

All miners voted against Gina?

By Dahli Aspillera
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ANA Mejia of the office of Sherwin Ting Gatchalian is fretting because I lumped Senator Gatchalian and his Wellex Mining with other mine-owning legislators. It is evident from what has been read and said during the past 10 months that almost all mine stakeholders are armed with rejection votes for Gina Lopez. She's one unyielding foe of law-circumventing mines. Most mines, operating the way they do, couldn't accept the DENR Secretary's scrupulous ways. Gina Lopez on the other hand, will be hard pressed to find a traditional miners (mine, mine, miner) beyond her reproach.

Gatchalian's office wrote to accuse me of not checking my facts. I did check my facts. It is a fact that those dozens of illegally operating mines that the DENR Secretary had closed or investigated, promptly armed themselves with "rejection votes" for Lopez. That is a lot of accumulated rejection votes in 10 months.

I also learned as fact from his website that Sen. Gatchalian's Wellex Industries Inc (WIN) , then known as REDECO, was engaged in mining and oil exploration activities, is a publicly-listed company now in its 52nd year of corporate existence, is the mining and petroleum investment arm of The Wellex Group.

Among the many assets of WIN is the Plastic City Compound, which sits on 84 hectares of land in Valenzuela, Metro Manila. This compound, which houses 44 industrial warehouses, boasts of complete facilities such as roads, water, electricity and security. The recent amendment of its articles of incorporation allows the company to once again enter into and focus on mining and oil exploration.

Wellex Mining website tells us of its 3,700-hectare nickel, chromite, iron and gold mine site in Dinagat, south of the Philippines. The property is under the Surigao Mineral Reserve established by the United Nations and holds a Mineral Production Sharing Agreement (MPSA) granted by the Philippine government.

Wellex states in its website that it is also set to operate a 10,000 hectare mine site in Samar for coal and another 7,000 hectare in Palawan for Nickel and Limestone. The former is under the Samar Mineral Reserve. The company is actively negotiating for the acquisition and development of more mine sites around the country to strengthen its position in the local mining industry. It also has plans of setting-up environmentally safe processing plants to further enhance the value of its present operation.

That's lots and lots of mines Gina Lopez will want to investigate. The different miners best get those rejection votes dispatched fast. Among the Gatchalian stateholders written down in the website of Wellex are William T. Gatchalian, Dee Hua T. Gatchalian, Kenneth T. Gatchalian, Sherwin T. Gatchalian, Weslie T. Gatchalian, Rexlon T. Gatchalian.

Editor's note: What the writer complained about was that Win Gatchalian is not a member of the Commission on Appointments and therefore had no hand in rejecting Lopez.)

Back to the issue of the secret cell for detainees--PNP chief Ronald dela Rosa: "...Legally, it's wrong because it is not the place where detainees should be. That's against the law. But [the police] said they just had to find space.

There was a wide hallway in the police station which can accommodate the detainees.... When [Sen. Panfilo Lacson] said that my defending my men is arrogance, I am sorry, Sen. Lacson's standard of arrogance is different."

Did Sen. Lacson hear the subsequent radio interviews of those same detainees? Those detainees who were swiftly moved into the overcrowded regular jail complained: "We were better off in what the human rights visitors called the secret cell. At least in that secret cell, we could lie down. Here in this packed jail, there is no room to lie down. No space to even sit down."

The 12 detainees admitted in later interviews that what they told the Human Rights visitors were lies: That they had been detained for a week; that the officers promised to let them go if they would pay hundreds of thousands of pesos, when the fact is none of them had even a few pesos with them; that they were tortured by the police. They made up these lies hoping that the human rights visitors would take them outside, away.

<http://www.malaya.com.ph/business-news/opinion/all-miners-voted-against-gina>