

DENR on-site services help Siargao establishments secure ECCs

By: Philippine News Agency

BUTUAN CITY – The “Services on Wheels” program of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in the Caraga Region (DENR-13) is now gaining ground in Siargao Island, Surigao del Norte especially in providing support to Tourism-Related Establishments (TREs) in securing Environmental Compliance Certificates (ECCs).

The program was launched in June this year with the aim of helping the local government units (LGUs) and TREs in the island obtain the necessary certifications and in the implementation of the environmental laws and policies.

“The agency created 10 teams to render onsite services to our TREs, LGUs, and the other stakeholders on the island,” said DENR-13 Regional Executive Director Nonito Tamayo in an interview on Wednesday.

He added that the first task of the team under the program was the filtering of the number of TREs operating in the different towns on the island.

A total of nine municipalities in Surigao del Norte are situated in Siargao Island, serving as the first legislative district of the province.

“Prior to the devastation of typhoon Odette, there were 1,108 TREs listed on the island. But with the filtering we conducted, the number is reduced to 445,” Tamayo said.

TREs required to secure ECCs are those that occupy an area of 1,000 square meters with at least 10 rooms available for rent.

“As of Aug. 7, we found out that only 20 percent of the 445 TREs on the island have ECCs,” Tamayo said.

The 10 teams, he added, are now working with the 80 percent of TREs on the island to cope with the necessary requirements for securing their ECCs.

Meanwhile, Tamayo also told the Philippine News Agency on Wednesday that he will personally meet with the LGUs on the island next week to discuss the issues and concerns on waste management.

“We also received reports on open dumpsites in all the towns on the island, and we want to settle this matters with the LGUs,” Tamayo said.

A team from the DENR-13 will also join the meeting to provide technical support to their counterparts at the LGU levels to address the problems on waste dumpsites.

“Siargao is a major tourism destination here in the Caraga Region. Effective waste disposal and management is essential and we want to work with the LGUs to address this matter,” Tamayo said.