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Published November 16, 2018, 1:06 PM

By Vanne Elaine Terrazola

Senator Joel Villanueva is calling on the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to immediately team up and act on the impending lay-off of some 400 workers of the APO Cement Corporation following the fatal landslide in Naga City, Cebu, last month.



Senator Joel Villanueva (CzarDancel / MANILA BULLETIN)

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Villanueva, who chairs the Senate labor committee, said the government should not allow the massive firing of employees, more so that the holidays are approaching.

“The Department of Labor and Employment and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources should act fast and coordinate so that the layoff of around 400 employees of Apo Cement Corporation is prevented and government assistance is on time,” the senator said in a statement.

“Just allowing the layoff to happen is an insensitive move especially now that Christ.mas season is fast approaching,” he added

Last Tuesday, APO Cement announced that it will lay off 30 percent, or about 100, of its employees; and 40 percent, or about 300, of its contractual workers, starting December 13.

The lay-off was due to the ongoing suspension of the quarry operations of Apo Land and Quarry Corp. (ALQC), its main raw material supplier, whose environmental compliance certificate (ECC) was suspended by the DENR after the landslide in one of its mining sites in barangay Tinaan in September. The landslide killed 78 people, including some of ALQC’s workers.

Villanueva said the DOLE and the DENR “should coordinate in the implementation of their respective mandates and programs,” saying that they should have already learned from the closure of Boracay island in terms of coordination and timely delivery of assistance.

The DOLE, he added, should also ensure the APO Cement will recall the affected employees when they resume normal operations.

APO Cement earlier said it is continuing its efforts to help Naga City get back on its feet after the deadly landslide.

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