

Economic Development Committee XI Deliberate on Water Quality Issues and Protected Areas in the Davao Region



Economic Development Committee XI

(Davao City, 6 June 2016). The Economic Development Committee (EDC) of the Regional Development Council (RDC) XI in its 2016 second quarter regular meeting on May 24, 2016 discussed the Water Quality and the Status of Protected Areas in Davao Region.

The Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) XI reported that all water quality parameters being monitored in the Region's major rivers are within the standards set in the Clean Water Act of 2004 except for the total and fecal coliform levels which exceeded the standard in some of the water bodies especially in the most populated communities along the river banks in the Region. Alarmed by the report, EDC XI Chairperson Maria Belenda Q. Ambi, CESO V affirmed the identification of mechanisms to monitor the informal settlers as a proxy indicator, to measure the level of concentration and "to have a clearer picture of the coliform contamination within the Region", as suggested by Private Sector Representative Alma Monica dela Paz. She also recommended that the data gathered by the City Planning

and Development Office (CPDO) of Davao City on informal settlers and potable water be matched with those of the EMB XI.

The status of protected areas in Davao Region was also discussed during the meeting. The Committee raised concerns on the lack of or poor implementation of management plans for the protected areas in the Region. Also, the Protected Area Management Board's inability to implement activities due to lack of personnel and financial capability were identified. To address the concern, a Regional Summit of Protected Area Management Boards (PAMBs) in the Region shall be conducted for sharing of experiences and success stories among the

PAMBs, crafting of Protected Area Management Plans, and to identify possible sources of funds for the operation of the PAMBs.

Issues and concerns, specifically on the Mount Apo Natural Park (MANP), were also raised. The Committee noted the proliferation of banana plantations in large tracts of land and the existence of stores and repair shops within and around the Natural Park. The EDC XI agreed to create the Task Force Mt. Apo to harmonize projects and programs of actions of concerned agencies to tackle the issues and concerns in the Mt. Apo Natural Park. The members of the Task Force shall include DENR XI, DA XI, NIA XI, Provincial and Barangay LGUs, NCIP XI, NEDA XI, DTI XI and Kapwa Upliftment Foundation, Inc. The Task Force shall meet on June 28, 2016 to be presided by the DENR XI, to formalize its organization.

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(Jaime P. Mallare, NEDA XI).