

## **PUERTO GALERA STP RECOGNIZED ON PRE-SONA FORUM 2020**

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy A. Cimatu cited on Wednesday the Puerto Galera-initiated Sewage and Treatment Plant (STP) located at Brgy. Sabang, Puerto Galera, Oriental Mindoro as one of the environmental milestones of the government.

In his report during the Pre-State of the Nation Address (SONA) Forum last July 22, Secretary Cimatu boasted of the P100-million modern facility in Barangay Sabang, which has the capacity to treat about 1,750 cubic meters of wastewater per day. This was built by the Local Government Unit of Puerto Galera, with guidance from the Environmental Management Bureau MIMAROPA Region, in order to address the high level of fecal coliform bacteria in the nearby water bodies.

Coliforms, as defined by the DENR Manila Bay Coordinating Office in their website, are forms of bacteria from the digestive tract of warm-blooded animals, including humans which, when excreted, can contaminate water bodies and cause pollution. High levels of coliform in a water body indicate poor water quality condition and may cause illness to humans who drink or swim in the affected area.

EMB MIMAROPA Regional Director Atty. Michael Drake Matias highlighted the importance of constructing the STP in Puerto Galera, one of the world's most famous eco-tourism destinations. "This is part of our efforts and collaboration with LGUs across MIMAROPA to achieve compliance of our coastal areas with the DENR's Water Quality Guidelines," said Director Matias.

In the midst of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, Director Matias vowed to intensify the region's fight to restore and improve the quality of water bodies in MIMAROPA Region through several water body programs and the effective implementation of the Republic Act No. 9275, otherwise known as the "Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004."

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