

Pepsi fined P11.8M for illegal deep wells

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THE National Water Resources Board (NWRB) has slapped a P11.8 million penalty against soft drinks manufacturer Pepsi Cola Products Philippines Inc. (PCPPI) for operating six deep wells in Muntinlupa City without authority from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The NWRB initially set the fine at P11.58 when the operations of the six deep wells were first discovered on April 19. The amount increased to P11.8 million after operatives of the NWRB, DENR and the Philippine National Police discovered their continued use during a second raid conducted last June 11.

The NWRB is an attached agency of the DENR that monitors and regulates the use of all water resources in the country.

“It will be recalled that on June 11, 2018, operatives from NWRB, DENR and PNP raided the softdrinks plant in Muntinlupa to enforce ... Supreme Court decision G.R. No. 22166 entitled Pepsi Cola Products Philippines Inc. vs. National Water Resources Board, which has become final and executory on April 17, 2017,” the DENR said.

NWRB litigation and adjudication unit head lawyer Archie Asuncion said the penalty imposed on the firm was set at P1,000 per day per deep well covering the period January 10, 2013 up to June 11 this year.

DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns Benny Antiporda said the illegal deep wells have already been sealed during the raid to prevent PCPPI from using them again.

A 2004 study commissioned by the NWRB has shown the groundwater in the area has already reached the “critical” level, and the PCPPI extractions have already caused land subsidence. – **Angela Lopez de Leon**

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