

Quezon City bans single-use plastics

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QUEZON CITY will ban single-use plastics and disposable materials in hotels and restaurants, the local government said in a statement.

Mayor Ma. Josefina G. Belmonte signed an ordinance that prohibits the distribution and use of single-use plastics and disposable materials, including cutlery for dine-in purposes in all hotels and restaurants in the city.

Materials covered by the ban for dine-in customers of hotels and restaurants are plastic spoons, forks and knives, plastic and paper cups, plates, straws, stirrers and styrofoam.

Hotels, meanwhile, are prohibited from providing bar and liquid soaps, shampoos and conditioners, shower gels and other items in sachets and single-use containers.

“The local government of Quezon City is taking this action to prevent and reduce the generation of waste materials that are hardly recovered and recycled, and to promote sustainable practices, especially in the city’s thriving hotel and restaurant industry,” Ms. Belmonte said in the statement.

She said she expects a significant drop in the volume of residual and plastic wastes once the rules that will implement the ordinance are issued.

“This will be beneficial for the environment and the people as these avoidable wastes are known to add to the city’s huge waste production and to littering and flooding problems,” Ms. Belmonte said.

The Environmental Protection and Waste Management Department and the Business Permits and Licensing Department will monitor compliance.

First-time offenders will be fined P1,000. A P3,000 fine will be imposed on second offense, and their environmental permits will be revoked. Third-time offenders will be fined P5,000 and their business permits will be revoked and their establishments will be closed.

In an interview, Steven T. Cua, president of the Philippine Amalgamate Supermarkets Association, Inc., said the ban on plastic bags might affect businesses. He added that the law should be enforced gradually and the public should be educated on the use of plastics.

Quezon City’s waste study in 2013 said 0.81% of the 9.64% “recyclable plastic wastes” from the city are composed of single-use cutlery. The city said this was equivalent to 2.6 tons a day or about one truckload of a mini-dump truck.

Meanwhile, Congressman Bienvenido M. Abante, Jr. proposed at a ways and means committee meeting on Monday to ban single-use plastic bags and impose higher

taxes on reusable plastics, noting that such measures will be more effective in “helping the environment.”

The panel tackled the proposed Single-Use Plastic Bag Tax Act, which seeks to tax P10 for every kilo of single-use plastic bag removed from the place of production or release from the Customs house.

Willy Go of the Philippine Plastics Industry Association Inc. opposed the tax. “A plastic bag is only P1 per piece and if we calculate P10 per kilo, that will add up to around 20% of the cost.” —

QC trial court to rule on massacre case this month

A QUEZON CITY trial court is expected to rule by Dec. 19 on a decade-long case involving the massacre of more than 50 people, including 32 journalists in Maguindanao province in southern Philippines.

In an order dated Nov. 29, Judge Jocelyn A. SolisReyes set the promulgation of the case for Dec. 19 at Camp Bagong Diwa in Taguig City.

The court was supposed to rule before the 10th year anniversary of the massacre on Nov. 23, but it asked the Supreme Court for an extension.

Case records have reached 238 volumes — 165 volumes of records on trials, 62 on stenographic notes, and eight on the prosecution’s documentary evidence.

The trial of primary suspects Datu Andal “Unsay” Ampatuan, Jr. and Zaldy U. Ampatuan ended in August.

Justice Secretary Menardo I. Guevarra said he was glad that “we have finally reached the day of reckoning.”

“The prosecution has presented nearly 200 witnesses, and the defense over a hundred, during an intense trial that lasted several years,” he said in a mobile-phone message.

“We thank the judge for her patience and diligence. We trust that she will dispense justice evenhandedly and with utmost respect for the rule of law,” he added.

The ambush took place while Esmael G. Mangudadatu, who was running for governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, was on his way to file his certificate of candidacy. He was accompanied by family members, supporters and members of the media. —