

RECORD OF THE SENATE

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8, 2000

OPENING OF THE SESSION

At 4:02 p.m., the Senate President, Hon. Blas F. Ople, called the session to order.

The President. The 70th session of the Second Regular Session of the Eleventh Congress is hereby called to order.

Let us all stand for the opening prayer to be led by Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile.

Everybody rose for the prayer.

PRAYER

Senator Enrile. Thank you, Mr. President.

Please, let us bow our heads before and in the presence of our Lord.

Lord, in the helter-skelter of the world specially in our modern age, dawn signals beginnings,

Working parents anticipate the needs of their families,
Teachers open a new page in the syllabus of learning,
Shopkeepers shine their smiles for the first customers,
Doctors use their scopes and hope for the best for the sick and infirm,
Engineers roll open their blueprints for construction.

The working day also signals, Lord, the opening of almost 301 government-owned or controlled corporations that employ about 1,378,644 government civil servants.

As government corporations open their service windows today, Lord,
Not as a never-ending reminder of work,
Or the perfect chance to make a quick buck under the table,
But as an opportunity for service.

Lord, when those government windows open today,
Bestow upon each of those who face opposite each other
The understanding that the other person is a reflection of one's self,
So that every act of kindness,
Every gesture of concern,
Every act of faith

Becomes a virtue shared.
And every act of aggression,
Every act of selfishness,
Every dark motive
Hardens into a seed of despair sown in an already barren land.

Bestow upon our brothers and sisters in government,
Lord,
The radiance of dawn,
The concern of responsible parents,
The patience of dedicated teachers,
The honest solicitousness of shopkeepers,
The healing warmth of doctors,
The perseverance of engineers who are determined to build something better each day.

When the windows in every office open today, Lord,
In order to accept tax payments,
Or to receive complaints,
Or to give information,
Or to process retirement and medical benefits,
Or to dispense justice especially,
Bestow upon our fellow civil servants the grace to look at the long line of desperate faces before them.

Lord, it is You who said, "Let there be light,"
And so this Wednesday, Lord,
We pray for the soft, warm light of Your presence.
Strengthen our faith in You by encouraging our faith in each other. So be it,

Amen.

The President. The Chair wishes to thank Senator Enrile for that uplifting prayer.

ROLL CALL

The President. The Secretary will please call the roll.

The Acting Secretary [Atty. Reyes], reading:

Senator Teresa Aquino-Oreta	Present
Senator Robert Z. Barbers	Present
Senator Rodolfo G. Biazon	Present
Senator Renato L. Compañero Cayetano ...	Present
Senator Anna Dominique M.L. Coseteng ...	Present
Senator Franklin M. Drilon	Present
Senator Juan Ponce Enrile	Present
Senator Juan M. Flavie	Present
Senator Teofisto T. Guingona Jr.	Present

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 6:19 p.m., the session was resumed with Sen. Juan M. Flavie presiding.

The Presiding Officer [Sen. Flavie]. The session is resumed. The Majority Leader is recognized.

BILL ON SECOND READING
S. No. 1595--Integrated Solid Waste
Management Act of 1999
(Continuation)

Senator Drilon. Mr. President, I move that we resume consideration of Senate Bill No. 1595 as reported out under Committee Report No. 52.

The Presiding Officer [Sen. Flavie]. Is there any objection? *[Silence]* There being none, resumption of consideration of Senate Bill No. 1595 is now in order.

Senator Drilon. We are in the period of interpellations.

For this purpose, may I ask the Chair to recognize the principal sponsor, Sen. Loren B. Legarda-Leviste.

The Presiding Officer [Sen. Flavie]. Senator Legarda-Leviste is recognized.

Senator Drilon. To interpellate and avail herself of the period of interpellations, may I ask the Chair to recognize Sen. Teresa Aquino-Oreta.

The Presiding Officer [Sen. Flavie]. Senator Aquino-Oreta is recognized.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. Thank you, Mr. President.

Will the honorable sponsor please yield for some clarificatory questions?

Senator Legarda-Leviste. With pleasure, Mr. President, to the distinguished lady Senator from Malabon.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. Mr. President, in the Declaration of Policy as stipulated in Sections 2 (b) and 2 (c) of the bill, the main concerns of an integral solid waste management program proposed to be adopted are focused on solid waste volume reduction through minimization measures, such as recycling, reuse and recovery before collection as well as proper segregation, collection, transport, treatment and disposal which are indeed very laudable.

Aside from composting biodegradable wastes, the disposal method suggested is by sanitary landfill and that open dumping is prohibited or declared illegal.

Furthermore, recently Republic Act No. 8749 or the Clean Air Act, whereby the distinguished sponsor and this representation are also among the principal authors, likewise prohibited open dumping and clearly stated its position on the use of incinerators.

Mr. President, as nowhere in the bill mentions anything about combustible solid wastes being allowed or disallowed to be burned in incinerators, may I inquire from the sponsor the committee's position on the use of incinerators and waste-to-energy facilities using incinerators.

Senator Legarda-Leviste. Yes, Mr. President. As to the question of the distinguished lady senator that there is no mention of open burning, this could be included in the period of amendments. But presently, there are no registered incineration facilities for municipal solid wastes around the country. However, there are between 20 to 25 incinerators for medical wastes in Metro Manila as indicated in the DENR preliminary listing given our office.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. I see. In the period of amendments, is the distinguished sponsor amenable to some amendments?

Senator Legarda-Leviste. Definitely, Mr. President, that suggestion will be welcome in the period of amendments.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. I would like to thank the distinguished senator for that.

Section 4 of the bill states that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources through the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) is the lead agency responsible for the implementation and enforcement of this proposed law. The EMB is empowered to (1) establish standards, criteria and guidelines for the formulation and implementation of national and local waste management programs and action plans; (2) establish criteria and guidelines for siting, design, operation of waste management facilities all over the country; (3) prescribe procedures for the issuance of permits and clearances on solid waste management for adoption by LGUs, et cetera.

Section 5 also proposes the organization of the National Solid Waste Management Council which is likewise attached to the DENR with the chairman to be appointed by the President with 14 members and it empowers this National Council to, again,

create a national ecology center that will provide consulting, information, training and networking service to local solid waste management councils of LGUs; to assist LGUs in the establishment of local solid waste management councils and ecology centers; to coordinate the operations of local councils in the provincial, municipal/city and barangay levels; to develop and recommend solid waste management action plans to LGUs; to draw up and recommend anti-dumping measures; to encourage resource recovery-based livelihood programs for local communities; to study and review the powers and functions of EMB as contained in Section 4 (a) and Section 4 (b).

Mr. President, it is apparent that the EMB which is meant to be only one of the members of the National Solid Waste Management Council and which is meant to be the Secretariat of the National Council is being cloaked with vastly superior executive and policy-making powers than the National Council itself. Considering further that under Section 7, the EMB is also empowered to take overall or part of the LGUs plans if the LGUs are found and assessed by the EMB to be lacking the capability to implement and enforce its own plans, my question will be: Will the distinguished sponsor please clarify if the bill really intends to make the EMB more powerful than the National Council and if they are both meant to have overlapping functions?

Senator Legarda-Leviste. No, Madam President. The DENR-EMB shall develop and adopt...

I saw the presiding officer (*referring to Senator Flavies*) squirming in his seat when I said "Madam President." I am sorry. [*Laughter*]

Mr. President, the DENR-EMB shall develop and adopt an integrated national framework program which shall contain the national policies, the standards or criteria, and the procedures for solid waste management. The EMB shall only assist and support the activities of the National Council and act as a Secretariat of the National Council. The National Council, on the other hand, shall be consulted extensively by the DENR-EMB in the development of the framework program and shall make recommendations to the DENR. It should also promote ecological waste management nationwide by establishing a National Ecology Center that will provide expert assistance for local action planning, networking, and implementation by the LGUs.

The bill does not intend to make the DENR-EMB more powerful than it already is or to give it more functions and responsibilities than it already has. We just deemed it proper that the EMB be made the Secretariat given its present roles and functions.

Therefore, we also decided to include other relevant agencies like the DOH, the DA, the DECS within the National Council so that the council will be able to provide the framework and the policy necessary to be able to assist the LGUs in creating their own local policies with regard to solid waste management.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. But then, why will the EMB or the National Council be mandated to pass evaluation and approval to the action plans of the LGUs when they are also mandated to provide assistance to the LGUs in making solid waste management action plans?

Mr. President, is there not a conflict of interest in passing judgment to programs wherein they themselves helped in planning such programs?

Senator Legarda-Leviste. Mr. President, the intent of the bill is to allow for consultation and to allow for continuity and consistency. That is the reason why the EMB could be consulted by the local governments for the other plans. However, if the distinguished lady senator would have suggestions later on for possible amendments, the sponsor would be more than willing to include those possible amendments at the most opportune time.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. I see. Does the sponsor feel that the National Council or the National Solid Waste Management Council can be set aside? Anyway, the EMB is already there.

Senator Legarda-Leviste. Mr. President, we believe that the presence of the National Council is very important because presently, the EMB is already beset with so many responsibilities. The EMB will be upgraded into a line agency with the implementation of the Clean Air Act and it is already responsible for the many functions of the DENR. Therefore, we believe that it will act as a Secretariat but there is a need for further coordination between and among the government agencies specified in the bill.

Mr. President, the intent of the bill, as well as the very nature of solid waste management, is multisectoral. It is not only concerned with the environment. We believe that solid waste management is not confined solely to environmental issues, but also includes the social, economic, health and other national issues within its scope. Delegating the chairmanship of the proposed National Council or limiting the scope of responsibility only to the DENR or the EMB would probably be tantamount to allowing failure to occur at the very start.

Therefore, with due respect to the distinguished lady senator, the sponsor believes that the establishment of the council represented by the directors of the seven agencies of the government is very important.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. I see. I thank the lady senator for that, Mr. President.

May I just follow it up. So with the EMB given the power to take over the Solid Waste Management Programs where the LGUs have failed as stated on page 9, lines 7 to 11, and in a scenario where the MMDA or the Presidential Committee on Solid Waste Management, for example, fails again to find a replacement of the San Mateo sanitary landfill by the end of year 2000, and for example, if the MMDA fails again to enforce its directive for color-coded segregation of household wastes, then how do we suggest or envision the EMB's capability of implementing or enforcing the solid waste management plans and programs of Metro Manila? What means or financial or physical resources should the EMB have to enable it to implement the solid waste management programs of the MMDA or the various LGUs all over the country?

Senator Legarda-Leviste. Basically, as provided for in the Local Government Code, the functions of the solid waste management should be devolved to the LGUs. In fact, it is not the intention of the bill to allow the national government to take over the solid waste management activity.

However, NGOs or private sectors can also undertake cooperative activities where solid waste management may be contracted out also to the private entities. We are not asking that the EMB be allowed to take over or to have the sole responsibility in solving the solid waste management problems of local government units. In fact, we encourage it to support the local government units. And we encourage the national council which has the EMB's secretariat to deal directly and coordinate with the local government units whose mayor will be the head of the local solid waste management council. There will be local counterparts of the national council.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. I still feel that these two...

Anyway, as the sponsor said and as agreed upon, later on, we may be able to put our amendments.

But another question, Mr. President. Who should recommend and what tenure shall the President make on the appointment of the chairman of the national solid waste management council?

Senator Legarda-Leviste. The President shall have the responsibility and shall have the flexibility of appointing the head of the national council who must possess managerial administrative skills and perhaps a background in environmental science. He would be the most qualified person to head the council.

As to the tenure, it is not provided for yet in the bill. That is a portion which can be discussed either in the period of amendments or even when the IRR of the bill is made after the enactment of this bill into law.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. Again, I would like to find out who will recommend and who will appoint the four private sector representatives in the national council? And again, what is the tenure?

I believe that this should be clearly stated in the law as the implementors or framers of the IRR should not make any interpretation outside the intent of the legislation.

Senator Legarda-Leviste. Yes. As mentioned earlier, the directors of the respective agencies mentioned will be members of the council. It will be up to the President to appoint the chairman of the council. He will also appoint the private sector representatives as well as the head of the governor's league, the mayor's league so that the local governments are also represented.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. I see. So the President will appoint, as the distinguished sponsor said, the chairman and the members of the council, the four private sector representatives? As well as?

Senator Legarda-Leviste. Yes, Mr. President.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. Mr. President, will the honorable sponsor also please clarify one of the proposed functions of the National Council as contained in Section 6 (e) which states and I quote, "Draw up and recommend anti-dumping measures," as it may be in conflict with the anti-dumping measures undertaken by the Tariff Commission and the Bureau of Customs?

Senator Legarda-Leviste. Mr. President, let us clarify that the anti-dumping here would literally mean "dumping" and it will mean dumping of solid waste into areas which are not necessarily designated as dumping areas for solid waste.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. Again, let us go to Section 7 and Section 9 of the bill which require the establishment of solid waste management councils and ecology centers in all of the 78 provinces, 1,525 municipalities, and 41,940 barangays all over the country.

Now, the local government units, in consultation with the local solid waste management councils, shall draft and adopt solid waste management action plans and programs. These action plans and programs shall be submitted by the local executives to the National Council and the Environment Management Bureau for

review. If they both find the submitted plans and programs adequate, the same will be recommended for implementation.

Now, these 43,500 studies and action plans will make several consultants in and outside the DENR very happy as this will be a veritable gold mine for them in addition to the environmental impact statement studies that only these people are capable of ensuring acceptability by the EMB.

My question will be: Given the highly technical complexities of these local action plans required to be submitted which shall follow the guidelines as enumerated in Section 11 (b) to (m), and given the very limited number of experts on solid waste management or experts on environmental sciences that are available currently in the Philippines to assist even for substantial fees the 43,500 local government units which are required to submit these studies, what extent of compliance among LGUs, especially the barangays and the fourth and sixth-class municipalities, is anticipated?

And, will we really be able to monitor all these provinces, municipalities, and barangays?

Senator Legarda-Leviste. Yes, Mr. President. To be able to make a national solid waste management successful, it must be implemented down to the barangay level because we know that the problem of solid waste is not only multisectoral but it also covers all the nooks and crannies of our archipelago. It does not only concern Metro Manila, Metro Davao, or Metro Cebu but it must be implemented nationwide.

I agree with the distinguished lady senator that it is not an easy task. Perhaps that is the reason why the garbage problem persists to be not only an economic, health and social problem but also a politically charged one.

I agree that it would be difficult but I also believe that there is a need to start with it now.

Now, will it be doable? I believe that it would be doable because presently, there are many barangays, many municipalities which are conducting and implementing their own solid waste plans.

Would it be expensive? It does not have to be necessarily expensive because many of these plans which will be implemented by the cities or municipalities can actually be replicated once it is proven to be effective in one city or another municipality.

I believe that these plans do not have to be presented one at a time because once accepted, it could serve as a model for other cities and municipalities to follow suit later on.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. Mr. President, how many personnel does the sponsor envision for the implementation of this, like monitoring, assessing, evaluating, et cetera?

Senator Legarda-Leviste. Yes. The concern is not without basis. And as regards personnel, the mayor of the local government unit will head the local solid waste management council and he will appoint existing staff to do the task. We know that there are Clean and Green task forces in different barangays and different municipalities. And presently, this is already being conducted except it is not being coordinated on a national level. We are simply providing a national policy and framework and we are simply trying to set up models for all municipalities to follow. And therefore, we do not perceive, we do not believe that it will cost too much, that it will have to require too much additional personnel.

Also, we believe that people in many developing countries are already carrying out significant waste reduction practices. And in designing strategies for further waste reduction, the first principle should be to build on what already exists and appears to be working. In general, sound practices for the majority of cities and towns in the developing world rest upon the facilitation of the existing private sector support in waste reduction where the current practices are acceptable. And solving these problems or ameliorating problems encountered by all the relevant factors is done through access to capacity-building, financing and education. And we must also design such assistance to dovetail with the strategic plan for the solid waste management. In short, there must be a coordination from the national to the local level. And when we say local, that would include the governors, the mayors, the barangay leaders.

This, I think, is doable and it has come at a time when it is most urgent and most needed.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. Of course, this bill is very laudable. But when all these councils, all these will be established in the provincial, municipal and then up to the barangay level, then will they be monitored, will they be evaluated by the national council?

Senator Legarda-Leviste. Yes, Mr. President. After the national council has laid out the framework and the policies, then the local councils will just follow the agreed-upon principles and implement it. As I said, the national and local councils do not have to hire additional hands because the local councils will be manned by existing personnel in the municipal or city offices.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. I see. Then how long after the enactment of this Act will the LGUs be required to submit their solid waste management action plans?

Senator Legarda-Leviste. The duration has not been set yet, Mr. President. It would depend upon the need of the local government unit.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. It will depend. So I was wondering also what action will the EMB or the National Council undertake to enforce this requirement to LGUs which did not submit action plans way after the deadline has been stipulated. Will the EMB take over the planning of solid waste management program in the city or in the municipality or in the barangay, in case the local unit does not submit an action plan?

Senator Legarda-Leviste. Since there is no deadline, there is really no penalty or no punishment for those LGUs which are not cooperating. However, we believe that since this is a need of the community, the LGUs would be more than willing to cooperate with the EMB and with the National Council. And, in fact, in crafting this bill, there had been consultations with LGUs who were just awaiting the passage of this into law so that they can participate actively in the implementation of sound solid waste management.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. Again, in the period of individual amendments, we are asking if we will be able to put some amendments in this bill.

Senator Legarda-Leviste. Definitely, Mr. President. The amendments of the distinguished senator will be most welcome.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. The mandated composition of the local solid waste management councils in the provincial, city, municipal and barangay levels are stated in Sections 9 (a) to (d) which must be clearly defined and not decided by the makers of the IRR.

My questions in this regard are: How many organized private sector representatives shall be appointed in the provincial, municipal and barangay level councils? From which specific sectors will they come from? Who will appoint them? And, of course, what is their tenure?

Senator Legarda-Leviste. There have been private sector representatives mentioned in the national council but the number is not mentioned. But if the distinguished lady senator would like to suggest a number of private sector representatives, that would also be welcome. There is no number specified in the bill.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. Also, in several municipalities and cities where the DENR does not have an assigned CENRO—the Community Environment and Natural Resources Officer—

who will be the suggested replacement of the CENRO in these local councils?

Senator Legarda-Leviste. Mr. President, all municipalities are covered by either the CENRO or the PENRO. Of course, we understand that not every municipality has a CENRO assigned there, but there is a CENRO assigned to perhaps a neighboring municipality which covers the other cities and municipalities where his presence is not needed. Therefore, the PENRO or CENRO assigned to that area could take over the responsibility.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. So in case there is a CENRO or a PENRO in one municipality and the next municipality does not have one, then the CENRO or PENRO in that municipality can cover the other municipality?

Senator Legarda-Leviste. The lady senator is correct, Mr. President.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. In the proposed Barangay Solid Waste Management Council, aside from the punong barangay recommendee as provided in Section 9 (b), who will be the other two government sector members as provided in Sections 9 (c) and (d)?

Senator Legarda-Leviste. May I hear the question again, Mr. President? Who is the local government..?

Senator Aquino-Oreta. No, no, in the barangay level. The Barangay Solid Waste Management Council, aside from the recommendee of the punong barangay, that is the barangay head, as provided in Section 9 (b), who will be the two other government sector members as provided in Sections 9 (c) and (d)?

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

Senator Legarda-Leviste. May we have a one-minute suspension, Mr. President, just to clarify the details of that statement.

The Presiding Officer [Sen. Flavio]. May I beg the pardon of the lady Senator?

Senator Legarda-Leviste. I move that we suspend the session for one minute just to clarify that statement, Mr. President.

The Presiding Officer [Sen. Flavio]. The session is suspended for one minute, if there is no objection. *[There was none.]*

It was 6:48 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 6:49 p.m., the session was resumed.

The Presiding Officer [Sen. Flavie]. The session is resumed. The two lady senators may continue.

Senator Legarda-Leviste. I would like to thank the lady senator for that question. It has been clarified to me, Mr. President, the question of the appointees in the barangay level. That is optional. It says here on page 7: "Each local solid waste management council may be composed of the following:" And it says from (a) to (e). This is optional and may or may not be represented.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. So in the barangay level, it is just the recommendee of the punong barangay.

Senator Legarda-Leviste. The lady senator is correct, if there is no local environment natural resources officer. As the senator questioned earlier, if there is no CENRO or PENRO in that barangay, then that position may not be filled, or it does not necessarily have to be filled.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. I would like to thank the sponsor for that.

Now let us go to Section 8. Section 8 defines the function and composition of the National Ecology Center which shall organize a multisectoral and multidisciplinary pool of experts from various concerned sectors, screened in accordance with the qualifications set forth by the national council.

My question will be: While Section 9 clearly mandates the organization of a provincial, city, municipal and barangay level solid waste management council, and with reference to the respective ecology centers of the local councils in lines 6 and 7 of page 11 of the bill, is it the intention of the committee to mandate the organization of ecology centers in all the provinces, municipalities, cities and barangays?

Senator Legarda-Leviste. We believe, Mr. President, that the ideal is to have all these ecology centers apart from the national ecology center that each municipality, if possible, would have. However, the ideal is not always what transpires in reality. Therefore, we are open to the realization that this may not be implemented as the bill intends it to be.

However, the beginning is the enactment of this piece of legislation into law and for the institutionalization of a solid waste policy-making body.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. Mr. President, I am looking at the fourth, the fifth and the sixth-class municipalities and barangays. These municipalities secure the funds to pay the salaries of the employees in the ecology center. Considering that most of these municipalities could hardly pay for devolved health and social workers, how will we now add for the ecology center? Will we be adding employees? I am looking at the fourth, the fifth and the sixth-class municipalities. They can hardly pay the salaries of the devolved health and social workers. How do we help them out?

Senator Legarda-Leviste. That concern is well-founded and well-taken. However, we know for a fact that there are many volunteers and even experts who consider solid waste management as a profitable venture. Therefore, this ecology center in those fourth, fifth and sixth-class municipalities could even be manned by volunteers who can coordinate with the local government offices so that they may profit from the buy and sell of the solid waste in those areas.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. So, they will compose the group.

Senator Legarda-Leviste. Yes, Mr. President. As we mentioned earlier, it is a multisectoral problem which should be addressed in a multisectoral approach, especially in very, very poor areas. Apart from using the Clean and Green Fund which is already allocated by the DENR for planting of trees, this could also be used for the solid waste management practices in those very poor municipalities. The voluntary acts of the experts or advocates in those areas could really help out. This is greatly encouraged.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. That is very laudable, Mr. President. But if we look at the sixth-class municipality, I wonder if it will have the expertise to run or to do this in its barangay or municipality.

Senator Legarda-Leviste. Mr. President, that is the reason why there are model solid waste management communities like Barangay Blue Ridge, like Sta. Maria in Bulacan. That is why there is a national council which will aid the local government units in need of assistance and expertise, as the lady senator mentioned.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. That is what I am afraid of because the national council then will oversee all these barangays all over the country. We are talking of 43,000 plus units which will follow this very laudable measure. I hope we could do something to make it easier especially for the sixth-class barangay or the sixth-class municipality. We have gone to those places and I am not sure if they have the capacity or the expertise to perform the requirements in this measure.

Senator Legarda-Leviste. Yes, there is that fear and those are

obstacles which could happen in reality. However, this is the kind of spirit needed in solving the problem of solid waste. We must not always try to squeeze the resources of government. The idea of volunteerism and the idea of pursuing the crusades of advocacy groups are already happening now. There are many women sectors involved in solid waste management who are not being paid by the government, by the DENR or even by their own barangays, but they do so because they have the time, the interest, the need, and they feel that they have contributed greatly towards the upliftment of the conditions in their areas. There are many of these in Sun Valley, Parañaque and, as I mentioned earlier, in Blue Ridge, Quezon City, in Sta. Maria, Bulacan, and even in Dagat-Dagatan, which is a very poor area. There is a group there that is trying to implement solid waste management.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. The places that the lady senator mentioned are all urban areas. Sta. Maria, Bulacan is a progressive municipality. What about the barangays in the sixth-class municipalities, like, for example, in Samar or somewhere in Mindanao? This is very laudable. However, if they will not have the proper education or the advocacy is not strengthened in those places, I am afraid that what we are trying to inject in this bill will not be used by these sixth-class municipalities.

Senator Legarda-Leviste. We share the lady senator's concern and we realize that it is an uphill battle. However, just like in any battle, we have to take the first step. Therefore, if this problem grows out of proportion, as it already is, and if we do not address the issue today, what will happen to the future? I believe that even the communities in the remote areas or hinterlands in Mindanao or the rural communities in the Visayas have not even heard of what solid waste management is. Perhaps it is the role of other agencies of the government, like the PIA, the DECS, even of the private sector, the media and the radio, to institutionalize and to create a certain level of awareness, to make people understand, appreciate and recognize that it is in their best interest that recycling, composting, segregation, et cetera, should be instituted and implemented.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. A final question, Mr. President. In a scenario such as what is already happening in Metro Manila wherein no nearby local governments or nearby communities will accept to be host to landfills for Metro Manila's garbage, what power or authority does this proposed law give to the DENR or the Solid Waste Management Council to compel any local government, such as San Mateo or other towns in the provinces of Rizal, Bulacan and Cavite, to become hosts to landfills? And how will such authority be enforced if the elected leaders, the people or residents of the locality are already the ones actively opposing their selection as landfill host to the garbage from other localities, or even opposing garbage from their own locality?

What penalties can be instituted to local governments and to residents of localities which will defiantly refuse their selection as landfill host?

Senator Legarda-Leviste. Mr. President, that is not provided for in the bill. However, I think it will be very difficult to implement politically, even if the bill gives the DENR the authority and the power to compel LGUs to host landfills, if the local government unit refuses to do so. The problem of landfill is a highly charged political issue. It is really up to the local government units to accept or refuse the presence of landfills in the areas, considering the problems of landfills in Magallanes, Cavite and San Mateo, Rizal. Therefore, this simply addresses the problem of solid waste management at source and creates a solution but it leaves to the local government units the option to either accept or reject the presence of landfill.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. Yes. But before we can have a total solid waste solution at source, there is garbage everywhere and everyday. The people do not know how this solid waste segregation and recycling will be done. We are throwing garbage every day. And so, what do we do? By the time the people will be educated enough, garbage shall have piled up.

Is there any intention from the committee to somehow address this problem?

Senator Legarda-Leviste. Yes, Mr. President. The encouragement of segregation, recycling and composting would greatly reduce the amount of garbage to be thrown in sanitary landfills. I believe that if the figures are correct, 70 percent of Metro Manila's 5,600 tons of solid wastes may be recycled. But only 6 percent is presently being recycled. Imagine, if we could reduce the solid wastes to be thrown and disposed of in the landfills, that would really be a happy solution to this problem.

Therefore, the intent of this bill is, No. 1, to make the people aware that there is an option. What is that option? The possibility of segregating, composting and recycling. It is possible because, as I mentioned, 70 percent of the wastes being generated is recyclable.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. Mr. President, I have more questions to ask, but may I request that these questions be set for another day?

Senator Legarda-Leviste. Yes, Mr. President, the request is granted. We shall be more than willing to elucidate on the issues being presented.

Senator Drilon. Mr. President, I move that we suspend the interpellation of Sen. Teresa Aquino-Oreta.

The Presiding Officer [Sen. Flavier]. There is a motion to suspend the period of interpellations to accommodate Senator Aquino-Oreta's request that she be allowed to continue at a future time. Is there any objection? *[Silence]* There being none, the motion is approved.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF S. NO. 1595

Senator Drilon. Mr. President, I move that we suspend consideration of Senate Bill No. 1595 under Committee Report No. 52.

The Presiding Officer [Sen. Flavier]. Is there any

objection? *[Silence]* There being none, the motion is approved.

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

Senator Drilon. Mr. President, I move that we adjourn the session until Monday, March 13, 2000, at three o'clock in the afternoon.

The Presiding Officer [Sen. Flavier]. Is there any objection? *[Silence]* There being none, the session is adjourned until Monday, March 13, 2000, at three o'clock in the afternoon.

It was 7:03 p.m.