

Cimatu prompts LGUs to rehabilitate open dumpsites

Six months after the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has completed the closure of all operating open dumpsites in the country, Secretary Roy A. Cimatu prodded local government units (LGUs) to implement their plan of action for the safe closure and rehabilitation of these garbage dumps.

"After our successful feat to close dumpsites all over the country, I would like to reiterate to our concerned LGUs to ensure that all systems and engineering measures are carried out in their rehabilitation plan to prevent negative impacts and risks to the environment," Cimatu said.

The DENR and its Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) had completed in May the closure of 335 open dumpsites nationwide following Cimatu's order to strictly implement Republic Act (RA) 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.

Cimatu is now appealing to the LGUs to implement their safe closure and rehabilitation plan (SCRP)--a requirement after the closure of the open dumpsite within their area of jurisdiction.

"Closing the dumpsite is just the first step. Your responsibility doesn't end there. You (LGUs) have to proactively implement rehabilitation because it is a requirement for closure," the DENR chief pointed out.

He added that the concerned LGUs should accomplish the rehabilitation projects indicated in their SCRPs.

Cimatu cited as an example the municipality of Sta. Ana in Pampanga province for having cleared its open dumpsite of all waste in September.

A closure order was issued to the Sta. Ana municipal government early this year after it turned its materials recovery facility or MRF into an open dumpsite.

DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and LGU Concerns Benny D. Antiporda, who led the closure of the four-hectare open dumpsite in Barangay San Nicolas last February, acknowledged the efforts of the Sta. Ana municipal government and its Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office for the immediate rehabilitation of the closed dumpsite.

"This development is an indication of the effective solid waste management program of the DENR and our thrust to address the solid waste management problem in the country in accordance with our mandate to strictly enforce RA 9003," Antiporda said.

He ordered the Sta. Ana municipal government to continue its SCRPs implementation, which will be closely monitored by the EMB regional office.

Sta. Ana town has allocated P9.5 million for the clearing of the MRF where about 20,096.28 tons or 1,100 truckloads of waste have been disposed at the Metro Clark Waste Management Corporation Sanitary Landfill.

In a statement last Wednesday, DENR Region 3 Executive Director Paquito Moreno said local governments in the region “played a significant role in the closure of open dumpsites in the region and have been cooperative and supportive with the DENR campaign including implementation of Solid Waste Management Law.” ###