

Baguio garbage crisis looms over P75-m fund

The Standard, posted March 06, 2017 at 12:01 am by **Dexter A. See**

BAGUIO CITY—Garbage is expected to pile up in this city's 128 barangays once the local government stops hauling residual waste to the sanitary landfill in Capas, Tarlac.

The P9-million fund allocated by the City Council for the purpose will be exhausted by March 9, Mayor Mauricio Domogan said.

He said the city government has no recourse but to stop hauling Baguio's waste to Tarlac because the city council refuses to return the P75 million it transferred to the city's maintenance and operating expenses allocation back to environment and sanitary services, which used to cover the costs of garbage hauling.

"We already explained to some members of the City Council that the account for environment and sanitary services includes the expenditures for garbage hauling and payment of tipping fees, pursuant to existing circulars previously issued by the Commission on Audit, thereby making the appropriation specific—contrary to their contention that it is generic," Domogan stressed.

The city council transferred the appropriation to the MOOE budget of the City General Services Office to compel the Mayor's Office to submit the contract for hauling to the Council for confirmation. It also decided to earmark just P9 million for garbage hauling expenses for the first two months of the year.

However, Domogan partially vetoed the portion of Appropriation Ordinance No. 072, series of 2016, specifically the transfer of the P75-million garbage fund. He argued that it runs counter to the provisions of existing CoA circulars that define environment and sanitary services to include expenditures for garbage hauling.

The City Council decided to override the mayor's veto, arguing that the 10-day reglamentary period to veto the ordinance had passed. It said the ordinance was transmitted to Domogan on Jan. 11, and that the veto was only submitted to the council on February 6.

Domogan explained in his motion for reconsideration to the council that "while it is true the Appropriation Ordinance was transmitted to the City Mayor's Office on January 11, it was only the first and last pages that were available."

"The same was withdrawn by the City Council staff on January 26, before it was again completely transmitted on February 2, thus, the veto was still within the prescribed reglamentary period," he added.

The council is expected to deliberate on the merits of Domogan's motion to avert the negative impact of the exhaustion of the garbage funds.