

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

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DENR

IN THE NEWS

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

9 OCT 2016

DATE

A-15

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

RESPONSIBILITY

GINA REMINDS CEMETERY-GOERS: CLEAN AS YOU GO

By Jaymee T. Gamil
@jaymeegamilINQ

As Filipinos start hying off to cemeteries to pay their respects to their departed loved ones for All Saints' and All Souls' Day, the environment chief reminded them to please respect their surroundings as well.

"Beyond flowers and candles that punctuate our beautiful tradition of Undas, this occasion demands that we also practice environmental responsibility in honoring the memory of our dearly departed," Environment Secretary Gina Lopez said, in a statement on Friday.

"Our dearly departed deserve our prayers and respect, not trash. Let us honor them by keeping their resting place garbage-free," Lopez added.

Lopez urged the public to "clean as you go," use reusable or recyclable food containers, segregate trash, and if possible to take public transportation, take bikes or walk to the cemetery INQ

BusinessMirror

DATE

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DENR chief issues appeal for garbage-free 'Undas'

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

✉ @jonlmayuga

AS the nation observes All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day on November 1 and 2, Environment Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez appealed to the public to be mindful of the environment when they visit the graves of their departed loved ones.

Lopez said it is about time Filipinos learn to observe a garbage-free *Undas*, noting that the huge volume of garbage collected during cleanup activities in cemeteries year in, year out is a sad footnote to an otherwise beautiful Filipino tradition.

"It exacts a major toll on the environment and public health," she said.

An estimated 30,000 tons of garbage is collected every day nationwide, with 8,000 tons collected in Metro Manila alone. The volume shoots up during public holidays.

According to the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, some 140 truckloads of garbage are usually collected from various cemeteries in the metropolis on November 1 and 2.

She said the public should take the occasion as an opportunity to show environmental responsibility and refrain from activities that would degrade the proper way to remember the dead.

"Beyond flowers and candles that punctuate our beautiful tradition of *Undas*, this occasion demands that we also practice envi-

ronmental responsibility in honoring the memory of our dearly departed," Lopez pointed out.

Lopez also reiterated the call of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources for everyone to practice *Claygo*, which stands for Clean As You Go, and use reusable or recyclable food containers.

"Please make an effort to throw trash in bins coded to segregate them accordingly," Lopez said, urging cemetery visitors to, as much as possible, bring their own garbage bags and take their own trash home.

"Our dearly departed deserve our prayers and respect, not trash. Let us honor them by keeping their resting place garbage-free," she said.

At the same time, Lopez called on the public to be mindful of their civic duty to follow the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.

"The law must be followed more out of good environmental citizenship, rather than out of fear of its punitive provisions," Lopez stressed.

Under the law, a person caught littering shall be fined between P300 and P1,000, or made to render community service.

Lopez also advised the public to take public transportation or share a ride to the cemetery during *Undas*.

"Carpooling or taking public transportation can create carbon savings. Whenever applicable, use bicycle or walk to your destination," she added.

29 OCT 2016

DATE

2

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

Maging responsable sa kapaligiran ngayong Undas

Nanawagan sa publiko si Environment Secretary Gina Lopez na maging responsable sa kapaligiran sa paggunita ng Undas.

Ang panawagan ay ginawa ni Lopez upang paalalahanan ang mga taong magtutungo sa mga sementeryo na huwag magtatapon ng basura ngayong All Saints day.

Binigyang diin ni Lopez na dapat isapuso ng publiko ang paggunita sa Undas sa pamamagitan

ng mga paraang hindi matatambakan ng basura ang mga sementeryo.

"Beyond flowers and candles that punctuate our beautiful tradition of Undas, this occasion demands that we also practice environmental responsibility in honoring the memory of our dearly departed," dagdag ni Lopez.

Dapat anyang ipairal ng mga tao ang practice na CLAYGO, na ibig sabihin ay Clean As You Go, at

gamitin ang reusable o recyclable food containers.

"Our dearly departed deserve our prayers and respect, not trash. Let us honor them by keeping their resting place garbage-free," ayon pa kay Lopez.

May 30,000 tonelada ng basura ang nakokolekta kada araw sa buong bansa at ang 8,000 tonelada dito ay mula lamang sa Metro Manila na ang pinaka marami ay tuwing public holidays. (Angie dela Cruz)

Ombudsman probes several illegal dumpsites in Mindanao

By Alvin Murcia

An in-depth investigation is now being conducted by investigators from the Environmental Ombudsman Program into illegal dumpsites maintained in the Mindanao region.

As the investigation is in progress the Ombudsman summoned the local officials from the cities of Kidapawan, Koronadal, Valencia, Cagayan De Oro, and the towns of General Luna (Surigao del Norte), Marikhatag (Surigao del Sur) and Loreto (Agusan del Sur).

They were directed to attend a series of clarificatory hearings conducted from October 25 to 28 in Davao City.

The fact-finding investigation is

being conducted as part of a national campaign to ensure compliance with Republic Act 9003 (Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000). As of September 2016, the Ombudsman Environmental team successfully caused the closure of 29 open dumpsites nationwide.

Upon receipt of the complaint filed by the National Solid Waste Management Commission in 10 February 2016, the Environmental Ombudsman gave local officials a non-extendible period of 30 days within which to submit their explanation and a Safe Closure and Rehabilitation Plan (SCRIP) which must include a proposal to immediately close the open dumpsite.

The Environmental

Ombudsman also ordered the local officials to detail the specific tasks, activities and legislative action to be completed within six months of SCRIP implementation.

The Environmental Ombudsman Team will monitor post-closure activities of the LGUs concerned and ensure that the provisions of RA 9003 and other environmental laws are fully implemented.

Under its mandate, the Environmental Ombudsman Team headed by Deputy Ombudsman for Luzon Gerard Mosquera shall investigate complaints filed against any environmental protection official and employee, and recommend the imposition of appropriate penalties and/or the filing of criminal indictments.



PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

29 OCT 2018

DATE

5

PAGE

UPPER-HALF

LOWER-HALF

29 illegal dumpsites ipinasara ng Ombudsman

Kinumpirma kahapon ng Office of the Ombudsman (OMB) na ipinasara nito simula noong nakaraang buwan ang 29 na ilegal at delikadong dumpsite sa iba't ibang lugar sa bansa dahil sa paglabag sa Ecological Solid Waste Management Act (RA 9003).

Ginawa ng Ombudsman ang pahayag kasunod ng paglulunsad ngayong linggong mga environmental investigator ng pagsisiyasat sa mga ilegal na dumpsite sa Mindanao.

Pinadadalo sa public hearing sa Davao City ang ilang lokal na opisyal mula sa mga lungsod ng Kidapawan, Koronadal, Valencia, Cagayan De Oro, at sa mga bayan ng General Luna at Marihatag sa Surigao Del Sur at Loreto sa Agusan Del Sur upang magpaliwanag kaugnay ng pagkakaroon ng mga dumpsite sa kani-kanilang lugar.

Binigyan ng 30 araw ang mga kinauukulang opisyal upang magsumite ng kanilang paliwanag

at ng isang Safe Closure and Rehabilitation Plan (SCRCP) na dapat na kasama ang pariukalang kaagad na ipasara ang open dumpsite.

Inatasan din ng Environmental Ombudsman (EO) ang mga lokal na opisyal na idetalye ang kani-kanilang partikular na tungkulin, aktibidad at hakbanging kukumpletuhin sa loob ng anim na buwan kaugnay ng ipatutupad na SCRCP.

Jun Ramirez

29 OCT 2016

The Manila Times

DATE

UPPER HALF

PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Mining firm asks court to stop DENR order

SANTA CRUZ, Zambales: BenguetCorp Nickel Mines Inc. (BNMI) filed a case against regional officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to stop the suspension of its nickel mining operations here.

"Seeing that BNMI is left with no other viable administrative remedy, it is constrained to elevate to the courts the matter of the unlawful suspension of its nickel mining operations," it said in a statement.

On July 8, the DENR ordered the suspension of BNMI and Zambales Diversified Metals Inc. (ZDMC), another mining firm in Zambales, and eight others for "various complaints of environmental degradation."

The order was signed by Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) Region 3 Director Lope Cariño, Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) Director Lormelyn Claudio and DENR Region 3 Director Francisco Milla Jr.

The DENR said the suspension will ensure that the environment, particularly the communities, farmlands and

water bodies are not compromised as a result of the mining operations pursuant to pertinent mining and environmental laws.

Anna Vicedo Montes, BNMI AVP-Corporate Communications and Special Projects, said the firm filed a petition for certiorari with injunction to assail the suspension order jointly issued by the MGB-EMB and DENR regional offices.

Montes said the suspension order was issued "with grave abuse of discretion, in an arbitrary manner, without due process and ahead of the conduct of a nationwide mining audit."

BNMI had proposed an arrangement with the government to ensure the environment in Santa Cruz would not only be protected but even be improved through a partnership among the mining corporations, the people and the government.

The mining firm said the suspension of operations has forced the company to lay off more than 1,000 workers.

PATRICK ROXAS

PEOPLES JOURNALS

29 OCT 2016

DATE

6

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Enquet Corp to sue DENR for suspending mining operations

The Enquet Corp. (ENQ) has filed a lawsuit against the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) for suspending its mining operations. The suit was filed in the Regional Trial Court (RTC) in Manila. ENQ is a mining company that operates in the Cordillera region. It has been operating for several years and has a long history of compliance with DENR regulations. However, in 2015, DENR suspended its operations, citing environmental concerns. ENQ claims that the suspension was unjustified and that it has been following all the necessary environmental protocols. The company is seeking damages and the reinstatement of its mining operations. The lawsuit is part of a larger legal battle between ENQ and DENR. ENQ has also filed a petition for writ of amparo with the DENR, claiming that the suspension is a violation of its constitutional rights. The DENR has responded by stating that the suspension is necessary to protect the environment and that it is in compliance with the law. The case is currently pending in court.

PEOPLES JOURNAL

29 OCT 2016

DATE

4

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

The cold calculus of a hot planet (1)

WHAT does the future hold for us—a nation greatly vulnerable to the ill effects of climate change?

We are walking on thin ice. Our future is uncertain because we are facing a crisis that we cannot resolve on our own.

Sea level rise threatens to submerge island nations and even our own coastal towns; ocean acidification is causing irreversible damage to our coral reefs, while the sudden shifts from hot temperatures to incessant rains pose uncertainties to agriculture, greatly affecting our food security. The warming climate is now one of the most significant risks for World Heritage Sites, including our own Ifugao Rice Terraces. Extreme rainfall and heavy floods constantly threaten lives, livelihood and development.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), a 1.5 to 2.5 degrees Celsius increase in global mean temperatures from pre-industrial levels threatens extinction of 20-30 percent of all species.

The World Bank projects that under a 2oC scenario, there will be a 20 percent decline in water availability for many regions and 15-20 percent decrease in crop yield.

Moreover, with warming of up to 2oC, sea-level rise is projected to be around 70 centimeters. Sea level rise, floods that damage fish farms, and the increased acidification of the oceans by 2050 could reduce farmed fish yield by 90 percent.

We have also been experiencing harsh weather events. Aside from the intensified periods of El Niño in the past months, climate change has also caused more frequent and stronger typhoons like Ondoy and Pepeng in 2009, which inundated almost the



Speech of Senator Loren Legarda delivered during Climate Change Educational Forum held at Ateneo School of Law, Makati City on October 25, 2016 – Ed

whole of Metro Manila; typhoon Pablo in 2012, which killed more than a thousand people in Mindanao; and super typhoon Yolanda in 2013, which claimed more than 6,000 lives and caused massive destruction, among many others.

If the world goes business as usual, there will be 6 million deaths per year by 2030, close to 700,000 of which will be due to climate change.

Clearly, climate change is the greatest humanitarian challenge of our time. It affects food, water, settlement, jobs, livelihood, human welfare, safety and security, poverty reduction, economic growth, and, consequently, our overall pursuit of sustainable development.

What has brought about the state we are in today?

The IPCC points to human activity as the main cause of global warming. Human activity released 545 gigatons of carbon dioxide, the main greenhouse gas, from 1750 to 2011. Of the carbon dioxide emitted, two-thirds was due to the burning of fossil fuels with one-third caused by deforestation and land-use change. In the last decade however, 90 percent of the rise in carbon dioxide levels was due to

burning of fossil fuels.

We must realize that we are living in a world with finite resources and yet generations have lived over the centuries like there is no tomorrow.

Our natural environment has been compromised. Our biological diversity has been significantly reduced and the general health of our environment is conceded to the greed of some. We cannot keep a blind eye to this.

Our ecosystems have been altered more rapidly in the name of development; but the poor have remained poor and their numbers are increasing notwithstanding the emergence of megacities and the increasing "GDPs" of nations.

The irony here is that, the things we want to gain and develop through the use of ecosystem services, are the very same things we lose due to exploitation and unsustainable use of our natural resources.

We are already experiencing the impact of climate change and if we do not act now, we will start to feel its grave effects in 15 to 35 years from now, or even earlier.

Clearly, what is at stake here is your future and your children's future.

You have the right to demand from us, your parents and your leaders, decisive and urgent action to limit global warming to 1.5oC. It is our duty, under the concept of inter-generational responsibility, to ensure that you and the future generations will continue to enjoy a balanced and healthful ecology.

This is why nations, especially those highly vulnerable to climate impacts such as the Philippines, pushed for the inclusion of the 1.5oC global warming limit in the drafting of the Paris Agreement.

PEOPLES JOURNAL

29 OCT 2016

DATE

4

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Deal for world's biggest marine reserve

THE world's largest marine reserve aimed at protecting the pristine wilderness of Antarctica will be created after a "momentous" agreement was finally reached Friday, with Russia dropping its long-held opposition.

The deal, sealed by the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) at an annual meeting in Hobart after years of negotiations, will see a massive US and New Zealand-backed marine protected area established in the Ross Sea.

It will cover more than 1.55 million square kilometers (600,000 square miles) – roughly the size of Britain, Germany and France combined – of which 1.12 million square kilometers will be a no fishing zone.

"The proposal required some changes in order to gain the unanimous support of all 25 CCAMLR members and the final agreement balances marine protection, sustainable fishing and science interests," New Zealand Foreign Minister Murray McCully said.

"The boundaries of the MPA, however, remain unchanged."

The Ross Sea is one of the last intact marine ecosystems in the world, home to penguins, seals, Antarctic toothfish, whales and huge numbers of krill,

ENVIRO WATCH

a staple food for many species.

It is considered critical for scientists to study how marine ecosystems function and to understand the impacts of climate change on the ocean.

Moscow was the last government opposing the move, largely due to concerns over fishing rights, after China offered its support last year.

"We had a lot of talks with them. Secretary (John) Kerry reached out to Russian President (Vladimir) Putin and (Foreign Minister Sergei) Lavrov and I think that helped a great deal to convince Russia to come on board," Evan Bloom, head of the US delegation at the meeting, told AFP.

"This decision is very important not just for the Antarctic but for efforts to promote world marine conservation."

Moscow has signalled more commitment to conservation in recent times, designating 2017 as the Year of Ecology. It moved in August to significantly increase the size of a protected zone around Franz Josef Land in the Arctic.

While the Ross Sea plan got the go-ahead, time ran out at the meeting to

reach agreement on a second proposed protected area – the Australia and France-led East Antarctica sanctuary covering another one million square kilometre zone.

Both reserve proposals have been on the table since 2012 with CCAMLR – a treaty tasked with overseeing conservation and sustainable exploitation of the Antarctic Ocean, also known as the Southern Ocean.

Consensus is needed from all 24 member countries and the European Union.

A third German-proposed plan is also in the works to protect the Weddell Sea, which extends from the south-east of South America over an area of some 2.8 million square kilometres.

"For the first time, countries have put aside their differences to protect a large area of the Southern Ocean and international waters," said Mike Walker, project director of the Antarctic Ocean Alliance, calling the outcome "momentous".

"Although there was not a decision on the proposed protection of the Weddell Sea and the East Antarctic this year, we are confident that these areas will be protected in the coming years, adding to the system of marine protected areas in the Southern Ocean."

29 OCT 2010

THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1980
MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

DATE
9
PAGE

UPPER HALF
LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Despite OMB case, DENR officials defend actions in Zambales

BY MARTIN S. CORDERO

Officials of the Provincial of Environment and Natural Resources (PENRO) in Zambales defended yesterday its issuance of award, miscellaneous sales patent and original certificate of title to a disputed one-hectare beach property, citing their actions as based on a Court of Appeals (CA) decision.

Speaking to the Manila Bulletin as a rejoinder to a recent report on the filing of charges against them before the Office of the Ombudsman (OMB), Laudemir S. Salac, PENRO chief, and Marife L. Castillo, head

of the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO), said there was nothing irregular in their actions.

They said that those who filed the complaint against them probably did not know that the issue they brought before the Ombudsman is already the subject of a final judgement by the Special 17th Division of the CA and put into the Entry of Judgments.

Salac and Castillo cited the CA decision (CA-GR. CV No. 89960) promulgated on Nov. 12, 2010, that reversed the decision of Regional Trial Court (RTC) Branch 72 in Olongapo City, declaring OCT P-8270 consisting of

13,322 sq. meters issued in the name of Heirs of Baloy Estate Association (HOBEA) as null and void, ruling that "the free of the original registration of the parcel of land subject of the case should be set aside as the application for such registration was attended by actual fraud."

In their explanation letter to DENR Regional Director Francisco Milla, Jr., Salac and Castillo pointed out that based on CA decision the OCT No. P-8270 issued in the name of HOBEA was already cancelled and declared void ab initio. The two DENR officials said that after CA cancelled the OCT No. 8270, the Register of Deeds in

Olongapo had also then reverted the property to "status of unregistered land" on May 4, 2015.

"With the CA decision, the Heirs of Dominga Baloy Laag-Custodio obtained vested rights over the declared unregistered lots that were processed under R.A. 730 Miscellaneous Sales Applications, zoned residential by Olongapo City which received payment of taxes under the law," Salac and Castillo told Milla.

Salac and Castillo said they believe that the complainant-possessor of the beach resort does not know probably that the lot they bought was under a new litigation.

29 OCT 2016

BusinessMirror

DATE

A-3

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

→ CSC BOOSTS SMOKE-FREE DRIVE

THE Civil Service Commission (CSC) has expressed support to President Duterte's plan to sign an executive order (EO) that will ban tobacco smoking in all public places. Through the EO, Filipinos can expect a nationwide smoking ban akin to Davao City's 100-percent smoke-free policy.

The CSC has been a staunch supporter of tobacco-control policies that aim to eliminate cigarette smoking in the workplace and to prevent tobacco companies from interfering with policy-making in the public sector. It issued Memorandum Circular (MC) 17, Series of 2009, or the Smoking Prohibition Based on 100 percent Smoke-Free Policy which prohibits smoking in or on the premises, buildings, and grounds of government agencies providing health, education and/or social welfare and development services, such as hospitals, health centers, schools, universities and colleges among others. Designated smoking areas are also not allowed.

The CSC has also partnered with the Department of Health in the promulgation of Joint Memorandum Circular (JMC) 2010-01 on the "Protection of the Bureaucracy Against Tobacco Industry Intervention".

JMC 2010-01 provides specific guidelines for the bureaucracy's interactions with the tobacco industry, particularly in prohibiting government officials and employees from doing unnecessary interaction with the tobacco industry.

Prohibited acts include providing preferential treatment, such as receipt of incentives, and soliciting or accepting any donation or favor from the tobacco industry in connection with any operation or transaction of the agency.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

9 OCT 2016

DATE

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

eGov: the ultimate in ease of doing business

The World Bank-IFC has released its 14th edition of the annual Ease of Doing Business Report, which compares business regulations and processes in 190 economies around the world and measures 10 basic steps involved in a typical life cycle of a business enterprise. Data are collected every first half of the year with a cutoff date of May 31.

In the report, the Philippines moved up four positions to No. 99 this year from No. 103 last year. In Asean, five countries—the Philippines, Indonesia, Brunei, Vietnam and Thailand—moved up, and five others—Lao PDR, Malaysia, Cambodia, Myanmar and Singapore—slipped, though in Singapore's case, it dropped only from No. 1 to No. 2. We live in one of the most competitive regions in the world.

Of the 10 indicators measured in the report, the Philippines improved in areas such as protecting minority investors (up 18 from No. 155 to No. 137), dealing with construction permits (up 14 from No. 99 to No. 85), paying taxes and social services (up 11 from No. 126 to No. 115), and enforcing contracts in court (up 4 from No. 140 to No. 136). While not significantly large improvements, these are nonetheless movements in the right direction.

On the other hand, the Philippines dropped in four indicators: getting credit (from No. 109 to No. 118), starting a business (from No. 165 to No. 171), getting electricity (from No. 19 to No. 22), and resolving

BUSINESS MATTERS

GUILLERMO M. LUZ

insolvency (from No. 53 to No. 56).

In order to make a huge improvement in these rankings, we will need to do three things in the coming months: continue to streamline and simplify processes (something that has been ongoing for some years); hence the 49 country jump in six years); legislate amendments to some laws and create new laws to support ease of doing business (currently pending in Congress); and take more government procedures online.

The typical process for applying for a permit or license is manual. One manually fills out forms, often entering the same data on different forms. These forms are usually submitted over the counter at some office (in many cases, multiple offices in different locations), and then manually processed. But before then, one is usually asked to submit supporting documents to verify or validate one's application—more paper! The release of the license or permit is also done over the counter.

The whole process is tedious, takes too much time, and entails too much cost. Though it has never been measured, it probably contributes to the traffic as people need to move from office to office to

obtain licenses and permits or make payments to government offices.

The obvious solution is to apply technology and take more of these services online. Our national goal should be to enable people to file anything from anywhere, anytime. It should also enable us to pay for these licenses and permits by whatever means is available—online payment, credit cards, mobile money. And we should be able to receive our licenses and permits online so we do not have to go to an office to pick these up. This should work like purchasing an airline ticket through the internet today.

Fortunately, such a system is being contemplated today by the newly formed Department of Information Communications Technology working with the Departments of Trade and Industry, Finance, and Interior and Local Government, and other agencies. It will take some time to fully roll out such a system, but much has been done to create the technology platform that will make all these applications possible.

The key is that people should continuously clamor for these programs and contribute ideas to make them more user-friendly and practical. It is only by moving into "eGov" that we will see ease of doing business a reality.

Guillermo M. Luz (gm.luz@competitive.org.ph) is the private-sector cochair of the National Competitiveness Council.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OCT 2018

DATE

B-5

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

INVESTMENTS IN POWER

NET METERING SEEN TO BOOST RENEWABLES

By Daxim L. Lucas
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Investments in renewable energy have received a boost thanks to a scheme that allows customers equipped with solar, wind, or biomass power systems to offset their electricity purchases from their local power utility and receive credits for the excess electricity exported to the grid.

In a press statement, Energy Secretary Alfonso Cusi said the net metering scheme has paved the way for investments

in renewable energy through distribution utility customers.

The Department of Energy is accelerating efforts to provide consumers with more sustainable energy choices by organizing, through its Consumer Welfare and Promotion Office, an orientation program about the net metering program of the Manila Electric Co.

Meralco's program manager for renewable energy Anna Maria Reodica said the first net metering customer in the country, with a 5-kilowatt rooftop solar photovoltaic (PV)

cell system, was "energized" by Meralco in November 2013.

Since then, net metering applications have been growing at an exponential rate, expanding from rooftop installations in households to commercial and industrial establishments, such as malls.

Cusi advised customers to exercise caution by informing their distribution utility of any Solar PV or renewable energy installations to ensure safety to both parties and preserve the stability of the grid where they are connected. INQ