

Duterte backs DENR chief in closure of several mining firms

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Environment Secretary Gina Lopez with President-elect Rodrigo Duterte. (Photo from an RTVM video)

President Rodrigo Duterte reaffirmed on Thursday his support for Environment Secretary Gina Lopez after she had ordered the closure and suspension of 21 mining firms.

“You know, I support her. And there was never a time that I called her to slow down a little bit because... (what she’s doing) is the strict implementation of the mining laws,” Duterte said in a speech at the 38th National Convention of Philippine Association of Water Districts in Davao City.

The President cited how Lopez was passionate about farmers, who had been insisting on the closure of many mining firms.

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“She’s so passionate about... not about the mining laws. But about the little men on the land tilling,” he said.

“She’s the pro-people, pro-poor, policies that I said when I took her in: You can have your way, just be fair and make it legal. That’s about the only standard that you follow: What is legal and what is fair. Hanggang diyan lang tayo (That’s our limit),” he added.

Lopez ordered on Thursday the closure of 21 mining firms. She also suspended six others, while one had action on it deferred.

Duterte has repeatedly said he would only allow the operation of mining firms that abide by the laws. /**ATM**

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