

NEWSINFO / NATION

DENR chief suggests common landfills, gov't loans for waste management

Meanwhile, QC appeals for reopening of Payatas landfill

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Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu (File photo by LYN RILLON / Philippine Daily Inquirer)

Local government units could look into the possibility of having common sanitary landfills or taking out government loans to be able to strictly comply with the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act.

These were the suggestions Environment Roy Cimatu offered to board members of the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP) in a recent meeting in which local officials expressed concerns on the costliness of the law's provision mandating the setting up of "engineered" sanitary landfills.

In a statement on Friday, the DENR explained that an "engineered" method of landfilling means that garbage would be handled at a disposal facility designed, constructed, and operated in a manner protective of public health and the environment.

In response, Cimatu said: "Adjacent municipalities or cities may cluster together and pool their resources to establish sanitary landfills."

He said the local government units could also avail of government loans, such as the green financing program of the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP).

"DBP is willing to provide financial and technical assistance to LGUs in implementing environment projects, including solid waste management," Cimatu said. "LGUs can then come up with a scheme to pay back the loan, such as through collection of tipping fees."

For long-term measures, Cimatu said the DENR would continuously promote alternative waste management practices, particularly the 3Rs – reuse, reduce and recycle.

"Our landfills can only hold so much garbage," he said. "The 3Rs model remains the most reliable and useful strategy for efficient and effective management of solid waste."

The Quezon City government likewise encouraged the adoption of the 3Rs approach in the face of the impending closure of the Payatas landfill by the end of the year and the recent temporary suspension of its operations ordered by the DENR.

“We are appealing to the residents of Quezon City to manage their garbage and to segregate, to reduce the amount of trash. Practice 3Rs to help the government... Not only the government should act, but also the constituents,” said Frederika Rentoy, chief of the Quezon City Environment Protection and Waste Management Department, in a statement.

As of now, Quezon City Hall has diverted the city’s garbage to a landfill in Rodriguez, Rizal. The local government unit has also appealed for the reopening of the Payatas landfill, at least for the next two months, to prepare for the permanent closure by Dec. 31.

Rentoy said the city government was also preparing for a “refleeting” of garbage collection trucks.

“We need to refleet into bigger truck or add bigger trucks so they would be appropriate for the long haul to Rodriguez, Rizal,” Rentoy said. The city government has deployed 550 dump trucks for garbage collection.

Rentoy appealed for patience for any delays in garbage collection in the city.

“Based on our monitoring, collection of garbage on main roads are implemented 100 percent, in barangays 82 percent, and in markets and schools 62 percent,” she said. /**atm**

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