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DENR gets 'Oscar nomination' for anti-lead policy on paints

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The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has just received the equivalent of an “Oscar nomination” when it comes to environmental sustainability policies.



(Photo from the EcoWaste Coalition)

This, after one of the agency’s policies was shortlisted from a total of 55 nominated policies from 36 countries by the World Future Council (WFC) for its Future Policy Award 2021 (FPA 2021).

Dubbed as the “Oscar on best policies,” the FPA is the first and only award that celebrates policies for the benefit of present and future generations on an

international level. This year's FPA puts the spotlight on the most effective policy solutions that minimize the adverse effects of exposure to chemicals on human health and the environment.

Among the shortlisted policies is DENR Administrative Order 2013-24, also known as the Chemical Control Order for Lead and Lead Compounds (CCO), which bans the use of lead in the production of paints and other processes, including the manufacture of toys, school supplies, cosmetics, and food contact packaging materials.

The CCO imposes a total maximum lead content of 90 parts per million (ppm) for all paints and sets a phase out period for lead-containing architectural, household and decorative paints (2013 to 2016) and lead-containing industrial paints (2013 to 2019).

"We are deeply honored to have been nominated and subsequently shortlisted for the FPA 2021 as the global award recognizes a groundbreaking policy that our government had promulgated with vigorous support from our paint industry and civil society partners to protect vulnerable populations, particularly children, women and workers, from the harmful effects of lead exposure," said Juan Miguel Cuna, DENR Undersecretary for Field Operations and Environment.

Cuna was the director of the DENR-Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) when the CCO was being deliberated on. There are only 11 other policies on the WFC short list for FPA 2021.

"With the CCO, the Philippines became the first Southeast Asian country to successfully implement legislation towards lead-safe paint. The policy's objective is to increase awareness of the toxicity of lead exposure and to provide safer alternatives to protect the health of the population and the environment," the WFC said.

"While globally only a few countries have enacted comprehensive bans on the use of lead additives in all paints, the Philippines demonstrate that it is entirely possible to restrict the use of lead in all paints to the maximum limit of 90 ppm, including in industrial paints, which generally have lead concentrations that are up to 10 times higher," it added.

"By 2020, the local industry had beaten the phase-out deadline for lead paints with a total of 1,395 paint products certified through the new Lead Safe Paint® Certification programme," the council further said.

For his part, Derrick Tan, president of the Philippine Association of Paint Manufacturers (PAPM) described the COO's shortlisting "as a high point in the industry-wide transition to lead-safe paint production made possible by the promulgation of a mandatory policy that was developed with the participation of paint manufacturers, raw materials suppliers, environmental health activists and government regulators".

He said local paint makers have now switched to non-leaded ingredients for pigments, driers and rust inhibitors, indicating the doability and viability of making the shift.

The winning policies will be revealed in a virtual award ceremony on July 6, 2021.

<https://mb.com.ph/2021/05/27/denr-gets-oscar-nomination-for-anti-lead-policy-on-paints/>