has always been: can the Philippines pay it back?

Borrowings are also good if the money is used judiciously. In our case, doubts persist in the way the coffers are being managed, in the face of alleged large-scale corruption being unearthed almost on a regular basis. Many view Duterte's pronouncement that justice will be meted out on government officials suspected of "just a whiff" of corruption as a mere soundbite. They point out that the president has been quick in absolving his supporters of any wrongdoing, even before they undergo judicial proceedings. The tentacles of corruption seem to choke every government office: PhilHealth, Customs, Immigration... the list is just too long to enumerate here.

While saying that the country has already squeezed whatever is left in the budget for amelioration program for the pandemic, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has stealthily shipped dolomite rocks from Cebu to Manila, and crushed them into "white sand" to beautify Manila Bay. The approved budget of the Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program (Baywalk area) is P397.897 million, which costs the Filipino taxpayers around P795,000 per square meter. Compare this to the P25 million to P30 million average cost of a two-lane road per kilometer. Such amount could sustain a month's social amelioration funding for almost 80,000 vulnerable families.



I believe that, at this point, we are a country living beyond our means. Time can only tell how we will eventually become unable to make good on our fiscal promises. If worse comes to worse, we will be hard put at borrowing more money to get ourselves out of the hole we ourselves dug.

“Debt is like any other trap,” the 19th century American author Josh Billings has said: “Easy enough to get into, but hard enough to get out of.” How hard? “To the extent that there is no such thing as zero external debt, and both the most and the least-developed countries in the world alike [and all those in between] today struggle more than ever under the burden of what they owe.”

When we borrow too much and too often, repayments of loans and interests weaken the objective for which these are intended for: enhancing economic productivity. Amassed debts are akin to a tax on the potential harvest of a nation: A huge portion of the funds that should have gone to education, health, infrastructure and such priorities, is allocated to paying back our lenders.

According to Finance Secretary Sonny Dominguez, the country already borrowed \$8.83 billion from bilateral development partners and multilateral lenders, as well as the offshore commercial market, as of August 27, to finance the fight against the health and socioeconomic crises inflicted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

“Of the total amount, \$5.98 billion is budget-support financing from the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, a development agency of France, and the Japan International Cooperation Agency. Meanwhile, we raised \$2.35 billion from our latest global bond offering that fetched our lowest-ever coupon in the US dollar market. The remaining \$496.36 million is composed of grant and loan financing from our development partners for various Covid-19-specific projects,” Dominguez said.

To Sonny Africa, executive director of the independent think-tank IBON Foundation, “fixing the political and economic damage that Duterte has wrought in the last four years is already a daunting task.” He says that the prospect of what another two years will bring is scary, he told Al Jazeera, as he warned that the Philippines “is in the worst crisis of joblessness and collapsing household incomes in its history.”

A London School of Economics-trained development expert said that instead of addressing basic fiscal and economic reforms—such as social protection, free land distribution and the reversal of a “regressive” tax system—Duterte’s economic managers are continuing with a “business-as-usual” stance.

There is obviously a valid issue to all these accusations. Money is being wasted when it goes to something unimportant, while the nation wallows in the physical, emotional, mental, and economic suffering wrought by the pandemic. By and large, critics are saying that the Wuhan virus has undressed the Duterte administration and exposed it for what it really is: “the best and the brightest in theatrics and cosmetics.”

For comments and suggestions, e-mail me at mvala.v@gmail.com

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/09/09/swimming-in-debt/>



Saving Manila Bay

By [Gab Meija](#)

September 11, 2020

I REMEMBER when I was child, I was told that seeing the sunset in Manila Bay was one of the few hundred things I should do before I die. It was a romantic, nostalgic tale, in a sense, to watch the crisp perfect shape of our sun sinking beneath the capricious waves of the sea. A vibrant mixture of orange and red hues colors the skies amid the fading silhouette of the Mariveles mountain range and the peculiar cross of Mount Samat as dusk finishes its passing. It is a moment that many of us share — as people who have lived and are living in this once great city that we have always called home.

The Manila Bay is beautiful as it was and is. Yet it is now enshrouded by a gray haze from an overpopulated city and streets, leaving this once remarkable expanse as a passing memory for us to long for. Its once clean waters are now polluted by streams of trash and its air, as rancid as a decomposing organism. For some, Manila Bay was a source of life and love, where our parents and grandparents would go for dates, where coastal communities would get their fish, and where we could have escaped from the noise and conundrums of life, away from the city we spent all our days in. For others, it is a dying body of water, left only for the trash to be swept away by its currents and tides. But for all, it will always be the heart of our city. It is a place we should be proud of and a place we should have fixed long ago.

Times have really changed its waters. Yet in the many struggles and lived experiences we have shared in Manila, our leaders have treated it as some sort of joke, a comedic act on the national stage, placing crushed dolomites worth hundreds of millions of pesos in an attempt to beautify it without even considering the economic and environmental impact of such action on its waters and people. And after this, only for a raging typhoon and storm surge to instantly take all of these crushed rocks deep down the seafloor bed for no one to again see and remember.

Millions of pesos that could have been used instead to rehabilitate the Pasig River, the vein which ultimately connects Manila Bay to its source. Millions of pesos that could have been used to support and promote the quality of life of the people directly living surrounded by its waters. Millions of pesos that could have been used to educate the public about the importance of a clean environment to our human health amid an ongoing pandemic. Millions of pesos that could have been used to strengthen the enforcement of our Clean Water Act and our Solid Waste Management Act. Millions of pesos that could have been used to hold corporations and industries that directly pollute Manila Bay accountable. Millions of pesos that could have been used to plant mangroves and seagrass, which Manila Bay is naturally and ecologically attuned to. So much more practical and sustainable solutions that such a beautification project, a joke like this, could never amount to — not even worthy of being considered.

What is it in these white sands that we are hiding away from? A shore of white cosmetics meant to distract us from real pertinent social and economic issues the Manileños are currently facing amid a health crisis. It was a bold yet uneducated and costly move from our leaders, that, even with all the explanations and reasons they could come up with, it will still never be able to save Manila Bay. For saving and rehabilitating Manila Bay will take a strong concerted effort and political will with educated choices from the different municipalities that encompasses the Pasig River and the downward stream that ultimately leads to its end. An act that should've been done a long time ago and must be done now.

The true beauty of Manila Bay doesn't just reside in its white shores, it resides in its clean waters and the people all working and dreaming of that day when they can see that setting sun again.

Email: jgbmeija@gmail.com

Instagram: [@gabmeija](#)

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/09/11/opinion/columnists/saving-manila-bay/766985/>



Editorial cartoon, September 10, 2020

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:10 AM September 10, 2020



Editorial cartoon



DENR, EDC join forces to conserve 11 native trees

Published September 10, 2020, 8:03 PM

by [Ellayn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), through its Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau (ERDB), has partnered with an energy firm to conserve 11 of the country's most critically endangered native tree species.

The partnership with the Energy Development Corporation (EDC) was formalized through a memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed by ERDB Director Henry Adornado and Energy Development Corporation (EDC) corporate support function group head and Assistant Vice President Regina Victoria Pascual.

Secretary Roy Cimatu said that through the MOU, the DENR will be able to “more effectively conserve and propagate native tree species that are vital to sustaining biodiversity.”

The public can expect the DENR to build more partnerships to protect the environment even with the ongoing pandemic, he added.

Under the five-year MOU, the ERDB and EDC have agreed to collaborate on strengthening the BINHI program, an initiative of EDC that focuses on native tree conservation and aims to rescue and ensure propagation of selected 96 premium Philippine threatened species across the country.

The ERDB-EDC collaboration zeroes in on 11 rarest and most critically endangered tree species, namely, kadalis narig, malayakal, Mindanao narek, pinulog, Palawan narig, narig laot, kanining peneras, Cagayan narek, pianga, mapilig and Samar gisok.

They will also conduct in-situ conservation or the conservation of species in their natural habitats, which is considered the most appropriate way of preserving biodiversity.

The ERDB is also tasked to coordinate with potential EDC partners for the identification of different tree species, provide assistance in sourcing and propagation of seedlings, and assist in technicalities and protocols for tree planting.

“ERDB is very much willing to respond to the need to conserve our natural resources by providing full support in developing science-based propagation protocols or information on the selected tree species through our research, development and extension centers,” Adornado said.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/09/10/denr-edc-join-forces-to-conserve-11-native-trees/>



Kalikasan mas mapoprotektahan sa pagbuo ng Environmental Protection and Enforcement Bureau



September 10, 2020 @ 6:14 PM 11 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Tiniyak ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) na mas mapoprotektahan pa ang ating kalikasan sa pagbuo ng Environmental Protection and Enforcement Bureau (EPEB).

Ayon sa DENR ang EPEB ay magbubunga ng continuity, sustainability at improvement ng environmental law enforcement ng bansa upang mas lalo pang maprotektahan ang ating kalikasan.

Sa ibinigay na update ni Environmental Protection and Enforcement Task Force (EPETF) Executive Director Nilo Tamoria sa panukalang batas patungkol sa pagbubuo ng DENR Environmental Protection and Enforcement Bureau (EPEB) ay mas lalong maisusulong ang pagbabantay sa ating kalikasan sa pagsusumikap ng ahensya na maprotektahan ang ating likas na yaman.

Sinabi pa ng DENR sa ginanap na inter-agency consultation webinar na isinagawa ng EPETF noong Agosto 28, 2020, binigyan diin ni Tamoria na ang pagkakaroon ng permanenteng enforcement bureau sa ilalim ng DENR ay magdudulot ng continuity at sustainability sa mga pagsusumikap ng ahensya sa environment law enforcement kahit na pa magbago umano ang administrasyon ng gobyerno.

Idinigagdag pa ng DENR na mabibigyan nito ng higit na kapasidad ang DENR enforces sa pamamagitan ng pagpapaunlad ng mga sistema at stratehiya ng enforcement, base na rin sa mga best practice at paggamit ng mga pinaka-advance at pinakamaasahang teknolohiya. **Santi Celario**

Source: <https://www.remate.ph/kalikasan-mas-mapoprotektahan-sa-pagbuo-ng-environmental-protection-and-enforcement-bureau/>



DENR-9 warns poachers, collectors on illegal plant trade

Published September 10, 2020, 8:13 AM

by [Nonoy Lacson](#)

ZAMBOANGA CITY – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Zamboanga Peninsula (DENR-9) warned collectors of wild flora directly from the forest, especially those considered as threatened species, that they need to secure a permit first before making any purchase.



Photo by Nonoy Lacson/ MANILA BULLETIN

DENR-9 Executive Director Crisanta Marlene P. Rodriguez said wild flora plan poachers caught gathering wild plants in the forest without a permit are violating Republic Act 9147, the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act.

Rodriguez said Department Administrative Order No. 2017- 11 stipulates that “the collection and trade of threatened species are prohibited unless such acts are covered by a permit issued by the DENR.

She added that the collection of wild plant species within the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System (E-NIPAS) sites strictly for research purposes will require Gratuitous Permits issued by the DENR.

If the wild plants collected are classified as critically endangered, violators can face imprisonment from 6 to 12 years and a fine of P100,000 to P1 million.

It was learned that several wild plant gatherers are collecting wild flora from the hill site and mountain and selling these to plant lovers at a price ranging from P500 to P20,000 each.



Photo by Nonoy Lacson

Among the wild flora considered as critically endangered are the Giant Staghorn (*Platycerium grande*), Waling-waling (*Vanda sanderiana*), and multiple species of *Rafflesia*.



Other threatened species include lipstick plants (*Aeschynanthus firmus*, *Aeschynanthus littoralis*, and *Aeschynanthus ovatus*), and Zebra Plant (*Alocasia zebrina*).

Wild plants act as important reservoirs and sources of insects, mites, and nematodes, she said.

She added that certain wild plant species may be indispensable to a vector as its alternate host, acting as an essential intermediary in the ecology of the virus.

Rodriguez has instructed the different DENR-9 field offices to strengthen the surveillance and monitoring of illegal plant trade and strictly impose fines and penalties on the offenders.



Vendors nabbed for selling wildlife

[IAN OCAMPO FLORA](#)

September 10, 2020

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO -- Two vendors were arrested by the wildlife enforcement team of the provincial office of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Monday, September 7, 2020, for illegally selling 11 live Luzon monitor lizards, locally known as “bayawak,” along the highway of Sasmuan road in Pampanga.

Laudemir Salac, Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer (Penro) of the DENR in Pampanga, identified the suspects as Ariel Torres and Daniel Sioco, both from Barangay San Nicolas in Lubao, Pampanga.

They were caught in the act for illegal selling Luzon monitor lizards (scientific: *Varanus marmoratus*).

“Collecting, hunting or possessing and trading of wildlife without necessary permit from the DENR is prohibited under the law. We need to protect and conserve our wildlife species instead of selling them. They are important biodiversity and vital to our ecosystem,” he explained.

He said that the suspects were selling the wildlife ranging from P400 to P700 per piece depending on its size, which came from a fishpond in Lubao town here and in Bataan province. The suspects have also removed the teeth of the wildlife, he added.

The wildlife was turned over to an accredited wildlife rescue center in Clark Freeport Zone to undergo care and rehabilitation.

If found guilty, the suspects may be imprisoned up to one year and a maximum fine of P1 million, depending on the species, for violating Section 27 of the Republic Act No. 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act, according to Michael Lopez, wildlife officer of DENR regional office.

Paquito Moreno, executive director of the DENR, warned the public to avoid human-wildlife interaction that can lead to zoonotic diseases and the next pandemic.

“Bayawak is favorite for its meat as exotic food and as a pet,” he said.

He also appealed to the public to report illegal wildlife trade and other wildlife crimes to the nearest DENR field office in their area.

Since 2015, the DENR has saved 245 various wildlife species from illegal trade and filed criminal charges against 17 individuals.

Bayawak is a large species of monitor lizard, which can reach a total length of two meters. It belongs to the family Varanidae and is endemic to the Philippines.



Authorities seize illegally-cut logs in Cagayan

Published September 10, 2020, 12:15 PM

by [Freddie Lazaro](#)

CAMP MELCHOR F DELA CRUZ, Gamu, Isabela — Joint operatives from the army, police, coast guard, and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) have seized at least 900 board feet illegally-cut logs in Sitio Kawayan, Barangay Sta. Margarita, Baggao, Cagayan, according to the army's 5th Infantry Division spokesman, Maj. Noriel Tayaban.

Tayaban said the seized hot lumber, which were flitches of Narra and Kamagong species, were abandoned and submerged underwater.

Army's 5th Infantry Division Commander, Brig. Gen. Laurence E. Mina commended the joint effort of different government agencies that led to the successful confiscation of the hot lumbers.

"We are mandated as members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to fully support the all-out-battle of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) against illegal logging within our Area of Responsibility (AOR)," said Mina.

Mina assured that the army will extend all assistance to DENR to stop the illegal logging operations in the area.

"We appeal to the whole community to fully cooperate with the government's campaign in the protection and preservation of the environment not just for us, but for the next generations to come. We only have one Earth to protect. Let us do our share," Mina said.



Masungi loses 70 narra trees to poachers

By Jonathan L. Mayuga

September 10, 2020

The Masungi Georeserve in Baras, Rizal has reported the loss of some 70 narra trees to poachers.

Billie Bumanlag, a trustee and advocacy officer at the georeserve, said rangers monitored the presence of the poachers in the area on Thursday last week and sought the assistance of local policemen.

However, when the law enforcers arrived, the suspects had already managed to escape and left a trail of dead narra trees and bamboo poles. Narra is a critically endangered tree species with the highest level of conservation status.



Environmental groups tell Gatchalian: Quit pushing legalization of waste incineration

Published September 10, 2020, 5:35 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

Environmental groups have called on Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian to stop using the “garbage crisis” to push for the legalization of waste incineration under the guise of waste-to-energy (WTE) projects.

Glenn Ymata of No Burn Pilipinas said Gatchalian has been citing government data to justify what he calls a “garbage crisis” and to condition the minds of the public to accept his proposal of allowing waste incineration in the country.

“Sen. Gatchalian’s proposal for waste incineration will only turn the situation from bad to worse,” Mother Earth Foundation chair Sonia Mendoza said.

“For every four trucks of waste incinerated, at least one truck of ash residues is produced that needs to be disposed of in landfills as well. Ashes from burnt materials are more difficult to manage than ordinary garbage because these residues contain contaminants which are dangerous to human health and the environment, hence we will need more engineered sanitary landfills for the ash from the WTE incinerators and this is a big added cost to our waste management,” she added.

Gatchalian is the principal author of Senate Bill 1789 or the Waste-to-Energy Bill. Once the proposed legislation is approved, burning of waste through the incineration process becomes legal, which is prohibited under the Clean Air Act and Ecological Solid Waste Management Act.

Apart from worsening toxic pollution, the proposal will only benefit the plastics industry and foreign waste management companies, the groups said.

“If only the National Solid Waste Management Commission and DENR did their job in identifying non-environmentally accepted products (NEAP) like single use plastics, our residual waste can be reduced significantly to eight percent or measly 1.67 million metric tons,” EcoWaste Coalition national coordinator Aileen Lucero said.

“Should the Gatchalian proposal become law, the only real winners would be foreign waste management companies, the plastics industry and the corporations who profit from the continuing use and proliferation of sachets and other throwaway plastics. Plastics are the ideal feedstock for these waste-to-energy plants, and they provide a convenient escape hatch for plastic polluters to evade their responsibility for dealing with the pollution associated with their products,” Break Free From Plastic global coordinator Von Hernandez said.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/09/10/environmental-groups-tell-gatchalian-quit-pushing-legalization-of-waste-incineration/>

NWRB appeals to public to conserve water as Angat Dam level goes below normal

Marje Pelayo • September 10, 2020



MANILA, Philippines – The National Water Resources Board (NWRB) appeals to the public to conserve water as Angat Dam’s water level goes down the minimum operating level.

As of Thursday (September 10), Angat’s level is at around 178.35 meters which is lower than its minimum operating level of 180 meters.

“We appeal to the public to conserve water and use water responsibly to help in our efforts to manage the level of the Dam and avoid or slow down the lowering,” Sevillo David Jr. said, Executive Director of NWRB.

The official said the September allocation for the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) remains at 46 cms, while the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) gets 30 cms.

“Considering that we are at the middle part of the wet cropping season in Bulacan and Pampanga and the need for steady supply of water for Metro Manila as preventive measure against COVID, allocation for September is currently maintained even if it is below the 180 minimum operating level,” David said.

The NWRB is collaborating with other government agencies such as MWSS, NIA, the National Power Corporation (NPC) and the state weather bureau PAGASA in closely monitoring the situation in Angat and the impacts to water supply for Metro Manila and irrigation.

The agency hopes that Angat’s water level will improve in the coming months.

“We are guided by the near normal to above normal rainfall projections of Pagasa for the rest of the year and probable occurrence of a La Nina Episode by the last quarter of the year,” David said.

“We expect the dam level to improve with the projected rainfall this month until the end of the year,” he said.

Source: <https://www.untvweb.com/news/nwrbs-expects-angat-dam-level-to-improve-this-month/>



Patay sa COVID-19 sa Pinas, higit 4,000 na; Kaso papalo na sa 249,000



September 10, 2020 @ 4:11 PM 15 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Umabot na sa 4,066 ang nasawi sa coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) ang namatay sa Pilipinas, matapos na madagdag ngayong Huwebes ang 80 nasawi, ayon sa pinakahuling tala ng Department of Health.

Nadagdagan pa ng 3,821 kaso ng COVID-19 ang naitala ng DOH ngayong Septyembre 10 kung saan pumalo na sa 248,947 ang kabuuang kaso sa Pilipinas.

Sa recoveries naman ay 563 ang naitala kaya umabot na sa 186,058 ang mga gumagaling na pasyente sa naturang sakit.

Ayon sa DOH, ang mga confirmed case ay iniulat base sa total tests na isinasagawa ng 105 mula sa 117 kasalukuyang mga operational labs sa bansa.

Nasa 12 laboratoryo naman ang hindi nakapagsumite ng kanilang datos sa COVID-19 Data Repository System (CDRS). Kabilang sa mga ito ang:

1. Amosup Seamen's Hospital
2. Butuan Medical Center
3. Calamba Medical Center
4. Cebu TB Reference Laboratory
5. Dagupan Doctors Villaflo Memorial Hospital
6. Dr. Rafael S. Tumbokon Memorial Hospital
7. Green City Medical Center
8. Ilocos Training Regional Medical Center (GX)
9. Maria Reyna Xavier University Hospital
10. NKTi GX
11. Philippine Genome Center
12. Qualimed Hospital – San Jose del Monte

Sa bagong mga kumpirmadong kaso ngayong araw, 3,277 (86%) ang naitala mula August 28 – September 10, 2020 kung saan ang mga rehiyon na may mataas na kaso ay ang NCR na may (1,731 o 53%), Region 4A (661 o 20%) at Region 3 (196 o 6%).

Sa mga pumanaw, 23 ang naitala sa September ang, 33 noong Agosto (41%), 10 noong Hulyo (12%), 11 noong Hunyo (14%), at tatlo noong Mayo (4%).

Mula naman sa NCR ang 35 o 44%, Region 7 ang 16 o 20%, Region 4A ang 13 o 16%, Region 6 na anim o 8%, Region 8 ay tatlo o 4%, tig-dalawa naman o 2% sa Region 3, Region 10, BARMM habang sa Region 5 ay isa o 1%.



Tinanggal naman sa total case counts ang 17 duplicates kung saa 12 rito ang recovered cases.

Bukod dito, mayroon ding 36 cases na iniulat na recovered ngunit matapos ang final validation ay nalaman na pumanaw ang 35 habang 1 ang aktibong kaso. **Jocelyn Tabangcura-Domenden**



Gov't debt seen rising to 14-year high by year's end

September 10, 2020 | 7:49 pm



THE Bureau of the Treasury headquarters in Manila.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT (GG) debt will likely be the equivalent of 46.7% of gross domestic product (GDP) by the end of 2020, the highest level in 14 years, as the government borrows more to fund its pandemic containment measures, the Treasury said.

National Treasurer Rosalia V. de Leon told a Senate budget briefing Thursday that the projection compares with the 2019 level of 34.1% of GDP.

If realized, this debt level would be the highest since the 49.3% posted in 2006, according to Finance department data.

"In 2020, our GG debt as a percentage of GDP (will be) about 46.7% and we will be in the middle of the pack against other ASEAN countries," she said, citing estimates for Thailand at 49.5% of GDP and Malaysia at 65.5%.

Pandemic borrowing has reversed the declining trend of GG debt-to-GDP starting in 2017.

Fitch Ratings had forecast a debt-to-GDP ratio of 47.8% this year, 49.8% in 2021 and 50.1% in 2022.

The GG debt stock was P6.65 trillion last year. Of the total, 62% or P4.11 trillion was provided by domestic creditors.

GG debt is the outstanding debt of the national government, social security institutions and local governments less the intra-sector debt holding of government securities and the bond sinking fund.



Ms. De Leon said despite the increasing debt stock, much of the budget still goes to productive spending since interest payments as a share of revenue and expenditure remain low.

“Even our interest payments were not eating up a lot of our expenditure nor of our revenue. In the 70s, it was about 30% of our revenue and even our expenditure. But now, it’s just about 12% at most so we’re saying we can still channel a lot of our revenue and a share of our expenditure to productive spending like infrastructure and social services,” Ms. De Leon said.

She said interest payments are expected to account for 19% of revenue, and 11.9% of expenditure in 2021.

She said the debt stock will taper off once the government returns to fiscal consolidation and returns to a fiscal deficit of about 3% of GDP.

The outstanding debt stock hit P9.16 trillion at the end of July, two-thirds of it domestically sourced.

The government plans to borrow P3 trillion this year to plug its budget deficit, which is projected to hit 9.6% of GDP. — **Beatrice M. Laforga**



PH working with Chinese firms that violated environment laws in South China Sea sends ‘bad message’ — Carpio

By [CNN Philippines Staff](#)

Published Sep 10, 2020 5:05:51 PM



(FILE PHOTO)

Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, September 10)— The Philippines' decision to push through with projects with Chinese companies found to be involved in reclamation activities in the South China Sea sends a “bad message” for the country, a former Supreme Court justice said Thursday, citing violations of environmental and humanitarian laws in the area.

Retired Senior Associate Justice Antonio Carpio said the activities of such Chinese companies— particularly dredging and building artificial islands— pose risks to the marine environment with the natural resources getting destroyed in the process.

“That’s a destruction of the marine environment, that’s a crime against humanity,” Carpio said in an interview with The Source, citing a violation of the country’s fisheries law.

“Here is a Chinese company that violated international law, violated domestic law of the Philippines, and we allow them now to give them a government contract--a juicy government contract to reclaim in Manila Bay? The message there is China can continue seizing, continue encroaching on our Exclusive Economic Zone, destroying our coral reefs. And it will be business as usual for the same Chinese companies that destroy these atoll reefs,” he added.

In a previous interview with CNN Philippines, Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro "Teddy Boy" Locsin, Jr. said that he will [recommend terminating contracts](#) with Chinese firms found to be behind incursions in the disputed sea — similar to the move carried out by the US.

The US government earlier imposed sanctions on Beijing's state-run firms as well as visa restrictions on Chinese nationals [involved in reclamation and militarization activities in disputed waters](#).

Malacanang, however, refused to follow suit, saying all deals with Chinese companies will proceed. Chinese Ambassador Huang Xilian also earlier assured companies involved in local projects will comply with existing Philippine laws and regulations.

In 2016, a ruling by a Hague-based international arbitral tribunal invalidated China's sweeping claims to the South China Sea and likewise recognized the Philippines' sovereign rights in areas within its 200-nautical mile EEZ.

China, however, has continuously refused to acknowledge the landmark decision, which it labeled as “illegal and invalid.”

Source: <https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/9/10/Chinese-companies-South-China-Sea-militarization-violation-environment-law.html>



‘Animal, avian population down by 70% in 50 yrs’

posted September 11, 2020 at 12:50 am by [AFP](#)

Global animal, bird and fish populations have plummeted more than two-thirds in less than 50 years due to rampant over-consumption, experts said Thursday in a stark warning to save nature in order to save ourselves.

Human activity has severely degraded three quarters of all land and 40 percent of Earth’s oceans, and our quickening destruction of nature is likely to have untold consequences on our health and livelihoods.

The Living Planet Index, which tracks more than 4,000 species of vertebrates, warned that increasing deforestation and agricultural expansion were the key drivers behind a 68-percent average decline in populations between 1970 and 2016.

It warned that continued natural habitat loss increased the risk of future pandemics as humans expand their presence into ever closer contact with wild animals.

2020’s Living Planet Report, a collaboration between WWF International and the Zoological Society of London, is the 13th edition of the biennial publication tracking wildlife populations around the world.

WWF International director general Marco Lambertini told AFP of the staggering loss of Earth’s biodiversity since 1970.

“It’s an accelerating decrease that we’ve been monitoring for 30 years and it continues to go in the wrong direction,” he said.

“In 2016 we documented a 60-percent decline, now we have a 70-percent decline.

“All this is in a blink of an eye compared to the millions of years that many species have been living on the planet,” Lambertini added.

The last half-decade has seen unprecedented economic growth underpinned by an explosion in global consumption of natural resources.

Whereas until 1970, humanity’s ecological footprint was smaller than the Earth’s capacity to regenerate resources, the WWF now calculates we are over-using the planet’s capacity by more than half.

While aided by factors such as invasive species and pollution, the biggest single driver of species lost is land-use changes: normally, industry converting forests or grasslands into farms.

This takes an immense toll on wild species, who lose their homes.

But it also requires unsustainable levels of resources to uphold: one third of all land mass and three quarters of all freshwater are now dedicated to producing food.

The picture is equally dire in the ocean, where 75 percent of fish stocks are overexploited.

And while wildlife is declining rapidly, species are disappearing faster in some places than others.

The index showed that the tropical regions of Central and South America had seen a 94-percent fall in species since 1970.

“It is staggering. It is ultimately an indicator of our impact on the natural world,” Lambertini said.

The Living Planet update comes alongside a study co-authored by more than 40 NGOs and academic institutions, which lays out ways of arresting and reversing the losses human consumption has inflicted.

The research, published in the journal Nature, suggests that reducing food waste and favoring healthier and more environmentally friendly diets could help to “bend the curve” of degradation.

Source: <https://manilastandard.net/mobile/article/333843>



The Philippine Coast Guard seizes 58 dead pangolins—a critically endangered species—as well as 14 boxes of seahorses and one carton of seadragons with the market value of almost P1 million, at North Harbor in Manila on January 13, 2017. The items were about to be smuggled to other Asian countries. DANNY PATA

World wildlife plummets more than two-thirds in 50 years —index

Published September 10, 2020 6:19pm

By PATRICK GALEY, Agence France-Presse

PARIS — Global animal, bird and fish populations have plummeted more than two-thirds in less than 50 years due to rampant over-consumption, experts said Thursday in a stark warning to save nature in order to save ourselves.

Human activity has severely degraded three quarters of all land and 40 percent of Earth's oceans, and our quickening destruction of nature is likely to have untold consequences on our health and livelihoods.

The Living Planet Index, which tracks more than 4,000 species of vertebrates, warned that increasing deforestation and agricultural expansion were the key drivers behind a 68 percent average decline in populations between 1970 and 2016.

It warned that continued natural habitat loss increased the risk of future pandemics as humans expand their presence into ever closer contact with wild animals.

2020's Living Planet Report, a collaboration between WWF International and the Zoological Society of London, is the 13th edition of the biennial publication tracking wildlife populations around the world.

WWF International director general Marco Lambertini told AFP of the staggering loss of Earth's biodiversity since 1970.

"It's an accelerating decrease that we've been monitoring for 30 years and it continues to go in the wrong direction," he said.

"In 2016 we documented a 60-percent decline, now we have a 70-percent decline.

"All this is in a blink of an eye compared to the millions of years that many species have been living on the planet," Lambertini added.



'Staggering' fall

The last half-decade has seen unprecedented economic growth underpinned by an explosion in global consumption of natural resources.

Whereas until 1970, humanity's ecological footprint was smaller than the Earth's capacity to regenerate resources, the WWF now calculates we are over using the planet's capacity by more than half.

While aided by factors such as invasive species and pollution, the biggest single driver of species lost is land-use changes: normally, industry converting forests or grasslands into farms. This takes an immense toll on wild species, who lose their homes.

But it also requires unsustainable levels of resources to uphold: one third of all land mass and three quarters of all freshwater are now dedicated to producing food.

The picture is equally dire in the ocean, where 75 percent of fish stocks are over exploited.

And while wildlife is declining rapidly, species are disappearing faster in some places than others.

The index showed that the tropical regions of Central and South America had seen a 94-percent fall in species since 1970.

"It is staggering. It is ultimately an indicator of our impact on the natural world," said Lambertini.

'From sad to worried'

The Living Planet update comes alongside a study co-authored by more than 40 NGOs and academic institutions, which lays out ways of arresting and reversing the losses human consumption has inflicted.

The research, published in the journal Nature, suggests that reducing food waste and favoring healthier and more environmentally friendly diets could help to "bend the curve" of degradation. Coupled with radical conservation efforts, these measures could avert more than two-thirds of future biodiversity loss, the authors suggested.

"We need to act now. Rates of biodiversity recovery are typically much slower than those of recent biodiversity loss," said lead study author David Leclere, research scholar at the International Institute of Applied System Analysis.

"This implies that any delay in action will allow further biodiversity losses that might take decades to restore."

Leclere also warned of "irreversible" losses to biodiversity, such as when a species goes extinct. Lambertini said that, like public discourse on climate change, societies are increasingly concerned about the links between the health of the planet and human well-being.

"From being sad about losing nature, people are beginning to actually get worried," he said.

"We still have a moral duty to co-exist with life on the planet, but there's now this new element of impact on our society, our economy and, of course, our health. — AFP

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/scitech/science/755075/world-wildlife-plummets-more-than-two-thirds-in-50-years-index/story/>



Could unlocking the mystery of the mealworm's gut help solve our plastic crisis?

Video by Ed Scott-Clarke; story by Tom Page, CNN

Updated 0856 GMT (1656 HKT) September 10, 2020

(CNN) Can't stomach the plastic pollution that washes up on beaches, kills sea life and makes its way into the food chain? Well mealworms can -- literally.

Growing to more than 2cm long, mealworms are the larval stage of the mealworm beetle. Scientists have known for some time now about their ability [to eat certain plastics](#), and researchers are now learning more about what's going on inside mealworms and replicating the process outside them.

It takes around 3,000 to 4,000 mealworms about a week to eat one Styrofoam coffee cup, and it's the bacteria living in their guts that break down the plastic, says Anja Malawi Brandon, a PhD candidate at Stanford University researching the subject.

When mealworms eat polystyrene -- the material used in Styrofoam, and often found in packaging -- they excrete [half of it as carbon dioxide](#), and some as partially degraded particles, raising concerns they could add to the growing problem of microplastics -- tiny pieces of plastic that can end up in the food chain. But harnessing their biology could present new opportunities for how we deal with waste plastic.

Brandon, a plastics and bioplastics sustainability expert, was part of a team that last year published research showing that mealworms could eat polystyrene, as well as polyethylene -- one of the most widely used plastics in the world, found in everything from shopping bags to detergent bottles.

It also showed that when eating polystyrene, the mealworms [excreted a flame retardant](#) that is sometimes added to the plastic. That meant the [toxic chemical](#) didn't accumulate inside the mealworms, so it wouldn't be passed up the food chain if they were used as a protein-rich food for livestock like chickens and pigs.



Stanford PhD candidate Anja Malawi Brandon in the lab.

Further research has now isolated the plastic-eating bacteria found in the mealworms' guts and grown them outside of the mealworm.

"Interestingly, the bacteria we identified are not crazy new, unheard of bacteria -- they're bacteria that have been associated with the breakdown of other environmental pollutants before," Brandon tells CNN.

"It shows that in the right environment these already-known bacteria are capable of plastic degradation," she continues. "This potentially means that other bacteria that are known to fortuitously break down other chemicals could break down plastics under the right conditions."

Brandon says degrading plastic with bacteria outside the mealworm is currently slower than the rate a mealworm is capable of, but under the right conditions, the degradation is "more rapid than other bacterial systems to date." She cannot share some details -- including the names of the bacteria -- as the research has not yet been published.

A natural recycling solution?

Plastic pollution is one of the most pressing environmental issues. A recent report from [The Pew Charitable Trusts](#) projected the volume of plastic entering the ocean could nearly triple to 29 million metric tons per year by 2040 -- the equivalent of 50 kilograms for every meter of the planet's coastline.

It also said there was "no single solution," but that "an ambitious recycling strategy" could slash 31-45% of plastic pollution.

Brandon says that for mealworms to be a viable recycling solution there would need to be a system to collect and treat the partly digested plastic they excrete. Using the bacteria in bioreactor vats instead could be easier to control and would leave no plastic residue. There's even the potential to use bacteria to break down plastics into monomers, the building blocks for other plastics.



Ramani Narayan, distinguished professor in chemical engineering and materials science at Michigan State University, says the science behind the Stanford research is "great," but cautions against extrapolating it into a solution for treating waste plastic.

"(Using mealworms is) not going to be a solution until you can say how you can integrate it into existing waste management infrastructures -- and that's where I see the big disconnect," he says, pointing out that dealing with all our plastic waste would require a vast number of mealworms.

Proven industrial processes to recycle polystyrene and polyethylene already exist, he says, adding that opportunities lie not in technology but in the collection and recovery of these plastics.

As for biological solutions, Narayan advocates designing plastics that can be composted by microbes alongside other biodegradable solids in existing waste management environments. "You don't want to change the [waste management] ecosystem; you want to harness the ecosystem to help you manage the waste," he says.

For now, Brandon's tests with the bacteria continue. "We're still a little way off from doing it at scale," she says, "but with our new research ... we have developed a system that will enable us to move to this future a lot faster. Hopefully this will be a viable technology."



Close to 5 million food wrappers collected from beaches in 24 hours

[AFP Relaxnews](#) / 04:27 PM September 10, 2020



In 2019, the 943,195 volunteers who turned out for International Coastal Cleanup day collected more food packaging items (4,771,602) than cigarette butts (4.2 million) from the world's beaches. Image: HearttoHeart0225 / iStock.com

A new report by the NGO Ocean Conservancy has revealed that items of food packaging are now more numerous than cigarette butts on the world's beaches.

Published on Sept. 8, 2020, the Ocean Conservancy report provides details of the 32.5 million items of waste removed from beaches in 116 countries across the globe by 943,195 volunteers who turned out for International Coastal Cleanup Day in 2019.

Food packaging, notably chip bags, candy wrappers, drink pouches and soda cans, was the main category of waste found, accounting for 4,771,602 items, many of them made from non-recyclable plastic. For the first time, the annual cleanup, which collected trash from 39,358 kilometers of beaches and waterways, found more items of this type than cigarette butts.

“More and more food-related plastics are ending up in our environment, where they persist and threaten wildlife indefinitely,” points out Allison Schutes, the director of Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup.

Among the other plastic waste collected, the NGO counted 1.9 million plastic beverage bottles, 1.5 million bottle caps and 942,992 straws and stirrers. *NVG*

Source: <https://technology.inquirer.net/103859/close-to-5-million-food-wrappers-collected-from-beaches-in-24-hours>



Climate crisis could displace 1.2 billion people by 2050, report warns

By Jessie Yeung, CNN

Published Sep 10, 2020 6:18:45 PM



(CNN) — The [global climate crisis](#) could see more than a billion people displaced from their homes in the next 30 years, as ecological disasters drive mass migrations and greater armed conflict, according to [a new report](#) released Wednesday.

The Ecological Threat Register, conducted by the Sydney-based Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), projected that as many as 1.2 billion people around the world could be displaced by 2050. No country will be able to escape the impact of the climate crisis -- but the world's poorest and most vulnerable populations will be hardest hit.

"Ecological threats and climate change pose serious challenges to global development and peacefulness," the report said. "The world's least resilient countries, when faced with ecological breakdowns, are more likely to experience civil unrest, political instability, social fragmentation and economic collapse."

The report drew on data from international organizations like the United Nations, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, the Food and Agriculture Organization, and the IEP's prior research on countries' resilience levels. Using these figures, the IEP then calculated the relative threats of population growth, water stress, food insecurity, droughts, floods, cyclones, and rising temperature and sea levels.

It found that more than a billion people lived in 31 countries that had low resilience -- meaning they aren't equipped to withstand the impact of ecological change in the coming decades.

The regions facing the highest number of threats are Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, the report said.

"Not all of these people will be displaced, however it is likely that a large number of them will be," said the IEP.

Better-resourced countries in places like North America and Europe will be more able to manage the effects of these disasters -- but they'll likely face huge flows of climate refugees, the report warned.

"This will have huge social and political impacts, not just in the developing world, but also in the developed, as mass displacement will lead to larger refugee flows to the most developed countries," said IEP founder Steve Killelea in [a news release](#), adding that ecological change was "the next big global threat to our planet."

Food and water scarcity

The global population currently stands at 7.8 billion. That number is expected to reach 10 billion by 2050 -- straining the world's already stretched natural resources, the report said, citing data from the UN's Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

Most of this population growth is expected to take place in countries with ongoing armed conflict, like those in Sub-Saharan Africa, the report said.



Citing research from the global non-profit organization World Resource Institute, the report projected that by 2050, global demand for food will increase by 50% and 3.5 billion people could suffer from food insecurity.

Water scarcity may be an even bigger issue -- already, there are more than 2.6 billion people facing high or extreme water stress, meaning they either don't have enough water for their needs or that their water supply is at risk of disruption, the report said.

Climate change has caused disrupted rainfall, rising temperatures, and other ecological impacts that are already creating water crises -- in 2019, Chennai, India's sixth biggest city, nearly ran out of water. Water had to be trucked in daily from other states, with people standing in line for hours in the sun to fill up jugs with their daily water ration.

By 2040, a total of 5.4 billion people -- or more than half of the world's projected population -- will live in countries facing high or extreme water stress. India and China, the world's top two most populous countries, will be among those countries, the report said.

It could also spell even greater violence and conflict, which not only destabilizes economies and governments but drives mass migration. In the past decade alone, water-related violent incidents have increased by 270% worldwide, the IEP said, citing water solutions company WorldWater.

Natural disasters

Recent years have seen dramatic increases in natural disasters around the world, which experts have long warned are the symptoms of a worsening climate crisis -- raging [wildfires](#) in California, [heat waves](#) across Europe, fears of a [dam collapse](#) in China and a [record-breaking hurricane](#) in the southern United States.

Asia-Pacific has been the most affected region; 29% of all natural disasters in the past 30 years have taken place there, the study found. Europe had the second highest numbers of natural disasters globally.

In 2019, India faced the largest population displacement due to natural disasters, with 5 million people having to leave their homes, the study said. Globally, natural disasters displaced 25 million people last year -- and the number will likely keep rising, the research team found.

And these natural disasters strike hardest in poorer countries; they kill seven times more people in the least developed nations than in highly developed ones, the report found, using socioeconomic indicators from the IEP's previous research on ecological resilience. It's not because the disasters in poorer countries happen more frequently or with greater severity -- but because those nations are less able to handle the shock.

All these threats combined will create a migration crisis that can then cause spinoff effects like heightened political instability, global insecurity and greater hostility toward immigrants.

International cooperation and foreign climate-related aid will be essential in mitigating these effects and helping developing countries build better resilience, the report said. This type of international aid has already increased 34 fold from 2000 to 2018 as the full extent of the crisis became clear -- but they still "fall well short of what is needed to address these issues going forward," the report warned.

This story was first published on CNN.com, "[Climate crisis could displace 1.2 billion people by 2050, report warns.](#)"