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Local gov'ts urged to create waste management plan for summer garbage

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The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is urging local officials to come up with an effective solid waste management plan, ahead of the expected increase in volume of garbage this coming summer.

"Local government officials should amplify their measures in managing wastes particularly in tourism sites as we expect an increased volume of garbage with the arrival of tourists this summer season," DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu said.

He urged local officials to put more trash bins in tourist sites to encourage proper waste disposal. He also appealed to tourists to be responsible for their wastes and avoid littering especially along shorelines and in the waters.

"We do not want the same situation in Boracay Island to happen to other vacation sites. LGUs (local government units) should be keen in monitoring waste issues in their areas of jurisdiction. Segregation activities should be strictly implemented. Tourists should also throw their garbage only in designated trash bins," Cimatu said.

Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 mandates the segregation of solid wastes, which includes the order that LGUs should divert at least 25 percent of all solid waste disposal facilities through use, recycling and composting activities and other resource recovery activities.

Under the law, wastes must be segregated as compostable, non-recyclable, recyclable, residual waste, and other appropriate classifications.

Compostable wastes or biodegradable wastes can be broken down to non-poisonous substances through the natural action of microorganisms like food wastes and soiled paper and wood.

DENR's Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) said residual wastes, or those soiled materials that cannot be composted and recycled, should be disposed through a long-term disposal facility or sanitary landfill.

Recyclable wastes are materials that can still be converted for beneficial use.

Improper waste disposal especially along the shoreline affects marine life. Plastic products also posed a threat to marine species which are prone to mistake plastic trash for food.

As increased tourist arrivals lead to a sharp rise in waste generation, Cimatu said LGUs in tourist cities should strictly enforce segregation of wastes to avoid environmental problems, such as uncollected garbage and soil contamination.

Cimatu said DENR can provide technical assistance and support to LGUs in terms of development of solid waste management plans.

✍ WASTE MANAGEMENT
✍ DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES