

# DENR continues enforcement of environmental laws



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Despite restrictions due to the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic, the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) still managed to carry out its mandate to monitor compliance with laws on clean water, clean air and solid waste management.

“The pandemic is no excuse for dropping guard against violators of environmental laws, rules and regulations,” Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said in a statement on Friday.

“In fact, this is the time for us to be more vigilant and aggressive against these lawbreakers due to what they perceived as relaxation of enforcement of environmental laws, which is really not the case,” he added.

To ensure compliance with Republic Act (RA) 8749, or the “Philippine Clean Air Act,” the EMB strengthened its monitoring of 8,572 industries and maintained 101 real-time air quality monitoring stations (AQMS) nationwide in 2020.

All AQMS recorded that the country’s air quality, particularly in terms of particulate matters 10 and 2.5, are within the standards of 60 micrograms and 25 micrograms per normal cubic meter, respectively.

Also this year, the EMB formulated, updated and monitored 22 airshed action plans. It also issued 211 certificates of conformity to new vehicles compliant to Euro IV standards in the first semester of the year.

Although only one additional water quality management area (WQMA) was declared this year, EMB updated and monitored existing 36 WQMAs in compliance with RA 9275 or the Philippine Clean Water Act.

To ensure the water quality of existing waterbodies, it conducted continuous ambient monitoring of 42 priority rivers, 315 other waterbodies and 39 priority bathing beaches. It also classified 52 waterbodies and monitored compliance of 4,960 firms/industries in the first semester of the year.

On the implementation of RA 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, the bureau assisted 598 barangays in establishing their respective materials recovery facility (MRF) and supported the operation of 24 functional MRFs.

Meanwhile, the DENR-led National Solid Waste Management Commission has approved a total of 106 solid waste management plans this year, bringing the total to 1,063 since RA 9003 was enacted in 2001.

It also monitored the implementation of 670 closure and rehabilitation plans, as well as the actual closure and rehabilitation of 204 dumpsites.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/12/26/business/business-top/denr-continues-enforcement-of-environmental-laws/817659/>