

## DENR cites solid waste management achievements under Cimatu's leadership

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units (LGUs) Concerns Benny D. Antiporda said that the agency has long been undertaking preventive measures and rehabilitation efforts in the different river systems in the country, including the Pasig River.

Antiporda issued the statement to clarify a global study labeling rivers in the Philippines as top plastic emitters.

"Again, even prior to the publication of the said study, the DENR has already launched various efforts on environmental protection and conservation under Secretary Roy A. Cimatu's leadership," Antiporda said during a press conference on June 28.



The Ocean Cleanup-led study, which was published in the international journal Science Advances, has named rivers in the Philippines as among the top 10 sources of ocean plastic pollution. Pasig River has been identified as the top plastic emitter.

Antiporda said that the study, which used a probabilistic approach and was based on secondary studies, did not reflect the actual condition of the rivers.

He stressed that with strong-willed leadership and efforts to mitigate pollution under the present administration, the study would show a different result.

Antiporda explained that solid waste management that includes plastic wastes is being addressed in the tributaries to the ocean not only through various mitigation strategies, technologies, law enforcement but also in manpower.

The DENR continues to support LGUs in establishing their materials recovery facilities (MRFs). So far, 11,546 MRFs have been built, serving 14,450 barangays nationwide.

This year, the DENR has completed the closure of all 335 illegally operating dumpsites in the country despite the restrictions brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As of 2020, 241 sanitary landfills have been established. The DENR has also formed the Coalition of Solid Waste Management Providers for a more effective approach in solid waste management.

The National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC), chaired by Cimatu, has also approved the solid waste management plans (SWM) of 22 LGUs as of May 2021, bringing the total of approved SWM plans to 1,082 or 63 percent of its target nationwide.

According to Antiporda, over 1,333 estero rangers were also commissioned by the DENR-National Capital Region for the cleanup of waterways and water bodies in the region.

He also noted that the Manila Bay Rehabilitation, which started in 2019, entailed cleaning up all waterways that serve as tributaries to the bay, which includes the Pasig River.

The Pasig River Coordinating and Management Office has deployed more than 100 River Warriors and River Patrollers to retrieve solid waste and other floating debris from waterways within the Pasig River System and guard the river against violators.

From January to May 2021, cleanup operations conducted in Pasig River have led to the retrieval of 136,564 sacks or around 4,096,920 kilograms of solid wastes.

Last year, a total of 216,000 sacks equivalent to seven tons of solid wastes were removed from February to December.

Antiporda also cited Estero de San Antonio Abad and Estero de Magdalena as some of the esteros cleared of solid waste.

"We have done our part in dealing with this solid waste problem of the country. In this present administration, you can see that it is only President Rodrigo Roa Duterte and Secretary Cimatú who really cared for our waterways," Antiporda said. ###