

COMP welcomes Palace ruling on ‘due process’ to mining issues

Published February 8, 2017, 7:57 PM | Manila Bulletin

By Philippine News Agency



PHOTO: Grabbed from Philippine News Agency | Manila Bulletin

The Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP) on Wednesday, February 8 thanked President Rodrigo Duterte and the Cabinet for deciding to observe due process with regards to mining issue.

“We welcome the decision as this gives hope to our mining communities comprised of the many women and men who rely on the industry for their living. We commit to work closely with government and the Mining Industry Coordinating Council (MICC) regarding issues raised to ensure that a fair and just conclusion to the mines audit is reached,” said COMP in a statement.

“We have not wavered in our commitment to continue being significant contributors to nation-building and inclusive growth,” it added.

President Duterte conducted a meeting with his Cabinet Tuesday and one of the agenda items discussed was the evaluation of the environment and natural resources sector in the context of social justice.

Presidential Spokesperson Ernesto Abella has said the President and his Cabinet “collectively decided to observe due process with regard to the mining issue.”

“This means companies affected by mining closures for violations of environmental laws and regulations will be given the opportunity to respond or dispute with the audit, or make the necessary remedies to ensure compliance with government standards,” he added.

Abella said the Department of Finance (DOF) shall have further discussions with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in their capacities as concerned government agencies of the MICC.

The Senate started Wednesday its inquiry on the issue of thousands of displaced workers as a result with the DENR order to close 23 mining firms and suspension of five others.

Senator Joel Villanueva, author of Senate Resolution No. 281, in his opening remarks, said he was “Deeply concerned that a huge number of the labor force would end up unemployed because of the closure order.”

“Of course, we fully support the initiative of the DENR to improve the state of our environment, but it is also our mandate to ensure that our workers in these mining firms are protected. I think it is important that the affected workers and their families know that the government is doing its best, at this point, to safeguard their rights and ensure that DENR’s closure order will not lead to joblessness in their communities,” he noted.

Villanueva said the purpose of Senate Resolution 281 was to inquire on the “employment transition plan” for the affected workers prepared by relevant government agencies, especially the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE).

Lopez was earlier quoted as saying that the areas previously occupied by mining companies could be developed into ecological zones that create green industry and green jobs.

However, Villanueva said it seemed that until now concerned government agencies had yet to convene and come up with a framework (employment transition plan) on how they would do it.

“Importante na tignan mabuti yung importance ng pagkakaroon ng transition program kasi di ito extraordinary. Importante ito kapag kapakanan ng manggagawa ang ating pinag-uusapan, lalo na kung hanapuhay ang pinag-uusapan,” he noted.

(Article retrieved from: <http://news.mb.com.ph/2017/02/08/comp-welcomes-palace-ruling-on-due-process-to-mining-issues/>)