

DILG: Boracay interagency to define island's soft-opening

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[Rosette Adel](#) (philstar.com) - July 3, 2018 - 8:47am

MANILA, Philippines — Department of the Interior and Local Government Undersecretary Epimaco Densing III on Monday said the rehabilitation of Boracay Island is ahead of schedule.

Due to this, Densing said an early reopening of the island to tourists is possible. However, he said the interagency task force composed of the Departments of Environment and Natural Resources, Tourism, Public Works and Highways and the DILG are set to discuss the guidelines on the soft-opening.

“As part of the agenda, we will request for the definition of a soft-opening. We'll have to define the criteria, what are the milestones,” Densing said in an interview with CNN Philippines’ “The Source.”

“Once we define it, then that can be criteria to slowly open the island until its full opening on October 26,” he added.

Densing explained that the rehabilitation is ahead of the schedule since progress on concerns were discussed during the committee’s last meeting.

He cited that the DENR has reported a significant improvement in the water quality while the DPWH said the demolition for the road widening project is 95 percent complete.

“By July 5, we were told by the DPWH that they will start cementing [the] road system including the drainage itself so early reopening is workable,” Densing said.

Densing said they are projecting the reopening of the island to a limited number of tourists once the road widening is 70 to 80 percent complete.

Meanwhile, Densing said the government foresees the opening to be gradual.

'Some establishments may no longer reopen'

The DENR official cited that he can also see that not all establishments would resume operations due to lack of proper licenses and permits.

“Right now, there are establishments that may no longer reopen because we made a compliance audit of their permits and licenses and I’ve already mentioned that out of the 2,269 that we have inspected—door-to door—only 95 are fully compliant,” Densing said.

Densing furthered that 1,086 of the establishments do not have a mayor's permit while more than 320 do not have environmental compliance certificate. In addition, at least 1,382 were found to lack Social Security System, PAGIBIG, and PhilHealth accounts for their employees.

“In other words, our fellow Filipinos in Boracay were taken advantage of. They do not have benefits,” he added.

Densing said establishments were required to comply with all the permits before they are allowed to open on or before October 26. They were also given notices to comply.

“The LGU (local government unit) of Malay [will implement] cease and order until and unless they fill in the deficiencies in their permits and licenses,” he added.

Read more at <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2018/07/03/1829949/dilg-boracay-interagency-define-islands-soft-opening#6QqKiJJhowTtwxTT.99>