

‘Govt must comply with Clean Water law

The Standard, posted May 01, 2017 at 12:01 am by **Rey E. Requejo**

The Supreme Court has ordered the government to submit a report on how it is complying with its mandate to implement the Clear Water Act of 2004.

In a four-page resolution, the high court directed the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to submit a list of categories of industry sector, its obligations relative to water quality standards and its plan with for solid waste disposal.

Section 14 of law requires the DENR to regulate the discharge of wastewater while Section 19 mandates it to prepare a National Water Quality Status Report, an Integrated Water Quality Management Framework and a 10-year Water Quality Management Area Action Plan as lead implementing agency of the law.

Apart from DENR, the Supreme Court also gave the same order to other agencies, including the Department of Health, Department of Public Works and Highways, National Sewerage and Septage Management Program Office in the Department of the Public Works and Highways, Department of the Interior and Local Government, Local Water Utilities Administration and Laguna Lake Development Authority.

The DILG was likewise required to submit to the court a complete list of highly urbanized cities in the country.

The high court issued the order upon the petition of water concessionaires Maynilad Water Services and Manila Water Company Inc.

Both firms were also required by the high tribunal to submit an updated list of the respective service areas under their concession agreements with the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System and also updated reports on the status of their compliance with the provisions of the law.

The Clean Water Act aims to protect the country’s water bodies from pollution from land-based sources (industries and commercial establishments, agriculture and community/household activities) and provides a comprehensive and integrated strategy to prevent and minimize pollution through a multi-sectoral and participatory approach involving all the stakeholders.