

PH needs foreign help in solving plastic pollution

Manila Bulletin · 21 Jun 2018 · B-9 · By ELLSON A. QUISMORIO

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) should address the plastic pollution in the country by seeking help from other nations that have the technology to solve it.

This was pointed out by Surigao del Norte Rep. Robert Ace Barbers who has raised serious concern over choked waterways with discarded plastics that could breed disaster, particularly during the rainy season.

"Marine pollution arising from plastic debris and other forms of garbage choking our waterways worsen our environmental problems," said Barbers, who chairs the House Committee on Dangerous Drugs.

"I urge the DENR and other research agencies of the government to reverse the cycle of plastic pollution by working with other countries to lessen, if not eliminate, its toxic impact on human health and ecology," he stressed.

"We don't have to wait for the rainy season before we realize that this environmental scourge would further claim the lives of more people, particularly those living in fenceline communities and esteros," he said.

Barbers specifically urged DENR to tap foreign technology that could recycle plastics into construction materials to build sustainable houses for the homeless.

He noted how modern life is now heavily dependent on plastic, and yet once these products are made, these are almost impossible to get rid of. This makes recycling a necessity.

A 2015 report on plastic pollution by international group Ocean Conservancy and McKinsey Center for Business and Environment revealed that the Philippines was the world's third-biggest source of plastic leaking into the ocean and has among the highest trash collection rates in Southeast Asia.

On the other hand, the latest waste and brand audit by environmental groups Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA) and Mother Earth Foundation (MEF) released on June 1 showed that six of the top 10 plastic polluters in six major cities in the Philippines are multinational brands.

The GAIA and MEF conducted the audit in Malabon City, Quezon City, Batangas City, Nueva Vizcaya, Tacloban City, and in San Fernando, Pampanga.

It said that about 79 percent of branded plastic residual waste came from food packaging, followed by household (12 percent) and personal care (8 percent) products.

"The DENR should tap technology from countries that have been successful in reducing plastic footprint," the House leader said.