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El Nido waters clean, tests show

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“But we have yet to assess and inspect if [El Nido] would be 100-percent compliant, like Boracay” Eduardo Año
Interior and Local Government Secretary

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Water pollution levels around the main beach area in El Nido town in Palawan province has gone down significantly, according to the latest tests conducted by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The DENR in Mimaropa (Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon and Palawan) region said results of water tests in Bacuit Bay, released seven months after the agency and the local government began a cleanup drive against errant establishments encroaching on coastal easements, indicated that fecal coliform levels had gone down to “normal.”

“Seven months after the roll out of intensified environmental compliance monitoring of Task Force El Nido, the level of fecal coliform in Bacuit Bay within Barangays Masagana, Maligaya and Corong-Corong has reached, and been kept, at normal levels,” Henry Adornado, DENR regional director, said in a statement.

Safe level

Water monitoring conducted at Barangay Maligaya, one of the town's most congested areas, showed that total fecal coliform had gone down to a safe level of 24 most probable number per 100 milliliters, from 17,000 MPN in February this year.

The DENR's water quality guidelines and general effluents standards of 2016 (Department Administrative Order No. 2016-08) prescribes 100 MPN as safe level.

Except for Barangay Buena Suerte, also a populated area, where fecal coliform levels reached 1,600 MPN, from 3,500 MPN in February, all other previous test sites showed safe levels of coliform.

Adornado said they were set to conduct more tests to determine if the improvements in the water quality of Bacuit Bay had to do with their current enforcement efforts.

"While this sounds good news, it is still too early to tell if the changes in coliform levels are due to the cleanup efforts," he said.

The tests were being conducted by the Environmental Management Bureau.

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