

Construction in 2 power plants ordered stopped

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The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has ordered a German company to stop the construction of two mini-hydroelectric power plants in the Northern Negros Natural Park (NNNP).

The two plants, owned by the Hydrotec Renewables Inc., are in Barangay Cabatangan in Talisay City and Barangay Bunga in the town of Don Salvador, both in Negros Occidental.

The order was issued by DENR's Negros Island Regional Director Al Orolfo, based on two separate memoranda from the DENR Central Office in Quezon City.

The memoranda were signed by DENR Undersecretary Demetrio Ignacio and DENR-Biodiversity Management Bureau Director Theresa Mundita Lim.

Ignacio and Lim said the memorandum of agreement for the two plants "cannot be given due course" because it violates the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) Act (Republic Act 7586).

Park and nature parks "may be subjected to exploration only for the purpose of gathering information on energy resources and only if such activity is carried out with the least damage to surrounding areas," Orolfo said, quoting the DENR memoranda.

The order also cited Section 14 of the Renewable Energy Act (RA 9513), which states that "all renewable energy explorations, development, utilization, and renewable energy systems operations shall be conducted in accordance with existing environmental regulations as prescribed by the DENR and/or any other concerned government agency."

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