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DENR seeks P24.17-B budget for 2019

By

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August 10, 2018 12:20 AM

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The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is seeking a budget of P24.17 billion for 2019 which is lower compared to the agency's funding allocation last year.

Despite this, DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu believes the allocation is enough to bankroll the agency's programs to protect the country's environment.

DENR's proposed 2019 budget is P740 million lower compared to its budget last year. It represents only 0.64 percent of the proposed P3.757 trillion national budget for next year.

"We do not need a bigger budget to carry out its mandate. All we need is to be prudent and judicious in spending our budget and make sure that every single centavo is spent efficiently for programs promoting environmental protection," Cimatu added.

The department is asking Congress almost P6 billion to finance its reforestation and forest protection projects for next year, with the Enhanced National Greening Program (ENGP) getting the lion's share among DENR programs.

"The ENGP takes the biggest chunk of the budget, followed by forest protection and anti-illegal logging, as well as our continued support for biodiversity conservation," Cimatu said.

Of the total P5.96 billion allocated for reforestation and forest protection, P5.15 billion goes to ENGP, while P809.4 million will be used for the Forest Protection Program/Anti-Illegal Logging Program.

Under the ENGP, the Duterte administration aims to reforest some 1.2 million hectares between 2017 to 2022 in accordance with the updated 2016-2028 Master Plan for Forestry Development.

For 2019, Cimatu said the DENR targets to cover some 143,187 hectares and produce 138.2 million planting materials. From January 2017 up to June this year around 193.05 million seedlings have been planted in 215,036 hectares of land.

The ENGP and forest protection initiative are among the 10 priority programs of the DENR, which have a total allocation of P8.88 billion or 36.73 percent of the agency's 2019 budget proposal.

More than P732 million was earmarked for the Enhanced Biodiversity Conservation Program, making it the third priority of the department in terms of budget allocation.

The other seven priority programs of DENR are the following: solid waste management (P656.8 million); geohazard, groundwater assessment and responsible mining (P468 million); improved land administration and management (P398.9 million); scaling up of coastal and marine ecosystems (P267.7 million); clean air (P111.6 million); and Manila Bay cleanup (P80 million).

Under its proposed 2019 budget, the DENR allocates P4.08 billion for its line agencies, namely Environmental Management Bureau (P2.65 billion) and Mines and Geosciences Bureau (P1.43 billion).

<http://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2018/08/10/denr-seeks-p24-17-b-budget-for-2019/>