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# Include environment in COVID recovery plan, gov't urged

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by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

Environmental advocates belonging to the EcoWaste Coalition urged the government to prioritize the environment in its coronavirus recovery plan through the adoption and implementation of key policies such as banning single-use plastics.

“We anticipate the President’s 5th SONA to unwrap the government’s detailed strategy and plan to rebuild the society from the unparalleled health, economic, and humanitarian crisis caused by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic,” said Eileen Sison, president of EcoWaste Coalition.

“With a green and just recovery strategy and plan, the government can resuscitate our battered economy in ways that will uplift the people’s lives, particularly those living on the margins of society like the informal waste communities, while ensuring the protection of the ecosystems from dirty energy sources, polluting processes and wasteful products, and toxic disposal technologies,” she added.

For a green and just recovery from the harmful impacts of COVID-19, EcoWaste and other environmental groups expressed the need to prioritize the adoption and eventual implementation of key pollution prevention laws and environmental justice policies, that include the rejection of bills rescinding the ban on waste incineration under the Clean Air Act and the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act and those espousing waste-to-energy incineration.

They also appealed for the enactment of a comprehensive ban on single-use plastics and the promotion of alternative product packaging and delivery systems; as well as the adoption of extended producer responsibility that will make manufacturers, importers, and distributors responsible for the retrieval, recycling, treatment, or disposal of post-consumer products.

The groups also asked for the implementation of the Basel Ban Amendment prohibiting the transfer of hazardous wastes from developed to developing countries, and the imposition of a national ban on waste imports, including electronic waste, plastic waste, and other wastes.

Other priorities mentioned by the groups are the environmentally sound management of infectious COVID-19 waste sans the use of incinerators or crematories; propagation of urban container gardening and farming and household composting as practical solutions to waste, hunger, and health woes; provision of secure, safe, and sustainable jobs and livelihoods for the informal waste sector, and the passage of a “Rights of Nature” law that will provide the highest level of legal protection to the natural ecosystems and processes amid the climate, biodiversity, plastic, and COVID-19 crises.

“We hope to hear that the government will be sane enough to stop the approval and implementation of environmentally destructive waste-to-energy incineration and mining projects,” Chinkie Peliño-Golle, executive director of Interfacing Development Interventions for Sustainability said.

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