

Fisherfolk laud DENR for mining shutdowns

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A fisherfolk group has lauded Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Gina Lopez for revoking the mining agreements of 75 undeveloped mine operations near watersheds.

The Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (PAMALAKAYA-Pilipinas) said it praises Lopez over her recent decision of canceling the mineral production sharing agreements (MPSAs) of 75 mining firms which are operating near the country's major watersheds.

Pamalakaya chairperson Fernando Hicap in a statement said Lopez's crackdown on irresponsible mining is a stepping stone to those who seek environmental and social justice against large-scale mining operations.

Farmers and fishermen, Hicap said, are the main casualties of environmental and marine degradation caused by large-scale mining activities.

"We must say well done, Secretary Lopez. Her firm stand against large-scale mining is highly notable. Large-scale mining activities always pose a threat to the community, economic and social rights of the rural people through community displacement, livelihood destruction and environmental disasters," he said.

Lopez ordered the cancellation of the MPSAs two weeks after she announced her decision to suspend and close down 28 of the country's metal mines.

MPSA, as the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) defines, is an agreement in which the government shares in the production of the contractor, whether in kind or in value, as owner of the minerals. In return, the contractor shall provide the necessary financing, technology, management and personnel for the mining project.

Of the cancelled MPSAs, 37 were in Mindanao; 11 were in the Visayas; and 27 in Luzon. Lopez said they have sent out their notices to the concerned mining firms. The firms, in turn, were told to submit their defense within seven days.

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