

Gov't closes 21 mine firms and suspends 7 more

Published February 2, 2017, 10:00 PM

by *Medelaine B. Miraflor*

The mining sector was left crippled after the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) decided to close down more than half of all the mine operations in the country and suspends seven more as the result of the nationwide audit it launched last year.

In a bid to make a “statement” as environment secretary, former anti-mining advocate Gina Lopez already proceeded to shut down 21 mining companies and suspend seven more.

Of the total 41 metallic miners, only 12 has passed while the decision for one company was left hanging as of now.

“My issue is not about mining. My issue is about social justice. If businesses go to certain areas and they benefit from the resources of these areas, and the people who live there suffer, there’s social injustice,” DENR Secretary Gina Lopez said yesterday.

“Water is life. We will not risk the water in the interest of businesses. In that line, we have decided to close down any mining operation near functional water. No law proclaims watershed is functional. There can’t and must not have any kind of industrial (activity) near watersheds.

Climate change is coming, water levels are coming down. It’s not acceptable,” she added.

Companies that were suspended are Oceana Gold Philippines, Inc., Lepanto Consolidated Mining, Citinickel Mines and Development Corp., Berong Nickel Corp., Ore Asia Mining Corp., and Strong Built Mining Development Corp..

Mining firms that were closed down, on the other hand, were BenguetCorp. Nickel Mines, Inc., Eramen Minerals, Inc., Zambales Diversified Metals Corp., LNL Archipelago Minerals, Inc., Mt. Sinai Mining Exploration and Development Corp., Emir Minerals Corp., TechIron Mineral Resources, Inc., AAMPFIL Natural Resources Exploration, Kromico, Inc., SinoSteel Philippines H.Y Mining Corp., Oriental Synergy Mining Corp., Wellex Mining Corp., Libjo Mining Corp., Oriental Vision Mining Philippines, Corp., ADNAMA Mining Resources Corp., Claver Mineral Development Corp., Platinum Development Corp., CTP Construction and Mining Corp., Carrascal Nickel Corp., Marcventures Mining and Development Corp., and Hinatuan Mining Corp.

Lopez said the nickel mines that we closed accounts for 50 percent of the country’s total production but she said she “doesn’t care about the money.”

“Who cares about GDP (gross domestic product) if people are suffering? We should increase GDP but it should come from a decent way,” she noted.

According to her companies can make an appeal to President Rodrigo Duterte. But during a national convention that was held in Davao on Thursday, Duterte said he supports DENR’s closure order against several big mines.

Those that passed are Philex Mining Corp., Rio Tuba Nickel Mining Corp., Carmen Copper Corp., Cagdianao Mining Corp., Taganito Mining Corp., Greenstone Resources Corp., Philsaga Mining Corp., Apex Mining Company, Inc., Pacific Nickel Philippines Inc., Agata Mining Ventures, Inc., Century Peak Metals Holdings Corp., SR Metals, Inc.

Asked if the DENR can provide the recommendation reports of Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), which has been part of the mining audit team, Lopez declined to provide them, saying the report of MGB is in contrast with the decision of DENR.

(Article retrieved from: <http://business.mb.com.ph/2017/02/02/govt-closes-21-mine-firms-and-suspends-7-more/>)