

# DENR to close illegal landfills

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Dumpsites near water reservoirs will be closed within this quarter, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources said Wednesday.

“We are signing an order that there will no longer be dump sites near bodies of water, it’s putting the lives of people there at risk,” said Environment Secretary Regina Lopez.

Lopez said the department would give local government units time to find an alternative area for a sanitary landfill.

Environment Undersecretary Art Valdez said only 5 percent of LGUs followed the solid waste law.

“The Ombudsman is really busy filing cases against the local governments. Open dumpsite is illegal so the Ombudsman is doing it,” Valdez said.

He said the government would give a 30- to 60-day deadline to look for an alternative area for sanitary landfill.

“In Boracay for instance, I already gave them a warning. Hotel operators there were given show cause orders to explain why they are discharging their effluent into the drain system,” Valdez said. “Now they are really compliant and putting up their own sewage treatment facilities because if they do not do that, we will close the hotel. We are looking at Boracay, Iloilo, Kalibo and the Payatas dumpsite here in Quezon City.”

“We will give them 30 to 60 days or we close it down. For Payatas, I think it will take 30 days. The order is clear—open dumpsite is not allowed. Once closed, there are other people that will come out to rehabilitate the place. We are willing to help the LGUs rehabilitate the area,” added Valdez.

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