

## DENR tells candidates to dispose of campaign materials properly

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Acting Secretary Jim O. Sampulna urged the candidates in the 2022 national and local elections to clean up and dispose of campaign materials in accordance with Republic Act (RA) 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.

“Win or lose, these candidates must consider the long-term consequences of their campaign materials in the environment. Therefore, they must encourage their supporters and volunteers to take down these materials, especially those made of plastic, and dispose these properly,” Sampulna said.

He added that the DENR, together with the local government units (LGUs), will be “at the beck and call” of the Commission on Elections (Comelec) to make sure that a resolution will be crafted requiring candidates to remove election materials after every campaign period.

“We will make sure that the existing environmental laws, such as RA 9003, will strengthen the resolution,” Sampulna said.

Moreover, the DENR chief asked the candidates to assemble their teams to “clean up voluntarily instead of being intimidated by possible violations after the election season.”

“Candidates could show how sincere they are in serving the country this way,” he added.

Sampulna recommended the recycling and upcycling campaign materials to lessen the by-products that will be disposed of in the dumpsites.

The Department of the Interior and Local Government, which is a member of the National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC), has already disseminated an advisory to all LGUs to remind them to strictly enforce the pertinent provisions of RA 9003.

Under the advisory, which was disseminated to the regional offices of the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB), several initiatives have been recommended including strict enforcement of local ordinances and regulations against illegal dumping, open burning and littering, and utilization of materials recovery facilities of LGUs to collect and store reusable materials.

Coming up with innovative and safe strategies to recycle and upcycle reusable campaign waste materials; imposing the responsibility to the organizers of political activities to ensure that the waste generated will be properly disposed; and encouraging the citizenry to take part in initiatives of LGUs in ensuring a clean and litter-free environment, prior to, during and after elections were also included in the recommended initiatives for post-election activities of the candidates.

In April, the DENR took down over 114,000 campaign materials posted on trees nationwide pursuant to RA 3571.



RA 3571 provides that “cutting, destroying, or injuring of planted or growing trees, flowering plants and shrubs or plants of scenic value along public roads, in plazas, parks, school premises, or in any other public pleasure grounds are prohibited.” ###