

DENR eyes environmental tax

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THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is looking to impose an environmental tax on businesses that use single-use plastics to help reduce solid wastes in the country.

During the department's yearend performance press conference on Thursday, Benny Antiporda, Environment undersecretary for solid waste management and local government unit (LGU) concerns, said the tax would also enable the DENR to source funds for the development of recycling facilities.

According to him, the department will continue to encourage industries to get involved in programs that increase the recovery of packaging materials, which end up in dumps and oceans.

"Basically, we cannot tell them to stop doing their business, we cannot tell them not to use [plastic]," Antiporda said.

"We're trying to think of something that could help our environment. The main objective of solid waste management [at] the moment...is to stop the plastic people, not the plastic itself," he added.

The Philippines is the third-biggest ocean polluter after China and Indonesia, according to a 2015 study conducted by the University of Georgia and reported by Ocean Conservancy and McKinsey Center for Business and Environment.

At present, the Philippine Alliance for Recycling and Materials Sustainability is doing a pilot study on recycling flexible packaging or multimaterial film packaging.

Republic Act 9003, or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, mandates LGUs to have a comprehensive solid waste management plan and establish an MRF in each village to receive, sort, process and store compostable and recyclable materials.

The law prohibits establishing and operating open dumpsites.

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