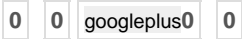


# 30,000 households to benefit from green jobs

By [Rhodina Villanueva](#) (The Philippine Star) | Updated March 9, 2017 - 12:00am



MANILA, Philippines - As many as 30,000 households could benefit from green jobs to be generated by a multi-agency P4-billion investment in three provinces that will be affected by mine closures, according to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

This developed after a mining audit conducted by the DENR resulted in the closure of mines near watersheds in Surigao del Norte, Surigao del Sur and the Dinagat Islands.

Environment Secretary Gina Lopez said that the closure of mines would not result in job losses that could adversely affect the lives of residents dependent on mining for their livelihood.

"It is incumbent upon us in government to provide alternatives for our citizens who are affected by our policies. We want to protect the environment, and want to show that we can save lives and provide livelihood at the same time," said Lopez.

She said the DENR together with 10 other government line agencies are prepared to invest close to P4 billion to provide employment opportunities for 25,000 to 30,000 households.

The other agencies include the Department of Labor and Employment, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, Department of Agriculture, Department of Science and Technology, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Department of the Interior and Local Government, Department of Trade and Industry, Philippine Coconut Authority, Department of Public Works and Highways and Department of Social Welfare and Development.

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"We have a very good, very doable plan that will provide employment in the short and long term, jobs that do not involve mining activities that will damage our much-needed watersheds," Lopez explained.

Short-term employment opportunities include reforestation, desilting of agricultural land, napier and bamboo farming, livestock raising and biochar manufacturing.

Biochar is a powerful soil enhancer that holds carbon and makes soil more fertile. It can boost food security, discourage deforestation and preserve cropland diversity. Biochar systems can reverse soil degradation and create sustainable food and fuel production in areas with severely depleted soils, scarce organic resources, and inadequate water and chemical fertilizer supplies.

"Medium and long-term jobs, on the other hand, will be generated by the manufacture of charcoal briquettes, ecotourism activities, infrastructure, and agro-post harvest processing," Lopez said.

Lopez stressed that "providing economic opportunities and protecting the environment are not mutually exclusive."

"It is not one or the other; we can and should do both at the same time, because we cannot sacrifice the welfare of future generations to meet short-term economic objectives," she said.

The environment secretary said even experts from the Mineral Policy Center based in Washington have referred to water as “mining’s most common casualty.”

“Any competent scientist will tell you that mining affects fresh water through the heavy use of water in processing ore, and through water pollution from discharged mine effluent and seepage from tailings and waste rock impoundments,” explained Lopez.

A study conducted by the think tank World Resources Institute said in late 2015 that the country is in danger of experiencing water scarcity in 23 years. The study predicts the Philippines will experience a “high” degree of water shortage in 2040.

<http://www.philstar.com/science-and-environment/2017/03/09/1679193/30000-households-benefit-green-jobs>