EcoWaste says beauty stores selling mercury-tainted products

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SEVERAL stores in Quezon City have been selling imported skin whitening cream tainted with mercury, the environmental group EcoWaste Coalition said.

The group cited violations despite the passage of City Ordinance No. 2767 of 2018, two years before the 2020 phaseout deadline for mercury-added cosmetics under the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

As part of its campaign to safeguard women and other vulnerable populations from mercury poisoning, the group said it visited retail stores in Cubao, Novaliches, and Commonwealth Avenue on Jan. 19 and Jan. 20 to inspect their compliance with the mercury cosmetic ban.

In 2023, the EcoWaste Coalition monitored 28 retail stores selling skinlightening products banned by the Food and Drug Administration for containing mercury above the maximum limit of one part per million and/or for lacking valid certificate of product notification.

Aileen Lucero, EcoWaste Coalition national coordinator, said they found 10 stores still selling mercury-contaminated facial and underarm whitening creams from Pakistan and Thailand.

The group reported its findings to Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte and Dr. Ramona Asuncion Abarquez of the Quezon City Health Department.

“This is despite the recent store inspections conducted by the QCHD in response to the complaints we lodged against the errant sellers.”