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Boracay establishments face closure for releasing untreated waste water

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is determined to finish in two months the assessment of commercial establishments that may have been releasing untreated wastewater, and sewage causing pollution into the waters of Boracay Island.

So far, DENR has finished the assessment of 30 percent of the business firms, most of which are resorts, operating in Boracay Island, DENR Undersecretary Jonas Leones said.

He pointed out that most establishments in Boracay have no wastewater treatment facility, while some are just connected to the island's drainage system, which can only accommodate rainwater.

There will be appropriate sanctions

for those found violating the Clean Water Act, Leones said. They will be issued notices of violation, he added.

"We need a serious and honest-to-goodness crackdown on these erring establishments that are contributing to water pollution in Boracay," DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu said.

DENR is working in close coordination with the Department of Tourism (DOT) in identifying Boracay establishments that are discharging untreated wastewater directly to the beach or illegally connecting to the drainage system.

DOT earlier said around 100 commercial establishments in Boracay have improper waste management.

"If these firms can manage their

wastewater through good housekeeping that will be fine. But if they cannot, wastewater should be treated, Leones pointed out.

Under the DENR's procedures, a notice of violation will be issued against an erring establishment, which will be called to a technical conference.

The violator will then be given one or two months to address their violations. The DENR-Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) will evaluate their compliance.

If the violations are not addressed, the EMB can elevate the case to the Pollution Adjudication Board with a recommendation to issue a cease and desist order against the establishment. (Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz)

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