

DATE : 1<sup>st</sup> JAN 2019

DAY : Sunday

**DENR**

**IN THE NEWS**

**Strategic Communication and Initiative Service**



Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

PHILIPPINE ENVIRONMENTAL DAILY  
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# DENR: Manila Bay swimmable by December

By Melvin Gascon  
@melvingasconINQ

It may not end up like the turquoise waters of Boracay or El Nido, but the hyperpolluted Manila Bay would at least be swimmable after a major rehab by the end of the year, officials promised on Saturday.

An interagency task force will attempt to bring down coliform contamination of the bay to acceptable levels with a P47-billion "Manila Bay Action Plan," said Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu.

In a statement on Saturday, Cimatu said the Department of Environment and Natural Resources

(DENR) would try to reduce the bay's fecal contamination to make it suitable for swimming and other public activities by December 2019.

The latest water test shows that fecal coliform level in Manila Bay is 330 million most probable number for every 100 milliliters.

### Strict implementation

The DENR target is less than 270 MPN. The acceptable level is 100MPN/100 ml for Class SB, or recreational water, which is for bathing, swimming, skin diving and fishing.

The strict implementation

of Republic Act No. 9275, or the Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004, will be the "key to addressing water quality issues and other environmental problems in the historic bay," according to the environment chief.

### Little progress in 10 years

Cimatu earlier lamented that "little progress has been done" over the past 10 years since the Supreme Court mandated over a dozen agencies to clean up Manila Bay.

The court directed the DENR and the departments of the interior and local government, education, health, agri-

culture, public works and highways, and budget and management to improve the water quality of Manila Bay to Class SB level.

The other agencies that will also be involved in this task are the Philippine Coast Guard, Philippine National Police Maritime Group, Philippine Ports Authority, Metro Manila Development Authority, Manila Water Sewerage System and the Local Water Utilities Administration.

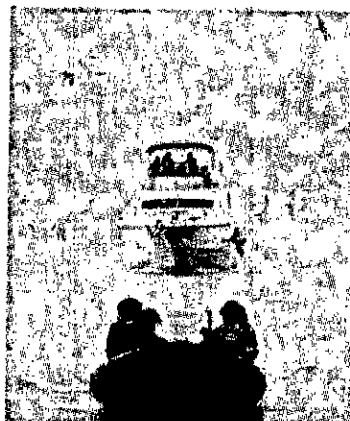
Cimatu said he would meet with representatives of these agencies, local governments and business operators along the bay on Tuesday to map out the three-

phase action plan—cleanup and improvement of water quality; rehabilitation; protection and sustainment.

### Estero cleanup

Phase 1 begins this year and will include the cleanup of esteros and waterways, plugging of toxic discharges from establishments and setting up of temporary sanitation facilities for informal settlers residing along the esteros and the shoreline.

At the same time, the DENR would also conduct solid waste management and plan for the relocation of the informal settlers. INQ



**CONTAINMENT** For its first target, the Manila Bay rehab program hopes to bring down the water's fecal coliform levels. —LYN RILLON



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**EUGENE E.  
BACASMAS**

THE PHILIPPINE STAR  
SUNDAY, JAN. 13, 2019



## Next cleanup: Manila Bay

It's good to hear the government wanting to clean up Manila Bay. If the heavily polluted Pasig River can be rehabilitated, it shouldn't be impossible to improve the quality of the water in the bay.

This is not Boracay, however, and there must be careful management of expectations. The government is zeroing in on hotels and commercial establishments including casinos by the bay for the cleanup. These establishments can be expected to quickly comply, if they haven't already, since most are connected to water treatment and sewerage systems in Metro Manila.

The bigger challenge is the waste from other sources. Manila Bay is home to the country's busiest international container port and domestic seaport, and there will always be toxic waste from the ships. Around the bay are numerous informal settlements, where people fish for a living, make charcoal and treat the sea as their garbage dump and public sewer. Tons of the garbage wash up along the shores during typhoons.

Environment officials have said the cleanup will include creeks and other waterways in Metro Manila that feed into the Pasig River or directly into the sea.

One upside of the planned

### EDITORIAL

cleanup is a possible stop to massive bay reclamation projects approved by local politicians. Artificially shrinking the bay area can aggravate flooding, endanger the livelihoods of marginal fishing communities and further upset the ecological balance around the bay.

Instead of further industrial or commercial development, the protected wetland that has sprung up along the Las Piñas-Parañaque border deserves to be expanded. The mangrove forest has become a bird sanctuary, marine protected area and ecotourism park, helping to mitigate the impact of flooding and storm surges in the area. Some informal settlers can be turned into custodians of ecotourism zones.

Developing a protected wetland around the country's primary seaport is unlikely. The area is congested enough and there are ongoing moves for port expansion. It is possible, however, to improve waste management—both solid and effluent—around the bay.

Even in informal settlements, local government and barangay personnel can mobilize the community for improved garbage management. Those living or working around the bay must be persuaded that it is in their best interest to stop treating the sea as their personal dump.



# Bay polluters given deadline

## Put up STP in 3 months or face sanctions

Manila's seaside teeming with 330 million fecal coliform per 100ML of water

By Kuhlín Caslle Gacula

The Department of the Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) yesterday gave establishments that dump sewage into

tributaries of the Manila Bay three months with which to put sewage treatment plants (STP).

The DENR admonition came a day after Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu led a team of experts in inspecting on Friday various creeks and rivers being used as sewer lines by establishments going to Manila Bay.

Cimatu's team revealed that the average coliform level (bacteria from human and animal wastes) at Manila Bay



**Boundless Joy** Boys love toy cars, thus imagine these kids' delight seeing and hearing the throaty engine notes of muscled-up street cars in the Navotas Auto Show yesterday. ROMAN PROSPERO

hovers around 330 million MPN (most probable number) per 100ML of water, compared to the 900 MPN/100ML recorded in Boracay Island when it was ordered shut down for rehabilitation.

After a six-month rehab, Boracay's coliform level is presently at 8MPN/100ML, with the standard for swimming being 400MPN/100ML.

The wide disparity between the water quality of Manila Bay and Boracay Island elicited from Cimatu a prognosis that



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## Bay polluters given deadline

the Manila Bay problem is many times over worse than Boracay's when the latter was closed down.

Cimatu said the DENR will strictly implement Republic Act 9275 or the Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004 to rehabilitate Manila Bay, with a three-phase course of action.

Among the establishments found to be without STP during the DENR inspection was the Manila Zoo, with its management, however, denying that animal wastes are being dumped into the Manila Bay.

Establishments have to put up their own sewage treatment plants. They cannot discharge their wastewater in the *esteros*," Cimatu said.

Cimatu said Phase 1, set to begin this year, will include the clean-up of *esteros* and waterways, reduction of the level of fecal coliform and toxic discharges from establishments.

### Establishments have to put up their own sewage treatment plants.

It will also include the provision of temporary sanitation facilities for informal settlers residing along the creeks and the Manila Bay shoreline. Solid waste management and planning for the relocation of the informal settlers will also be done.

Phase 2 will be focused on rehabilitation, while Phase 3 will be about ensuring the sustainability of rehabilitation efforts.

Aside from the Estero de San Antonio, Cimatu's team also took a closer look at the Parañaque and Don Galo rivers, which both empty into Manila Bay. The two tributaries have also been reported to have high fecal coliform levels.

In 2008, the Supreme Court (SC) issued a continuing mandamus ordering DENR and 12 other agencies to clean up Manila Bay to restore its water quality to Class SB level, safe for recreational activities such as swimming.

The acceptable level for Class SB water is 100MPN/100 ml. The DENR's goal is to reduce coliform level to less than 270 MPN/100ml less by December 2019.

Aside from the DENR, the others tasked by the SC to help the Manila Bay clean-up were the interior, education, health, agriculture, public works and budget departments, as well as the Philippine Coast Guard, Philippine National Police, Philippine Ports Authority, Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System and Local Water Utilities Administration.



## DENR TESTS MANILA BAY WATERS

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources tested the quality of water on several portions of the Manila Bay following the directive of President Rodrigo Duterte to rehabilitate Manila's popular coastline starting Jan. 27.

"Establishments have to put up their own sewage treatment plants [STPs]. They cannot discharge their wastewater in the esteros," Environment chief Roy Cimatu said.

"We are giving them three months to put up their own STPs," he added.

Cimatu earlier described Manila Bay as a "magnified cesspool" because of the high coliform level of 330 million most probable number (MPN) per 100 milliliter, compared to the safe level of 100 MPN per 100 milliliter.

The DENR's goal is to reduce the coliform level to less than 270 MPN by December 2019.

Cimatu vowed to apply the same "political will" in rehabilitating Boracay in efforts to clean up the 19-kilometer-long Manila Bay and make the waters fit for swimming, diving, and other forms of contact recreation.

The DENR said the government is considering the use of "special road funds" to finance the cleanup and rehabilitation of Manila Bay.

Earlier, Malacañang said it will use the road users' tax for government projects including the massive cleanup of Manila Bay and Pasig River.

"We need to confront difficulties in cleaning up the bay because of the informal residence and establishments along the bay. Discipline would play key role in making Manila Bay clean," he said.



**AHEAD OF THE REHAB.** Personnel of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority and volunteers from the city of Manila start a clean drive along Manila Bay on Saturday, Jan. 12. **Norman Cruz**



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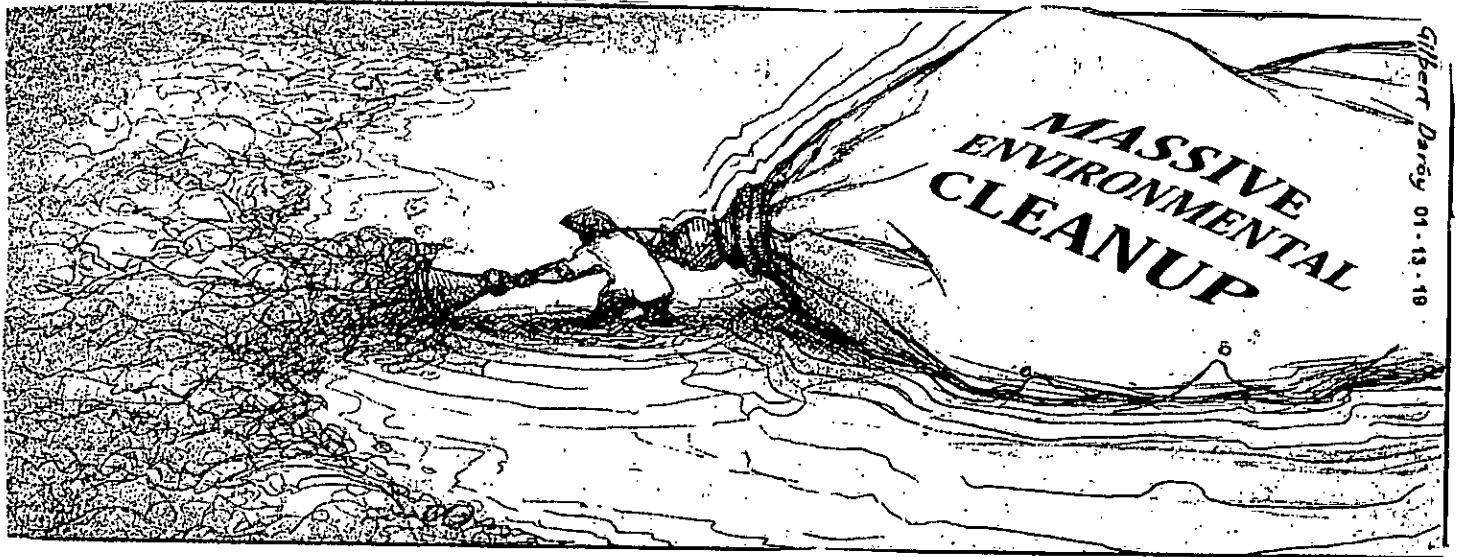
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## MANILA BAY, HAMON SA DENR

**NAGSALITA** na si **Pang. RODRIGO DUTERTE** ukol sa kanyang gusto na ibalik ang ganda ng Manila De Bay. Inutusan niya si DENR Secretary **ROY CIMATU** para simulan ang pag-aaral at pagsusuri para bigyan muli ng magandang buhay ang dagat ng Maynila.

Nagbantasi Pang. **DUTERTE** sa lahat ng institusyon na karami nan ay naglalakihan na kilala at pamosong hotel na nakahilera halos sa baybayin. Ang tanong ng marami – kaya ba?

Naalala natin noong bata pa tayo, Sabado at Linggo ay ipinapasyal kami ng aming tatay sa Luneta at kakain sa tabing dagat. Makakabili noon ng iba't ibang uri ng isda at mga shellfish tulad ng talaba at tahong. May pagkakataon din na nag-

lalakihang alimango at nahu-huli mismo sa batuhan!

Lamang, kasabay ang pagdami ng populasyon ng Maynila ay unti-unti itong dumumi, umitim at bumahol! Paano ba naman, pabaya ang mga namuno noon. Hinayaan nilang lumaki ang erya ng iskuwater kaysa bigyan sila ng lugar na puwedeng tayuan ng bahay na maayos.

Hindi ba naging pamoso pa ang namuong "Smokey Mountain"?

Ngayon, katulad ng ginawa ni **PRRD** at **DENR** kasama ang ilang ahensiya ng pamahalaan sa Boracay at ibang pasyalan-bakasyon ng mga lokal at dayuhang turista, malaking hamon para sa **DENR** ang paglilinis ng Manila De Bay!



13 JAN 2013

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## Kooperasyon ng lahat, kailangan sa Manila Bay rehab—Goitia

LUMAHOK kamakailan ang Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission sa pulong na ipinatawag ni Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu para simulan ang rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay.

Kabilang sa mga ahensyang nagsidalò ang Laguna Lake Development Authority, Manila Bay Coordinating Office, Policy and Planning Service at Policy Studies Office ng DENR sa National Capitol Region upang talakayin at maisapinal ang short-term at medium-term plan para sa rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay.

Ayon kay Cimatu, kinailangan ang aktibo at kahusayan ng PRRC sa rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay dahil nagtagumpay ang ahensyang pinamumunuan ni Executive Director Jose Antonio "Pepeton" E. Goitia sa epektibong restorasyon at pamamahala sa Ilog Pasig at mga tributaryo nito.

"Kailangan talagang magkaisa ang lahat dahil utos na ng ating mahal na Pangulong Rodrigo Roa Duterte ang rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay," ani Goitia. "Dapat sumunod sa batas ang lahat ng establisimyento, pabrika, at informal settlers hindi lang sa Manila Bay kundi maging sa Pasig River at iba pang tributaryo dahil magsisimula ang pagbabago sa ating lahat para mapaganda natin ang kalidad ng tubig sa ating mahal na look ng Maynila."

Siniyasat nina Cimatu at DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda ang ilang establisimyento noong Biyernes sa tabi ng Manila Bay at natuklasang walang maayos na drainage system at water treatment facility ang mga sikat na hotel at pasyalan doon tulad ng Manila Zoo.



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## DENR orders Manila firms to put up own sewage treatment plants

By **CORY MARTINEZ**

**THE** Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has given the establishments in Manila particularly those located near the Estero de San Antonio de Abad in Malate, three months to put up their own sewage treatment plants (STPs).

DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu issued the ultimatum after learning that many establishments in the area have no STPs and have been discharging their wastewater into the esteros.

"Establishments have to put up their own sewage treatment plants (STPs). They cannot discharge their



**Cimatu** wastewater in the esteros. We are giving them three months to put up their own STPs," said Cimatu who have not yet identified the establishments that have no STPs as their are still conducting an inventory on these firms.

Last Friday, Cimatu conducted an ocular inspection of the Estero de San Antonio de Abad in Malate, Manila where outfalls from establishments in the area discharge their wastewater.

He also inspected the Parañaque and Don Galo rivers, which both lead to Manila Bay. These two tributaries have also been reported to have high fecal coliform levels.

The inspection was conducted amid preparations for the start of the massive rehabilitation of the Manila Bay, which will commence on Jan. 27.

Cimatu said that to jumpstart the rehabilitation, the DENR will start the clean-up of esteros by

tracing the sources of untreated wastewater.

He also stressed that the DENR will strictly implement the country's clean water law to ensure the success of the effort to revive the heavily polluted Manila Bay.

"The strict implementation of Republic Act 9275 or the Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004 is the key to addressing water quality issues and other environmental problems in the historic bay," Cimatu stressed.

He further disclosed that the planned Manila Bay rehabilitation program will be strategic to oversee the implementation of the three-phase Manila Bay Action Plan.



## DENR bares rehab plan for polluted Manila Bay

By Joel dela Torre

**TO jumpstart the daunting task of rehabilitating Manila Bay, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said it will start tracing sources of wastewater discharged into esteros and gave establishments concerned three months to put up their own sewage treatment plants (STPs).**

According to Secretary Roy Cimatu, the country's clean water law should be strictly implemented to ensure the revival of the now heavily polluted historic bay.

Cimatu said that Republic Act 9275 or the Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004 is the key to

addressing quality issues and other environment problems to bring the bay's waters back to pristine quality.

"Establishments have to put up their own sewage treatment plants (STPs). They cannot discharge their wastewater in the esteros," Cimatu said.

Cimatu recently inspected the Estero de San Antonio de Abad in Malate, Manila where establishments discharge their wastewater.

The environment chief underscored the strategic implementation of the three-phased Manila Bay Action Plan.

Phase 1 is cleanup and improvement of water quality improvement, Phase 2 is rehabilitation,

and Phase 3, protection and "sustainment."

Cimatu said Phase 1 is set to begin this year. It will include the clean-up of esteros and waterways, reduction of the level of fecal coliform and toxic discharges from establishments.

It also includes the provision of temporary sanitation facilities for informal settlers residing along the esteros and the Manila Bay shoreline while solid waste management and planning for the relocation of the informal settlers will also be done.

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## KOOPERASYON NG LAHAT KAILANGAN SA MANILA BAY REHAB

UMAHOK kamakailan ang Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC) sa pulong na ipinatawag ni Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu para simulan ang rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay.

Kabilang sa mga ahensiyang nagsidalò ang Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA), Manila Bay Coordinating Of-

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"Kailangan talagang magkaisa ang lahat dahil utos na ng ating mahal na Pangulong Rodrigo Roa Duterte, ang rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay," ani Goitia. "Dapat sumunod sa batas ang lahat ng establisimiyento, pabrika, at informal settlers hindi lamang sa Manila Bay kundi maging sa Pasig River at iba pang tributaryo

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## Legarda urges public to cooperate in planned Manila Bay Rehab

SENADOR Loren Legarda yesterday welcomed the proposed rehabilitation of the Manila Bay and urged the public to be part of such efforts. Legarda said that while the government should take the lead, all sectors must work together to ensure not only the immediate and successful rehabilitation but also to ensure continuity.

"I fully support the government in its planned rehabilitation of the Manila Bay. It is long overdue and I hope we can all work together to ensure its success," said Legarda.

"We should have a sustainable restoration program for the Manila Bay which should include the strict enforcement of laws such as the Clean Water Act and the Ecological Solid Waste Management (ESWM) Act. We must ensure that the liquid waste from households and other establishments are treated before disposal and that solid waste are not thrown into its waters," she added.

The Senator said that all local government units (LGUs) in the Manila Bay area should enforce the ESWM Law and have a materials recovery facility (MRF) and sewage system.

In 2013, Legarda conducted a Senate briefing on the status of compliance to the Supreme Court's Writ



of Continuing Mandamus issued in 2008 ordering various government agencies to clean up Manila Bay. Since then, she has been urging concerned agencies to fast track the much-needed rehabilitation of Manila Bay.

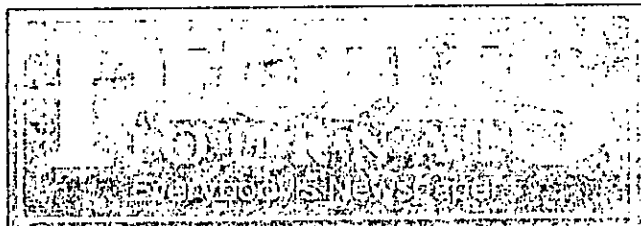
Legarda also noted the evident habitat loss and degradation around the Bay area, such as diminishing mangrove forests, coral reefs and seagrass beds, affecting the capability of the Bay to sustain marine life.

Records from the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) show that in 1890, about 54,000 hectares of mangrove surrounded the bay. A hundred years later, or in 1990, only 2,000 hectares of mangrove remained; and in 1995, only 794 hectares remained.

The Senator stressed that, "Mangroves are one of the most important ecosystems because they serve not only as nursery grounds for various fish species but also as shield from storm surges and rising sea levels."

Legarda also stressed the economic benefits of the Manila Bay. A humble estimate of the economic value of selected major uses of the Bay, such as offshore fisheries, aquaculture, ports and harbors, and tourism, is placed at P8.7 billion annually.

"Let us reclaim Manila Bay's stunning beauty and proclaim its significance. And let us, above all, work towards a healthy, sustainable and disaster resilient future through concerted cleanup efforts," said Legarda.



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# Everybody must pitch in to save Manila Bay -- Loren

By  
Marlon  
Purificacion

SENATOR Loren Legarda yesterday urged all sectors of society to do their share in the rehabilitation of Manila Bay.

"I fully support the government in its planned rehabilitation of the Manila Bay. It is long overdue and I hope we can all work together to ensure its success," said Legarda.

"We should have a sustainable restoration program for the Manila Bay which should include the strict enforcement of laws such as the Clean Water Act and the Ecological Solid Waste Management (ESWM) Act. We must ensure that the liquid waste from households and other establishments are treated before disposal and that solid waste are not thrown into its waters," she added.

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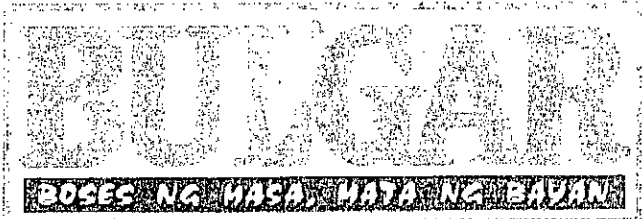
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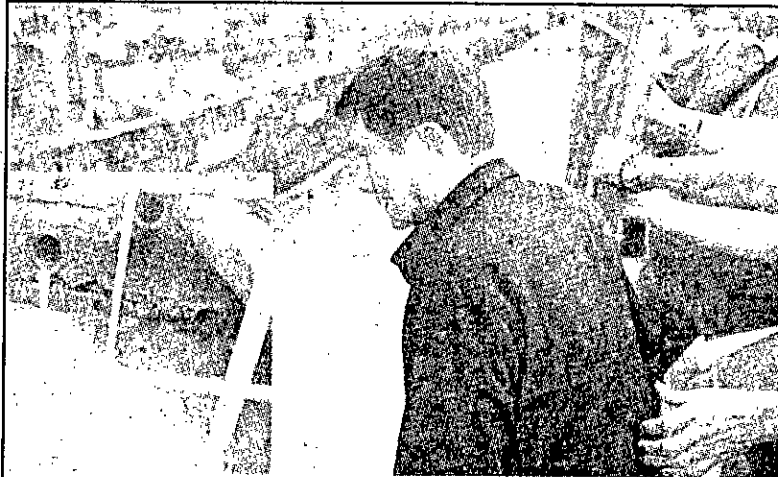
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**AKTUWAL** na nakita ni DENR Sec. Roy Cimatu ang isang outlet na naglalabas nang maruming dumi sa estero ng San Antonio Abad sa Maynila kung saan napag-alaman na ito ay dumidirekto sa Manila Bay mula raw sa Ospital ng Maynila. (Jun Guillermo)



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

**Manila Bay  
rehab aabutin  
ng 7 taon;  
gagastos  
ng P47 billion  
- DENR**

AABOT ng pitong taon at gagastos ng P47 billion ang rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay, ayon sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources o DENR.

Sa panayam ng Inquirer.net, sinabi ni Undersecretary Benny Antiporda na batay sa pahayag ni DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu ay susubukan ng pamahalaan na matapos ang rehabilitation process sa Manila Bay sa loob ng pitong taon.

Pero tiyak aniya na mayroon nang pagbabago sa Manila Bay sa loob ng isa o dalawang buwan.

Sinabi ni Antiporda na hindi magiging madali ang rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay dahil sa tindi ng kontaminasyon sa tubig.

Kabilang naman sa paglalaanan ng multi-bilyong pondo ay ang clean-up activities at paglilipat sa informal settlers.

Ayon kay Antiporda, ang P47 billion ay naunang panukala ng gobyerno pero maaaring bumaba ito sa tulong ng pribadong sektor.

Ang rehabilitation process sa Manila Bay ay mag-uumpisa sa January 27, at sisimulan ito sa tinatawag na "Billionaire's Lane" kung saan matindi ang fecal coliform level.



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# REHAB SA MANILA BAY 7 TAON

## Coliform content ng tubig mapanganib

AABŪTIN ng pitong taon ang rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay, ayon sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). **SUNDAN SA PAHINA 9**

**NADISKUBRE** ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) na isa ang Manila Zoo sa pinang-gagalingan ng untreated wastewater na tumatagas sa Manila Bay na natuklasang may mataas na lebel ng coliform bacteria. Kamakailan ay nagbanta ang Pangulong Duterte na ipasasara ang mga hotel at establisimiyento na hindi maglilinis ng kanilang kapaligiran na dahilan ng pagdumi ng Manila Bay. *Kuha ni DANNY PATA*





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## Coliform content ng tubig mapanganib

# REHAB SA MANILA BAY 7 TAON

Mula sa pahina 16

Nakatakdang simulan ang rehabilitation process sa Manila Bay sa Enero 27 at unang tatamaan dito ay ang tinatawag na "billionaire's lane" kung saan matindi ang fecal coliform level.

Lumalabas sa isinagawang pag-aaral ng mga eksperto na mataas sa coliform content ang tubig sa Manila Bay na mapanganib sa kalusugan ng mga tao.

Sa isinagawang inspeksiyon ni Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu sa mga estero sa Maynila, lumalabas na ang mga dumi na galing sa mga ito ay dumidiretso sa Manila Bay dahil sa kawalan ng sewerage system, treatment plant at sariling septic tank.

Nag-ikot si Cimatu sa estero San Antonio de Abad sa pagitan ng Ospital ng Maynila, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) at Manila Zoo, nakita niya na walang treatment plant ang zoo kaya inatasan niya ang pamunuan nito na ayusin ang dinadaluyan ng dumi ng mga hayop.

Napag-alaman pa na ang mga sewerage sys-

tem kung saan konektado ang mga bahay, hotel at iba pang establishments ay napupuno ngunit hindi nila ito magawang linisin.

Bunga nito ay unahin munang alamin ng DENR ang mga estero na posibleng pinagmumulan ng dumi na tumatapon sa Manila Bay bago ang re-

habilitasyon nito.

Tiniyak ng kagawaran na sa una o ikalawang buwan ay mayroon nang pagbabago sa Manila Bay.

Aabutin ng P47 billion ang magagastos sa rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay kasama na ang paglilipat sa informal settlers na nasa paligid nito.

**NENET VILLAFANIA**



## Cimatu traces origin of wastes that flow out to Manila Bay

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu traced on Friday the origin of untreated water wastes that flow out to the Manila Bay.

On his inspection, Cimatu first visited the Estero de San Antonio de Abad surrounded by Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), Ospital ng Maynila, and Manila Zoo in Malate district. Its waters look severely contaminated and release putrid smell.

Data from DENR showed that the fecal coliform level at the said waterway was 1.3 billion most probable numbers per 100 milliliters (MPN/100ml).

"It is validated that the water that comes out here is really dirty so its source is dirty," Cimatu said when asked to react on what he saw.

The environment chief then

dropped by to the Manila Zoo and confirmed that it lacks a sewage treatment plant (STP).

The animal park has been built 60 years ago and houses around 640 creatures.

"They have to put a treatment plan. Otherwise, they cannot throw waste water to the canal," Cimatu said.

The zoo management, however, said that they have septic tanks and that they only dump water used in bathing animals in the estero.

"The Estero de Abad is so long. It passes Leveriza. So, definitely we are not the only contributor [of pollution]," said lawyer Jas Garcia, officer-in-charge, Manila Public Recreations Bureau. **(Ria Fernandez)**

**DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu inspects the Manila Bay in Baseco Compound in Tondo, Manila. (Rio Leonelle Deluvio)**



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

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**Manila Bay rehab:**

**Port Area, MOA inikot ng DENR**

Ipinagpatuloy ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang kanilang pag-iikot para alamin ang kondisyon ng tubig sa Manila Bay.

Kasunod ng inspeksiyon ng ahensiya sa daluyang ng maruming tubig mula sa mga establisimyento, septic tank ng mga bahay at Manila Zoo sa Malate, Maynila kamakalawa, ay nagpunta si Secretary Roy Cimatu sa Baseco Compound sa Port Area hanggang sa baybaying sakop ng

Mall Of Asia (MOA) sa Pasay City.

Ayon kay Cimatu, may ulat na hindi lamang ang mga residente ang nagtatapon ng mga basura at mga human at animal waste sa karagatan kundi maging ang mga dumadaong na barko.

Kinakailangan umano na masuri kung gaano na karami ang volume ng bacteria ng tubig dagat sa lugar.

Nabatid na magsasagawa ng mga estratehiya ang gobyerno para sa P47 bilyon Manila Bay Rehabilitation Pro-

ject na nakatakdang simulan sa Enero 27.

Nalaman na ang rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay ay hahatiin sa tatlong bahagi kung saan kasama na rito ang relokasyon ng mga informal settler at ang pagpapasara sa mga establisimyento na hindi susunod sa kautusan ng gobyerno na magkaroon ng water sewerage treatment facility.

Piano umano ng gobyerno na tulad sa Boracay ang gagawin ang rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay. **(Juliet de Loza-Cudia)**



Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Balita

ANG MANGUNGUNANG PAMAYAGANG TAGAL OG SA BANGSA

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**GOAL: MALINIS NA  
MANILA BAY** Maagang  
sinimulan kahapon ng mga  
volunteers ang paglilinis sa  
Manila Bay, na sasailalim sa  
rehabilitasyon sa Enero 27,  
2019.  
**RIO LEONELLE DELUVIO**



# Abante

UNA SA BALITA

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**NAGSISIMULA** nang dumami ang mga migratory bird na malayang dumadapo sa karagatan na sakop ng Manila Bay sa Roxas Blvd. sa Maynila na isa sa nagiging atraksyon sa mga namamasyal sa lugar. Samantala, sa unang pagkakataon ay namataan sa probinsya ng Bataan ang Far Eastern Curlew, isang uri ng ibon na nakikita lamang sa eastern Russia, ayon sa Wild Bird Club of the Philippines (WBCP) kahapon.  
*(Jonas Sulit)*



## Kooperasyon ng lahat, kailangan sa Manila Bay rehab - Goitia

LUMAHOK kamakailan ang Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC) sa pulong na ipinatawag ni Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu para simulan ang rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay.

Kabilang sa mga ahensiyang nagsidalo ang Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA), Manila Bay Coordinating Office (MBCO), Policy and Planning Service, DENR sa National Capitol Region ang Policy Studies Office upang talakayin at maisapinal ang short-term at medium-term plan para sa rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay.

Ayon kay Cimatu, kinailangan ang aktibo at kahusayan ng PRRC sa rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay dahil nagtagumpay ang ahensiyang pinamumunuan ni Executive Director Jose Antonio 'Pepeton' E. Goitia sa epektibong restorasyon at pamamahala sa Ilog Pasig at mga tributaryo nito.

"Kailangan talagang magkaisa ang lahat dahil utos na ng ating mahal na Pangulong Rodrigo Roa Duterte ang rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay," ani Goitia. "Dapat sumunod sa batas ang lahat ng establisimyento, pabrika, at informal settlers hindi lamang sa Manila Bay kundi maging sa Pasig River at iba pang tributaryo dahil magsisimula ang pagbabago sa ating lahat para mapaganda natin ang kalidad ng tubig sa ating mahal na look ng Maynila."

Siniyasat nina Cimatu at DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda ang ilang establisimyento nitong Biyernes sa tabi ng Manila Bay at natuklasang walang maaayos na drainage system at water treatment facility ang mga sikat na hotel at pasyalan doon tulad ng Manila Zoo.

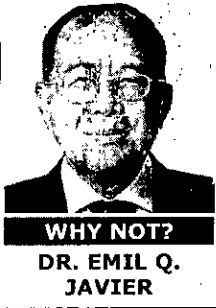




Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Year-end wishes for agriculture

## (Part 3)



There are those who look at things the way they are, and ask why... I dream of things that never were, and ask why not?  
— Robert Kennedy

In many countries because of the very close ecological and cultural links between agriculture (crops and livestock) and forestry, both sectors are administered by the same national ministry or department. This was our set up under the old Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources (DANR), until environment, forestry and mines were carved out together into a new Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

As far as this writer is concerned, agriculture in the broad sense includes crops, livestock, fisheries and forestry. Hence, forestry's inclusion in the wish list.

### Seventh wish: For DENR to rediscover forest production

By the looks of it, the DENR with Secretary Roy Cimatu at the helm, indeed had a banner year. The Department reported exceeding its targets for environmental programs on solid waste management, clean air, and clean water.

Much remain to be done but significant progress had been made in monitor-

ing, closure and rehabilitation of open and controlled dumpsites; establishment of materials recovery and recycling facilities; monitoring and formulation of airshed action plans; rehabilitation of esteros and waterways, and establishment of water quality management areas.

The National Greening Program reported reforesting 125,000 hectares and hiring 1,175 additional forest protection officers. Supervision and closure of erring mines are still much in the air but serious dialogues with the mines sector are underway.

But easily DENR's most conspicuous single achievement was the temporary closure and rehabilitation of Boracay. Thanks no doubt to the resolute will of the President.

*Conspicuously absent is the mention of achievements in agroforestry and forest production. Even the National Greening Program had been all about the environment — forest protection, biodiversity conservation, carbon sequestration and climate change mitigation.*

*There is hardly any reference to producing forest products for domestic use and for exports; for creating livelihoods for poor people in the countryside, particularly the lumads whose vast ancestral domains are often slope lands not very suitable for arable agriculture but more ecologically suited for agroforestry and forest plantations.*

In 2017, we imported US\$2.04 billion worth of forest-based products like paper, paperboard, plywood, veneer panels, wood furniture and pulp. These in spite of the fact that out of our 30 million hectares of land mass, 15.81 million hectares are forest lands, and of which 10.1 million hectares have been classified by DENR itself as Established Timberlands.

Surely, had we been paying attention and investing in our 10.1 million hectares of timberlands, we would be producing most of these forest-based products themselves. And in fact we should be exporting these forest-based products as two retired UP Los Baños foresters, Adolfo Revilla and Florentino Tesoro, had been passionately pointing out all these years.

In 2017, our primary round wood log production was only 731,000 cubic meters. With the total log ban, practically all these logs came from plantations of introduced fast growing species. Since these fast-growing wood species, mainly *falcata*, *gmelina*, *deglupta*, and *mangium* can easily produce 60-80 cubic meters of wood in 8-10 year rotations, this means that at most we have a million hectares of plantation forests. Just imagine what we can produce if we have three million hectares of planted bamboo, rattan, fast-growing trees, coconut, rubber, oil palm, coffee, durian, etc. out of the 10 million hectares of classified timberlands!

My seventh wish therefore is for DENR to rediscover forest production: 1) set targets for agroforestry and plantation forests, 2) secure ownership rights of the people who plant them, and 3) link them with investors in wood processing plants to assure tree farmers of markets for their produce. And most importantly rid us of the inane department rules on permit to cut planted introduced species of trees and worse, another permit to transport the logs, in the guise of protecting natural forests.

### Redirecting the national greening program to agroforestry and plantation forests

Since we had been investing heavily in the national greening program (NGP), we can simultaneously achieve the twin national purposes of eliminating poverty and conserving the environment, by simply redirecting the greening program to not just reforesting here and there but into organized agroforestry and plantation forests.

The NGP as presently implemented has two shortcomings — one, ecological and the other, social/cultural. In the first place, the emphasis on replanting with native tree species to conserve and save them from extinction has no scientific basis. None of our indigenous tree species are endangered.

If the purpose were to conserve our plant biodiversity, replanting of native trees is not the way to go because it is ineffective, costly and wasteful.



P-2

Year-end wishes for Agriculture

The simpler, more expedient way is to conserve them in their natural state (*in situ*) by way of parks, reservations and protected areas which are not subject to exploitation. In fact, we have legislated that through the national network of protected areas (NIPAs) representing all the major eco-silvicultural environments. It is a matter of robust forest surveillance and mobilizing local government and community support by way of incentives to maintain integrity of the NIPAs.

Reforestation with native species is costly and wasteful because of their low survival rates. DENR will be loath to admit it but the real problem with the previous reforestation efforts and the current NGP (apart from allegations of corruption in seedling procurement and contract planting) is the low survival rates of the seedlings due to weed competition and very significantly due to fire.

Our partly denuded forests if allowed to regrow will naturally revert to tropical rainforest kind of vegetation. They become denuded and become grasslands after the *kaingeros* cut down the remaining trees left by the original timber concessionaries. The *kaingeros* then grow a succession of annual crops (rice and corn), in the process exhausting the fertility of the soil. Subsequently, the *kaingeros* abandon the *kaingins* and move on, clearing more. Annual fires during the dry season continue the process of degradation until cogon grass (*Imperata*) completely take over. Unlike trees whose growing points are aboveground, the growing points of cogon are found in their underground rhizomes and are therefore immune from fires.

The cogon grass provide the fuel for the annual fires. Thus, if there is no effort to manually to mow down the cogon, with the accumulation of cogon biomass on the ground, very hot tree-killing fires are inevitable.

Hiring laborers to weed the plots around the newly planted seedlings is laborious and expensive. And worse, as pointed out in monitoring and assessment reports, these hired hands will not mind if the seedlings are killed by fire because they will be forever employed.

Here's where the greening program

misses out on the social/cultural aspect. The people who plant the tree seedlings will themselves look after the seedlings only if they have an economic interest in their survival. They will have an interest in the survival of the trees if the trees belong to them (not necessarily the land).

**The subsidies of the greening program therefore should be redirected to organized groups of farmers and committed local government units (LGUs) who will program the establishment of forest and industrial tree plantations that will serve as the permanent sources of livelihood of those poor communities.**

However, for those areas ultimately intended to become protection forests or natural reserves, the same strategy can be applied. The jump from grass vegetation to tropical rain forest is problematic because of fires. Better to apply the principle of stepwise seral succession from grass to an intermediate species, and ultimately to timber species.

The farmers will initially plant the fast-growing species as their medium term source of income but will be required to plant the indigenous tree species in between. After say two rotations of the fast-growing trees by which time the indigenous trees are already 15-20 years old, and no longer susceptible to fire, the tree farmers should be compensated for the value of the timber species they planted and move on.

However, it is very important that the tree plantations be linked to investors who will establish wood processing plants in the vicinity of the plantations to minimize log transport costs and therefore raise the farm gate value of the raw materials and income of the tree growers.

To be continued... Part 4

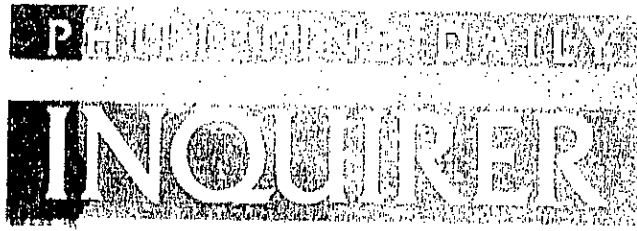
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Dr. Emil Q. Javier is a Member of the National Academy of Science and Technology (NAST) and also Chair of the Coalition for Agriculture Modernization in the Philippines (CAMP).

For any feedback, email [ejavier@yahoo.com](mailto:ejavier@yahoo.com).



Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE



3 JAN 2019



**Fairways & Bluewater is First and Only ISO-IMS Certified Resort in Boracay**

Homegrown brand and multi-awarded resort Fairways & Bluewater proved its commitment to excellence as it becomes the first and only Boracay property to receive the ISO-IMS certification. The ISO-IMS is given only to organizations that acquire the ISO14001:2015 Environmental Management System, ISO9001:2015 Quality Management System and ISO45001:2018 Occupational Health & Safety Management System certificates.

The resort's FVP/GM, Catherine Marcelo, revealed that it took years to develop a system that gives equal priority to the guests, the environment and the employees. Gen. Roy Cimatu secretary of the DENR lauded the resort for its "deep and sincere commitment to protect and preserve the environment" and for implementing environmental programs "voluntarily and very consistently". DILG secretary Gen. Eduardo Año expressed hope that Fairways & Bluewater "will continue to inspire other resorts to aspire to be better always". Fairways & Bluewater, which posted an average occupancy rate of 99% in 2018, is also a consistent recipient of the Outstanding Performance, Loved by Guests, Most Booked Property, #1 Most Popular Property in Boracay, and Customer Experience awards.



## 4 emission testing centers, suspendido sa pamemeke

Sinuspinde ng Department of Transportation (DOTr), sa pamamagitan ng Investigation Security and Law Enforcement Staff (ISLES) nito, ang apat na private emission testing centers (PETC) dahil sa umano'y pamemeke ng emission test results.

Ayon sa DOTr, sakop ng preliminary suspension order (Department Order 2016-017), ang Lucena Grand Service Station, Inc., na matatagpuan sa Diversion Road, Barangay Ilayang Dupay, Lucena City, 4301, Quezon; MCRB Emission Testing Center, na nasa 59 Upper Irisan, Naguilian Road, 2600, Baguio City; One Eighteen Pollution Test Services-Maramag Branch sa National Highway, South

Poblacion, Maramag, 8714, Bukidnon; at Iprotek Emission Testing Center - Malaybalay City, 8700, Bukidnon.

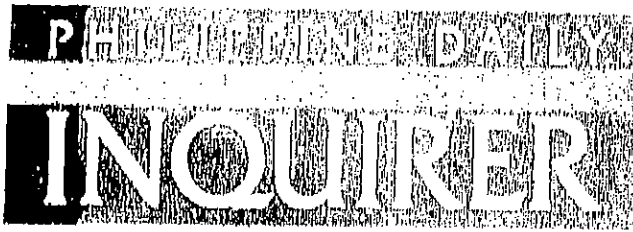
Magtatagal ng 90-araw ang suspension order, na sinimulang ipatupad nitong Enero 9, 2019.

Sinabi ng DOTr na napagkalooban na nila ng kopya ang mga naturang PETC, gayundin ang PETC IT Service Provider, na binalaan nitong papatawan ng kahalintulad na parusa kung babalewalain ang kanilang kautusan at ipagpapatuloy pa ang pagproseso sa anumang data na ipapadala sa kanila ng mga naturang sinuspindeng PETC.

**Mary Ann Santiago**



Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE



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# Climate change toll on PH agriculture in 2018: P36B

By Karl R. Ocampo  
@kocampoINQ

Climate change-induced weather patterns have brought an estimated P36-billion loss to the Philippine agriculture sector in 2018, according to a top agriculture official.

Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol, on his Facebook page, said typhoons that struck the Philippines during the year dragged the sector's growth down from 3.9 percent in 2017 to 1 percent in 2018.

The loss just showed how vulnerable Philippine agriculture was to climate change, Piñol said.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) had hoped to hit a growth rate of 2.5 percent to 3.5 percent in 2018.

## Missed targets

"A supertyphoon and tropical storms battered the country almost every month of the year, destroying 1.8 million metric tons of crops with an estimated value of P36 billion," Piñol said.

He added that the DA had missed most of its production targets for several agriculture

subsectors, except for the poultry industry.

Climate change's impact prompted the DA to adjust its planting calendar for 2019 and use rice lands in areas deemed not prone to typhoons like Samar, Lanao del Sur, Zamboanga, Tawi-Tawi, Leyte, Bohol, Palawan and some parts of Central Mindanao.

Other measures taken by the department to counter climate change's destructive effect included the expansion of the agency's credit loan to

farmers and fishermen.

More farm-to-market roads, solar-powered irrigation systems, and postharvest and transport facilities were also built as a countermeasure against climate change.

## Agriculture role

Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Ernesto Pernia said the importance of agriculture in ensuring Philippine food security could not be underestimated so it was pivotal for the government to deal with climate change.

"Climate change is only about to get worse with recent rapid increases in temperature," Pernia said.

"If we do nothing, this will impede our target of increasing agricultural productivity and ensuring food security," he said.

For 2019, the DA's budget was reduced to P49.8 billion from P60 billion in 2018.

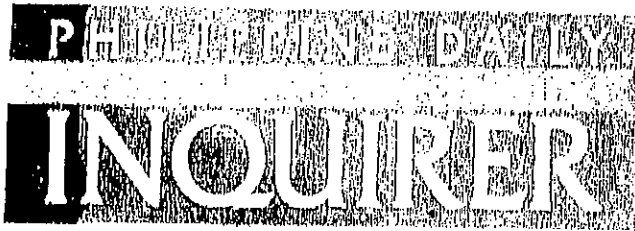
It requested a P123.7-billion budget for the year, which was to be spent on easy access credit programs and the development of the rice industry. INQ



**SITTING DUCK** A farmer plants rice seedlings in a paddy in Bulacan province in a trade that is increasingly being vulnerable to climate change. —INQUIRER PHOTO



Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
PUBLIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE



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#### ENVIRONMENTAL CRUSADE

## LUNTIANG PILIPINAS ASKS FILIPINOS: JUNK PLASTICS

By Melvin Gascon  
@melvingasconINQ

An environment group is urging Filipino families to stop using plastics to help stem the tide of plastic garbage polluting the oceans.

In a statement, party-list group Luntiang Pilipinas said Filipinos should adopt a zero-waste lifestyle, as it launched a nationwide campaign this month, declared by the government as zero-waste month.

"A zero-waste lifestyle means using products that can be reused and promoting processes that avoid or eliminate the volume and toxicity of waste," said Sen. Loren Legarda, Luntian founder.

"It means creating little to no waste [and] veering away from the throwaway culture by reusing, reducing and recycling," she said.

#### Single-use plastic

The group said it had joined the campaign with other environment groups for a ban on single-use plastics and will hold forums and meetings with community leaders to push the initiative.

Legarda said Filipinos needed to cut down on waste, as they produced some 40,000 tons of

garbage yearly, and that the Philippines was the third largest ocean plastic polluter in the world after China and Indonesia.

"Let us start the year with a resolve to be better citizens of the Earth by adopting an eco-friendly, zero-waste lifestyle," Legarda said.

As a party-list group, Luntian said it has vowed "to take a more proactive role in the protection and preservation of the environment."

#### Congress seats

It seeks to land seats in Congress, by fielding veteran journalist Mike Ubac, actress Ciara Sotto, columnist Mons Romulo and environment advocate Sonia Mendoza as its first, second, third and fourth nominees in the midterm elections.

Legarda said Luntian is rallying support for Senate Bill No. 1948, or the "Single-Use Plastics Regulation and Management Act of 2018," which is aimed at pushing the Philippines' transition to a zero-waste lifestyle.

The bill sought to prohibit the importation and use of plastics in establishments and offer incentives to businesses and individuals who would transition to nonplastics. INQ



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# The Manila Times



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Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
TELECOMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

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## World's oceans heating up fast – study

**TAMPA:** The world's oceans are heating up at an accelerating pace as global warming threatens a diverse range of marine life and a major food supply for the planet, researchers said.

The findings in the US journal *Science*, led by the Chinese Academy of Sciences, debunk previous reports that suggested a so-called pause in global warming in recent years.

The latest technology shows no such hiatus ever existed, raising new concerns about the pace of climate change and its effect on the planet's main buffer — the oceans.

"Ocean heating is a very important indicator of climate change, and we have robust evidence that it is warming more rapidly than we thought," said co-author Zeke Hausfather, a graduate student in the Energy and Resources Group at the University of California, Berkeley.

About 93 percent of excess

heat — trapped around the Earth by greenhouse gases that come from the burning of fossil fuels — accumulates in the world's oceans.

The latest report relied on four studies, published between 2014 and 2017, that gave more precise estimates of past trends in ocean heat, allowing scientists to update past research and hone predictions for the future.

### Floating robots

A key factor in the more accurate numbers is an ocean monitoring fleet called Argo, which includes nearly 4,000 floating robots that "drift throughout the world's oceans, every few days diving to a depth of 2,000 meters (yards) and measuring the ocean's temperature, pH, salinity and other bits of information as they rise back up," said the report.

Argo "has provided consistent and widespread data on

ocean heat content since the mid-2000s," it said.

The new analysis shows warming in the oceans is on pace with measurements of rising air temperature.

And if nothing is done to reduce greenhouse gases, "models predict that the temperature of the top 2,000 meters of the world's oceans will rise 0.78 degrees Celsius by the end of the century," it said.

The thermal expansion — water swelling as it warms — would raise sea level 12 inches (30 centimeters), above any sea level rise from melting glaciers and ice sheets

"While 2018 will be the fourth warmest year on record on the surface, it will most certainly be the warmest year on record in the oceans, as was 2017 and 2016 before that," Hausfather said.

"The global warming signal is a lot easier to detect if it is changing in the oceans than on the surface."

"If the ocean wasn't absorbing as much heat, the surface of the land would heat up much faster than it is right now," Malin Pinsky, an associate professor in the department of ecology, evolution and natural resources at Rutgers University, told *The New York Times*. "In fact, the ocean is saving us from massive warming right now."

Laure Zanna, an associate professor of climate physics at the University of Oxford and who was not involved in the study, told the *Times* the new research was "a very nice summary of what we know of the ocean and how far the new estimates have come together."

"We are warming the planet but the ocean is not warming evenly, so different places warm more than others," Zanna said, according to the paper. "And so the first consequence will be that sea level will be different in different places depending on the warming." **AFP**



## Reef makes a pledge for cleaner beaches

**D**EDICATED to making sure beaches stay clean and healthy, international beach apparel brand Reef pledges to use the fun, freedom and spirit of the beach to champion a better life for people and planet.

To achieve this, Reef is targeting to accomplish 1,500 beach cleanups, remove 150,000 lbs of trash and engage 30,000 volunteers around the world this year, in the hopes that their industry and communities play an equally big role in enacting meaningful change for the planet.

Globally, Reef partnered with Surfrider and has cleaned up 840 beaches and collected 206,871 lbs of trash which is beyond the target mentioned with the help of 30,654 volunteers as of this writing.

In the Philippines, Reef hosted their annual Free the Sea Movement, a fun-filled three-day event and coastal cleanup that aims to promote responsible travel and environmental conservation.

Now on its third year, Reef's Free the Sea Movement 3 in San Juan, La Union, was created in partnership with World Wildlife Fund-Philippines and aimed to encourage people to live a sustainable lifestyle by not using single-use plastics that are harmful to the environment, specifically oceans.

100 volunteers participated in the cleanup during Free the Sea Movement 3, and the event also included Plastic Solutions' talk on eco-brick making. Reef is also part of WWF-Philippines Ayokong Plastic Campaign, which seeks to lessen, and eventually eliminate, single-use plastics within the country by raising awareness of the issue of plastic pollution with the public.

Single-use plastics are among the biggest pollutants found in our oceans today. In 2016, plastic production amounted to as much as 335 million metric tons, approximately half of that

amount used for single-use purposes. A whopping 32 percent of plastic packaging being left to the environs, with 8 million tons of plastic packaging wind up in the ocean each year.

The event also included free surfing clinics for the volunteers, and a fun Music Festival Night graced by bands like Orange and Lemons, G2 and the Bundocks, Coeli, The Geeks PH, Rusty Machines, Eazyhead, We are Imaginary and Cheats.

Aside from mounting coastal cleanups, Reef is also committed to supporting environmental programs of local communities. Recently, Reef also donated cash and goods to the La Union Surf Club to support the organization's environmental efforts in the area.

"A lot of our programs next year will be geared toward encouraging people to live a sustainable lifestyle," says Reef Philippine Marketing Head Marnelli Gaerlan. "Most of our products are now PVC free and we even have sandals enhanced with Eco One, as well, which makes them 100 percent biodegradable."

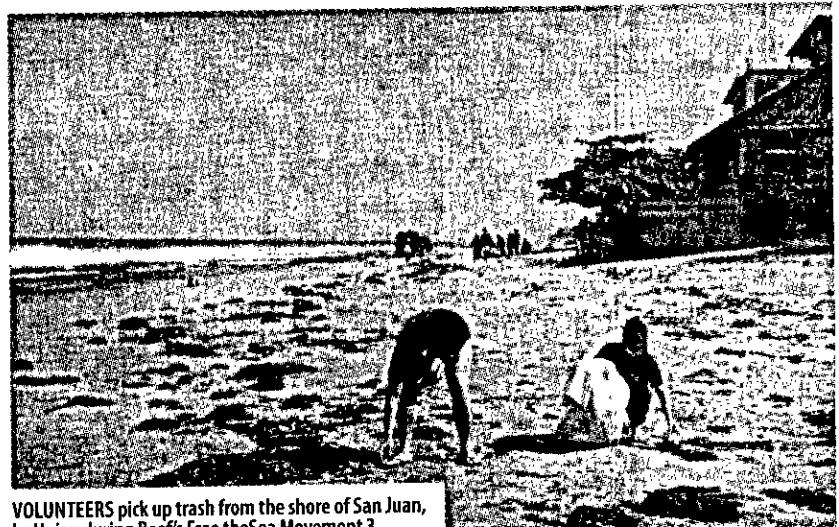
Eco-One, by Ecologic LLC, is an organic

additive that enhances the biodegradation process through a series of chemical and biological processes when disposed of in a biologically active landfill. A normal plastic bag could take hundreds of years to breakdown, but with Eco-One, the material will biodegrade over a shorter period of time.

Next year, Reef will also enhance their plastic packaging with Eco-One.

Reef's pledge for cleaner beaches is in line with their latest campaign Beach Freely, which encourages everyone who steps into the sand or into Reef products to experience the beach in their own way and take that fun spirit of the beach with them wherever they go. By committing to preserve and restore beaches, Reef aims to help ensure that everyone continues to have the opportunity to Beach Freely.

Embrace the spirit of fun, freedom and the beach with Reef—watch the recap of Free the Sea Movement 3 in La Union by visiting <https://bit.ly/2EctPEw>.



**VOLUNTEERS** pick up trash from the shore of San Juan, La Union during Reef's Free theSea Movement 3.





## River dredging, tree farming seen as solutions to flooding

By LOUISE MAUREEN SIMEON

The Department of Agriculture is pushing for the dredging of rivers and intensified tree farming to address the problem of severe flooding during typhoons that affects the local farm sector.

Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol said the majority of damage to the sector is a result of the flooding in the vast agricultural valleys like Cagayan Valley and the river basins of Pampanga, Bulacan, Bicol, Agusan and Rio Grande de Mindanao.

"The cutting down of trees and the clearing of mountains to give way to settlements have contributed to the 'loosening of the soil.' The siltation which eventually ends up in the coastal areas also destroys corals in fishing grounds," he said.

Because of this, the DA has proposed the immediate dredging of the major rivers of the country to end the water backflows and flooding during typhoons and rainy season and open thousands of hectares of fertile areas to agriculture.

"The dredging of the major rivers is an expensive and daunting undertaking but it must be done as an immediate remedy to minimize the flooding and the destruction of agricultural crops during the typhoon and rainy season," Piñol

said.

"The dredged silt from these rivers, presumably peat soil, could be used in reinvigorating the fertility of the farmlands near the river basins," he added.

For the long-term, the DA, Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the local government units target to intensify the country's tree farming program, especially fruit bearing trees, in the sloping and undulating agricultural areas of the country.

Last year, DA adopted tree farming as an agricultural activity and promoted the planting of fruit-bearing trees like cacao and coffee in undulating and sloping areas of the country to address serious environmental problems affecting agriculture and fisheries.

The DA has started the planting of falcata trees in the ancestral domain areas of indigenous peoples under the Kabuhayan at Kaunlaran ng Kababayang Katutubo or the 4Ks program.

"The LGUs will also have to be engaged in implementing the new policy of the DA to discourage the use of weed killers in sloping and undulating areas where farmers plant corn and other cash crops," Piñol said.



## FROM A DISTANCE

CARMEN N. PEDROSA

### 'The Constitution is just a piece of paper' - Roxas

When asked what he thought of constitutional reform in a press conference with STAR, Mar Roxas scoffed "the Constitution is just a piece of paper." For politicians like himself it is. That is how we got into this goddam situation in the first place. Government is used by the oligarchy, to which he belongs, to own the country.



Constitutional reform aims to change all that. We have to restructure government to stop US neo-imperialism supporting oligarchic government.

The announcement of Mar Roxas that he will be an independent candidate in the coming senatorial election is the mask he will use in the campaign. But do not be misled. He will continue to perform his role yet again to promote the interest of the oligarchy and their American backers using the generic name of "liberal."

He follows the footsteps of his ancestor, Manuel Roxas of the Liberal Party, whom the American chose as their front for neo colonialism after the recognition of independence in 1946. For this we have to go back to history.

"On July 5, 1946, representatives of the United States of America and of the Republic of the Philippines signed a Treaty of General Relations between the two governments. The treaty provided for the recognition of the independence of the Republic of the Philippines as of July 4, 1946, and the relinquishment of American sovereignty over the Philippine Islands.

The US retained dozens of military bases, including a few major ones. In addition, independence was qualified by legislation passed by the US Congress.

For example, the Bell Trade Act provided a mechanism whereby US import quotas might be established on Philippine articles which "are coming, or are likely to come, into substantial competition with like articles the product of the United States."

It further required US citizens and corporations be granted equal access to Philippine minerals, forests, and other natural resources.

In hearings before the Senate committee on finance, Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs William Clayton described the law as "clearly inconsistent with the basic foreign economic policy of this country" and "clearly inconsistent with our promise to grant the Philippines genuine independence." (Wikipedia)

In other words to be formally independent but not free. This is the background we must keep in mind about Mar Roxas. He belongs to the Roxas family, the descendants of President Manuel Roxas. This is the Filipino dynasty US imperialists used as the figurehead of the country to maintain their hold.

The post colonial period began under Manuel Roxas lasted from 1946 (when Philippine politicians were servile to American foreign policy) until the election of President Rodrigo Duterte. We did not become independent in 1946 but in 2017, when Duterte announced to the world that from here on the Philippines would adopt an independent foreign policy.

"We will be friends with all countries when it serves the Philippine interest." Of all places he chose to make the declaration in his first visit to China, US rival for superpower. There was thunderous applause from the audience most of whom were Filipinos.

Since then Duterte has had many accomplishments - his war on drugs, his Build, Build, Build program, and the impact of his socio-economic programs for the poor. But to me his independent foreign policy is the most significant. Through his new foreign policy, Duterte was praised by leaders of other countries similarly affected by American superpower but did not have the courage to say.

That Filipinos agree with Duterte's independent policy is backed up by his recent ratings. Duterte's rating is a six-point increase from the previous quarter. Only 13 percent were undecided over the president's performance in the last quarter, while 7 percent disapproved.

Duterte's approval ratings are the highest in Mindanao with a 96 percent rating; followed by the Visayas at 86 percent; then Luzon at 74 percent, and 69 percent in the National Capital Region.

In a coffee talk with some members of the American embassy once I asked them what happened to the original plan to set up Roxas as the Liberal presidential candidate. It was an indirect question asking them why they had acceded to changing Roxas with Aquino.

With Roxas in the Senate if he gets elected expect the same servile policy of these American Filipinos. But you can't say they didn't try.

His oligarchic background was hidden with an unfortunate ad campaign to make him a candidate of the masses. He carried sacks of rice on his back as if he did not know that he is heir to the vast Roxas empire.

It was laughable. But even more hilarious were pictures of him as a tricycle driver. Since when did tricycle drivers wear Gucci shoes? The masses were not fooled.

Indeed every propaganda tactic was tried including his romance with Korina Sanchez, an ABS-CBN anchor. Their wedding was designed to push the Mar and Korina wedding as a marriage of media and politics. It would have been ideal but as far as Filipinos were concerned they were no longer interested in marriages for political purposes.

There may be some who were enamoured with the media play-up of the wedding as nation's most celebrated power couple. But those who were aware to play-up were not impressed. So what? It was dismissed as another attempt to make Roxas popular to the masses. Most interesting was the presence of the US Ambassador to the Philippines Kristie Kenney in the wedding.

What use would a constitutional reform be to a Liberal candidate who would simply resort to oligarchic tactics like a grand wedding? Or pretending to work hard for a living with little reward? All this we must consider in assessing Roxas' return to the Senate. If democratic election is the will of the people, for the people and by the people, I cannot see it in this Manuel Roxas descendant. Connect all the pieces together and the whole picture will emerge.