

San Miguel river dredging resumes

August 27, 2020 | 12:03 am



THE P1-BILLION dredging project of San Miguel Corp. (SMC) in the Tullahan-Tinajeros river system has removed 2,150 truckloads of silt and garbage after resuming operations in June.

SMC President and Chief Operating Officer Ramon S. Ang said that around 20,000 cubic meters of silt and garbage had been extracted from the river system as of Aug. 25.

“The company has been removing 600 tons of solid waste on a daily basis that go to disposal sites designated and approved by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR),” he said.

The dredging project, launched in February this year in partnership with the DENR, is part of SMC’s plan to solve flooding in Bulacan and parts of Central Luzon.

“We’re just starting with phase one of the project, covering a 5.25-kilometer stretch of river system from Navotas to Malabon City. We have a long way to go, but we are fully committed to this long-term project that will benefit so many people and our environment,” Mr. Ang said.

He said the bigger objective of the dredging project is to solve flooding problems in low-lying provinces such as Bulacan, where SMC plans to construct a new international airport. He said the dredging activities in Tullahan-Tinajeros play a major part in the plan.

“The dredging will clean up and deepen the river system, increasing its capacity to handle heavy rains and allowing for floodwaters to flow more freely and drain into Manila Bay,” Mr. Ang said.

He said Tullahan River is a spillway for water flowing from Angat and Ipo dams heading to Manila Bay, thus the need to maintain its depth.

“Based on studies by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), we will need to deepen the river by five meters. Some parts have gone to as low as one to two meters. The accumulation of silt and trash that has caused this is also the primary reason for the heavy incidence of floods in the low-lying areas beside the river, including Bulacan province,” Mr. Ang said.

Meanwhile, he said the airport project and its flood mitigation component would serve as a long-term solution to the flooding issues affecting Bulacan, amid claims from some sectors that the construction will only worsen the flooding situation.

“It will not make sense for us to build an airport here if we do not address these issues. We will do everything to ensure this huge investment in our country will benefit millions of Filipinos and the country for many generations,” Mr. Ang said. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

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