

QC MOVES EFFECTIVITY DATE OF BAN ON SINGLE-USE MATERIALS

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The Quezon City government has moved to July 1 the effectivity date of a sweeping ban on single-use materials in hotels and eateries, after businesses protested that the original Feb. 1 deadline left them too little time to undertake such a massive transition.

Quezon City **Environmental Protection and Waste Management Department** head Andrea Villaroman told the Inquirer that the imposition of stiff penalties for violators of City Ordinance SP-2876 would also be postponed to July, but all establishments were required to submit a detailed transition plan.

“It couldn’t be done in two months. They were informed in December,” Villaroman said. “That’s why Mayor [Joy Belmonte] allowed the deadline to be extended. But we will be very strict in monitoring them, and no postponements will be granted come July.”

According to her, some retailers brought up concerns about the novel coronavirus in seeking an extension in the ban’s effectivity, citing concerns about reusable utensils that may unwittingly transmit the virus.

But Villaroman said that to the government, the most compelling reason was the sheer length of time it would take the businesses to procure new materials and equipment.

While several cities have adopted plastic bans, the Quezon City law passed in October was one of the most far-reaching yet. It prohibited not just plastic but single-use paper materials, too, and covered any business where customers could dine in, from international chains to “carinderias.”

Some, however, doubted whether it was feasible, as the only plastic that could be used was “labo,” often used to wrap food without packages like fish. Villaroman said on Monday that after multiple dialogues with businesses, they had allowed other exemptions.