

NATION

# DENR to prioritize clearing of water lilies in Pasig River, Laguna de Bay

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MANILA, Philippines – The Department of Natural Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Wednesday said it is eyeing to tap fisher folks to control the growth of water lilies in Pasig River and Laguna de Bay.

In a statement, the DENR said that the problem of the proliferation of water lilies was tackled during the meeting on the ongoing rehabilitation of Manila Bay last March 11.

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DENR Usec. Benny Antiporda, the concurrent head of the Manila Bay Anti-Pollution Task Force (APTF), directed the members of the task force to prioritize the removal of the water hyacinth in Pasig River and Laguna de Bay as the rapid increase of the water lilies is causing a major obstruction to smooth flow of navigation along waterways.

“With the improvement of the water quality, there should also be no foul odor coming from the bay,” he said.

He stressed that he wanted to make a “drastic change” in the quality of the water in Manila Bay.

He also instructed the Manila Bay APTF members to establish an effective monitoring system that has “complete standard operating procedure with corresponding timeline” to ensure the compliance of “environmental polluters.”

“We need to double up our effort in running after them. We will deal with them head-on,” Antiporda stressed.

A sub-committee in charge of the clearing of water lilies was created “to control and minimize” the growth of the water plant, while the Manila Bay APTF will also look into the possibility of employing the services of local fisherfolk to harvest water lilies.

“To see is to believe, to smell is to believe, and to test is to believe,” he said, reminding its members of the task force’s three main goals. –*Liezelle Soriano Roy, trainee*

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