

Mandaluyong to implement total ban on plastic bags in 2014

By Nathaniel R. Melican
Philippine Daily Inquirer

9:19 pm | Sunday, December 15th, 2013



MANILA, Philippines — The use and sale of all plastic bags—including biodegradable ones—and Styrofoam packaging will be prohibited in Mandaluyong City in 2014.

This was after the city council enacted an ordinance that fixed a timeline for the imposition of the ban.

Ordinance 523, Series of 2013, mandates that the use of plastic bags and styrofoam containers in Mandaluyong will be completely phased out by April 20, 2014, the third year of a gradual phaseout plan drafted by the city government.

The city council enacted the ordinance on Nov. 11 while Mayor Benjamin “Benhur” Abalos Jr. approved the ordinance on Nov. 21.

The ban will cover all kinds of styrofoam and plastic bags as the ordinance’s definition of plastic bags “refers to ‘carry-all bags’ such as

but not limited to plastic labo (thin, translucent bag without handles), sando bags (white bags with handles), basura (garbage) bags and handled plastic bags used by merchants in all business and commercial establishments.” Also banned are biodegradable plastic bags or those using materials of high density biomate BM 205 as additive.”

The gradual ban on plastics started on April 20, 2012 when the city government mandated that businesses should not use these on Mondays and Wednesdays. This was extended the following year from Mondays to Fridays.

Penalties for businesses found using these types of packaging include a fine ranging from P500 to P5,000 and the revocation of licenses and permits or imprisonment of one to three months.

In imposing the ban, the city council noted that “globally, plastic bags are part of an environmental crisis,” citing figures from the United Nations Environment Programme that states that there are 46,000 pieces of plastic litter floating in every square mile of ocean.

“Locally, plastic bags and styrofoam are one of the major causes of the clogging of our canals and creeks that contribute largely to floods and flashfloods during heavy rains,” the ordinance read.

The new ordinance repeals the one approved in 2011 which outlined the city government’s plastic ban policy.