

16 January 2023, Monday



DENR

NEWS ALERTS

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



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Palace official issues anomalous order backing Chinese firm illegally mining nickel

The December 23 order appears to be part of a coordinated plan. Just a week after, on December 29, Yinglong was given by the DENR Regional Office 3 a permit to transport 250,000 metric tons of nickel ore, and an export permit for 50,000 MT of laterite nickel ore. At laterite nickel's current price of \$100 per metric ton, Yinglong would have shipped \$4.5 million, or P250 million worth of the metal.

Because of the rise in international prices of nickel ore due mainly to Russia's war against Ukraine, exportation of nickel ore — the Philippines is the world's second largest producer of the mineral — has become big money, especially since the ore in Zambales is the so-called laterite nickel found just near the surface, and therefore requires little digging.

If Yinglong had managed to sell locally or abroad the remaining 200,000 MT under the permit, it would generate revenues of P1 billion.

However, the DENR's national headquarters was alerted by the export permits — rushed through the Christmas season — issued by its regional office. The MGB's director Wilfredo Mancano, invoking the instructions of two DENR secretaries, ordered its regional office last Thursday (January 12) to revoke the mineral export permits. The next day, the head of Regional Office 3, Alilo Ensomo, resigned, writing that "it is time that I give back to my family and spend every possible moment with them." He didn't mention at all the nickel ore transport and export permits he had issued to Yinglong on December 29.

In its Motion, YSC showed a pressing necessity for the lifting of the CDO in order to prevent irreparable injury not only to it but also to the environment. This Office takes note of the reports dated 31 October and 07 November 2022 of the DENR Office of Zambales to the Governor of Zambales that YSC's nickel mining stockpile has overflowed into the Usson Lake posing a hazard in the lake and the lowland if not removed. Apparently, the CDO has prevented YSC from accessing the mining site and from properly and safely disposing its mining stockpile already existing even prior to the issuance of said CDO. Needless to point out, the continuous enforcement of the CDO will cause grave and irreparable damage to YSC because the mining stockpile has already spilled into the lake necessitating its removal, and to the surrounding environs, as undoubtedly, the spillage of the stockpile would cause serious environmental concerns.

WHEREFORE, premises considered, the instant Motion for Reconsideration is hereby GRANTED. The Cease and Desist Order dated 05 October 2022 issued by the Environmental Management Bureau, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, is temporarily LIFTED. Let the records of the case be remanded to the office of origin for the immediate determination and resolution of the Notice of Violation against Yinglong Steel Corporation for alleged violation of Presidential Decree No. 1586.

SO ORDERED.

Manila, Philippines. 23 DEC 2022

CERTIFIED TRUE COPY

Secretary for Legal Affairs

ANNA LIZA G. LOGAN

Deputy Executive Secretary for Legal Affairs

Desla Anna Liza Logan's Dec. 23, 2022 order to DENR (left) to lift its cease and desist order against Yinglong's illegal mining of nickel ore; right, Mines and Geosciences Bureau Regional Office 3 December 29 permit authorizing the firm to export the nickel ore.

Logan and first lady Liza Araneta-Marcos. SCREENGRAB FROM THE LAW FIRM'S WEBSITE IN 2012 firm however ignored these orders.



(P1 billion) agreed payment that Yinglong submitted to it had been dishonored by the banks. Only \$850,000 could be encashed early last year. A Westchinamin lawyer said that in hindsight, it was Yinglong's small payments that made it so complacent as to allow the Chinese firm to secure the mining area and extract nickel as soon as it could.

Westchinamin Chairman and President Antonio Marfori asked through three letters in August last year Environment Secretary Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga to formally rescind its assignment of rights to the firm and order the police to stop Yinglong from mining.

P1 billion

The DENR finally acted on Westchinamin's request only in October last year, but not for Yinglong's failure to pay the P1 billion under the agreement, but rather for the Chinese firm's failure to secure the required ECC and other requirements needed to undertake mining.

The Desla's order December 22 lifted the EMB's order, the first time a Palace official overturned an order of a DENR office. "It emasculated the DENR in resolving matters within its sole and exclusive jurisdiction," according to the motion by Westchinamin lawyers to the executive secretary. Logan didn't even get Westchinamin side and violated rules of procedure for appeals to the president, among them that a notice of appeals and a bond must be submitted to the Office of the President.

More importantly, the Desla's ruling to block the DENR order for Yinglong was flimsy: That the Chinese firm's nickel stockpile had accumulated and therefore had to be disposed to prevent it from spilling into the Uacon lake.

Illegal

The DENR since last year had asked Yinglong to stop its mining operations, which it deemed to be illegal. This is because Presidential Decree (PD) 1586 issued by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s father 44 years ago, and reaffirmed in so many laws and regulations, required a company to have an ECC issued by the DENR or else it is deemed to be mining illegally, with its owners punishable by imprisonment and fines.

A Yinglong representative last week admitted that the firm had no ECC, but that its position was that it could use the ECC secured by the company that sold it its mining rights to the area. This is not true as PD 1586 categorically states that an ECC is issued to the person or corporation undertaking the mining operations in order to assure accountability.

A Filipino company, Westchinamin Corp., in 2021 assigned its mining rights covering 2,292 hectares in Candelaria, Zambales to Yinglong, with the agreement requiring Yinglong to secure its own ECC, as Westchinamin cannot under PD 1586 transfer its ECC to it. Especially as the mine's site, Candelaria, is the hometown of Zambales Gov. Hermogenes Ebdane, the former police general and public works secretary, who since 2021 has been asked by local NGOs and Westchinamin officials to persuade the Chinese firm to stop its illegal mining. Ebdane however had ignored the pleas.

Another DENR office, the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), early last year also ordered Yinglong to stop its operations for not complying with other mining regulations. The Chinese



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Stunned

DENR officials were stunned at Desla Logan's order, which has been the subject of talk in the department as this had never happened before. Deputy executive secretaries and even the executive secretary have no authority to stop an order issued by executive departments. Only the president has the authority to do so. No such appeal against the DENR order, however, was brought to President Marcos and he had not authorized the executive secretary or his deputy to act on it.

What raised eyebrows at the DENR and the mining industry is the fact that Logan has been the first lady's closest lawyer, whom she had recruited into her former law firm MOST (for Marcos, Ochoa, Serapio and Tan) in 2008, just two years after it was founded, until she was allegedly requested by Mrs. Marcos to join her husband's office. She was appointed deputy executive secretary for legal affairs last September, after then Executive Secretary Victor Rodriguez was removed, reportedly at the instigation of the first lady with whom he had locked horns.

Logan's chief legal officer is Rowena Sanchez, whose husband Manuel is a former Rizal congressman who held various positions in both Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's and Benigno Aquino 3rd's administrations, including DENR undersecretary during the latter's administration. Lawyer Manuel Sanchez apparently has been assisting Yinglong legally and through other means.

He had sent his representative to meet me two weeks ago, who actually was the one who alerted me to this issue, although he tried to convince me that it was Westchinamin that did not comply with its deal with the Chinese firm. Yinglong, Sanchez's man said, was unfairly "vilified and demonized viciously at the DENR and in the mining industry."

Reorganizing

I had sent messages three days ago to the Presidential Communications Secretary Cheloy Garafil requesting for comments on this topic from the first lady. When pressed why she wasn't replying to me at all, she messaged me: "*Nagrere-org pa po kasi OP, Sir* (Because the Office of the President was reorganizing)."

Yinglong certainly was audacious in mining for nickel and shipping it out since the original holder of the rights to the mine, Westchinamin, which assigned its rights to it in 2021 for \$20 million (P1 billion), had been furious at it for not paying it the amount agreed upon. It claimed that based on its agreement with Yinglong, the failure to comply with the schedule of payments (in \$5-million tranches from July 2021 to December 2022) automatically voids the agreement, and the Chinese firm must stop mining and vacate the area.

The Chinese firm didn't.

Westchinamin claimed that most of the checks for the \$20 million

Ridiculous

"This is completely ridiculous," Westchinamin's lawyer Victoria Florido said. "The lake is far from the mining area and spillage is not possible at all," she pointed out. "It's stolen mineral ore as Yinglong did not have an authority to mine it, and now the Desla is saying they can do whatever they want with the mined nickel since it poses an environmental threat?"

Yinglong seems to have such control of that area in Zambales that its real plan is to ship out the nickel it had mined, through another firm, the lawyer claimed.

Big money is involved here. The Philippines is the second largest miner of nickel, a necessary ingredient for the manufacture of stainless steel and lithium batteries, especially for electric cars. Refined nickel prices had zoomed up starting last year to hit \$30,000 per ton because of fears that the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, the fourth largest producer, would reduce its exports as a result of Western sanctions. At that price, Westchinamin's estimated laterite nickel ore reserves, if mined and exported quickly, could yield at least P3 billion in revenues for the miner.

Second part on Wednesday,
Jan. 18, 2023

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BusinessMirror

A broader look at today's business



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Land Management Bureau official vows delivery of land-related services to Filipinos to improve

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

@jonlmayuga

EXPECT a more efficient and effective land administration and management services from the government this year.

An official of the Land Management Bureau (LMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources

said the agency has put in place last year groundbreaking policies geared toward efficient and effective land administration and management.

LMB Director Emelyne V. Talabis said with the newly implemented policies and other accomplishments on its priority programs, they expect improved delivery of land-related services to Filipinos this year.

Land Management Circular (LMC) 2022-001, titled "Guidelines on the Use of Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) in the Conduct of Control and Land Surveys," which the LMB issued on February 7, 2022, provides geodetic engineers with the proper procedures on the use of GNSS as complementary and alternative instrument in the conduct of land surveys.



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NEWS BRIEFS

DENR-13, CHED ink planting pact

BUTUAN CITY – In line with the enactment of the proposed “One Million Malunggay Plant Growing Advocacy Project”, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in the Caraga Region and the Commission on Higher Education signed the memorandum of understanding for the implementation of the program.

The MoU signing – held over the weekend – was led by DENR-13 executive director Nonito Tamayo and CHED-13 director Dr. George Colorado.

According to Tamayo, state universities and colleges will be part of the project as the regional agency eyes to link the SUCs to the National Greening Program of DENR-13, particularly to the 123 associations in the region under the Community-Based Forest Management Agreement.

DENR-13 has a target area of 1,200 hectares for its NGP project.

“The CHED and the SUCs here will provide the seeds and seedlings of malunggay trees which will be propagated in the 17 nurseries of the DENR situated in different provinces,” he said, adding that they aim to begin the project by February.



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Parañaque garbage contractor in hot water

BY ALVIN MURCIA
@tribunephil_alvi

Parañaque City Mayor Eric Olivarez announced on Sunday that he has ordered an investigation into possible "malicious and deliberate" acts by the city's former garbage hauling contractor that resulted in trash pileups during the recent Christmas and New Year holidays.

Olivarez stressed that he has received reports that water and electrical facilities, as well as the sewage treatment plant or STP in the city's garbage transfer station were disabled by the previous contractor which prevented the processing of trash when the new contractor took over on 1 January.

"These are very serious allegations, and we will send the previous contractor a letter asking for an explanation," Olivarez said.

However, the mayor said he is happy to announce that despite that glitch, garbage collection has already returned to normal and there are no more pileups in major and secondary streets and even inside subdivisions and communities.

'These are very serious allegations, and we will send the previous contractor a letter asking for an explanation.'

The city's 16 barangay chairpersons were also hailed by the mayor for their support and cooperation.

"We really appreciate the help of our barangay officials because they went above and beyond their mandates to ensure that our communities are clean and our constituents safe and healthy," Olivarez said.

To recall, the city experienced some garbage pileups around Christmas time as the former contractor reportedly started pulling out personnel and trucks as evidenced by reports and complaints received by the City Environment and Natural Resources Office or CENRO at that time.



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Krisis sa basura sa Parañaque, pinaimbestigahan

Inutos ni Parañaque City Mayor Eric L. Olivarez ang imbestigasyon sa posibleng "malicious and deliberate" acts ng dating contractor sa paghahakot ng basura sa lungsod na nagresulta sa mga tambak ng basura noong mga nakaraang Pasko at Bagong Taon.

Sinabi ng alkalde na nakatanggap siya ng mga ulat na ang mga pasilidad ng tubig at kuryente, gayundin ang sewage treatment plant o STP, sa garbage transfer station sa lungsod ay na-disable ng dating contractor na

humadlang sa pagproseso ng basura nang ang bagong contractor ang pumalit noong Enero 1.

"These are very serious allegations, and we will send the previous contractor a letter asking for an explanation," aniya.

"Nevertheless, we are happy to announce that despite that glitch, our garbage collection has already returned to normal and there are no more pileups in major and secondary streets, and even inside subdivisions and communities," dagdag ni Olivarez.

Nagpasalamat din ang alkalde sa 16 na punong barangay sa suporta at kooperasyon na aniya, ay naging instrumento sa agarang pagresolba ng problema sa loob ng ilang araw.

Naranasan ng mga residente ng lungsod ang pagtambak ng mga basura sa kalye na hindi nahakot noong kapaskuhan.

Ani Olivarez, dahil umano sa pag-pull out ng mga tauhan at trak na pinatunayan ng mga ulat at reklamong natanggap ng City Environment

and Natural Resources Office o CENRO na lalo pang nagtambakan ang basura noong Bagong Taon dahil sa tradisyunal na paghahanda ng mga tao.

"By this time, the former contractor had reportedly stopped collecting trash altogether. "We were ready for an efficient and orderly transition in garbage hauling," ani pa ni Olivarez.

Nangako naman ang alkalde na aalamin kung sino ang responsible sa nangyari. (Ludy Bermudo)



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Parañaque City Mayor Olivarez pipigain dating kontratista sa basura

PINAIIMBESTIGAHAN ni Parañaque City Mayor Eric L. Olivarez ang posibleng 'malicious and deliberate' acts ng dating garbage hauling contractor na nagresulta ng pagtambak ng basura nitong nakaraang Pasko at Bagong Taon.

Ayon sa alkalde, nakatanggap ito ng mga ulat na ang water at electrical facilities, gayundin ang sewage treatment plant o STP sa garbage transfer station ng lungsod ay hindi pinagana ng dating contractor kaya nagkaproblema sa mga basura nang pumalit ang bagong contractor noong Enero 1.

"These are very serious allegations, and we will send the previous contractor a letter asking for an explanation," giit ng alkalde.

"Nevertheless, we are happy to announce that despite that glitch, our garbage collection has already returned to normal

and there are no more pileups in major and secondary streets, and even inside subdivisions and communities," ayon kay Olivarez.

Kaugnay nito ay pinasalamatan ni Mayor Olivarez ang 16 barangay chairperson sa kanilang suporta at kooperasyon kaya agarang nasolusyunan ang problema.

Nakaranas ang lungsod ng tambak ng basura noong Pasko dahil sinimulan ng dating contractor ang pag-alis ng mga tauhan at trak base sa report at relalamong tinanggap ng City Environment and Natural Resources Office or CENRO.

"We were ready for an efficient and orderly transition in garbage hauling," ayon sa mayor. "Unfortunately, there have been acts that are beyond our control, but we promise to look into this matter and find out who is really responsible."



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EcoWaste laments use of plastic fiesta buntings

Environmental watchdog EcoWaste Coalition lamented the unregulated practice of hanging *banderitas* or buntings made mostly of single-use plastics, amid the celebration of the Feast of Sto. Niño in Tondo and Pandacan, Manila yesterday.

"While we applaud some neighborhoods for opting not to join the wasteful bandwagon, we are saddened by the needless use of single-use plastic *banderitas* as citizens rejoice in honor of the Child Jesus unmindful of the plastic pollution crisis we are facing," EcoWaste national coordinator Aileen Lucero said.

EcoWaste patrollers said they observed the use of plastic "labo," sando bags and other plastic

scraps in *banderitas* displayed in the streets of Pandacan and Tondo.

Among the places found extremely decorated with disposable *banderitas* were Kahilom and Narciso streets in Pandacan, as well as portions of Corcuera, Franco, Lakandula, Pavia, Perla, Madrid, Mejorada, Nicodemus, Pacheco, Pilapil, Sto. Cristo, Tioco and Trinidad Rizal streets in Tondo.

"These *banderitas* have no artistic, functional, historical or spiritual value. Worse, they contribute to the tons of garbage to be hauled after the occasion, consisting mostly of single-use plastics and other unsorted discards, including food waste," Lucero said.

To address this perennial garbage problem, EcoWaste called on the

local government of Manila and church officials to back a citywide ban on single-use plastic *banderitas* in all festivities.

The group also pushed for the implementation of Manila City Ordinance 8282, which bans the use of plastic bags for dry goods and regulating their use for wet goods.

The ordinance prohibits polystyrene plastic as containers for food, produce and other products.

EcoWaste pointed out that stricter enforcement of Ordinance 8282 would help in reducing the volume of garbage generated by the city of Manila, which is projected to increase from 418,507 metric tons last year to 421,772

metric tons in 2023, according to the National Solid Waste Management Commission.

Aside from *banderitas*, EcoWaste also questioned the need for "happy fiesta" plastic tarpaulins, which, the group said, "contribute to the street clutter and litter."

Meanwhile, permits to carry firearms outside of residence in Manila for the Sto. Niño feast will remain suspended until today, the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) said.

Only members of the police, military and other law enforcement agencies performing official duties are allowed to carry firearms, the NCRPO said.

- Elizabeth Marcelo,
Ralph Edwin Villanueva



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METROLINE

Beware of unregistered cosmetic products - FDA

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has warned the public against the purchase and use of unregistered cosmetic products.

In separate advisories, the FDA identified the unregistered cosmetic products as Green Apple liquid hand soap, Simple Kind to Skin moisturizing facial wash, GT Clarifiance facial toner, Lashful Mascara, Lumiere Skin Vitals, Faceshop Real Nature Bamboo face

mask and Nivea Energy men shower gel.

"The use of such violative products may pose health risks to consumers," the FDA said. "Potential hazards may come from ingredients that are not allowed to be part of cosmetic products or from the contamination of heavy metals."

According to the FDA, the use of substandard and adulterated cosmetic products may cause adverse reactions such as skin irritation, itchiness, anaphylactic shock and organ failure.

The FDA advised the public to check if the product they intend to use is registered with the agency.

The agency ordered stores and other establishments to stop selling unregistered cosmetic products.

Local government units and law enforcement agencies are asked to ensure that violative products are not available in their areas of jurisdiction.

- Mayen Jaymalin



Climate Change agency eyes boost from funding

BY SAMUEL P. MEDENILLA

✉ @sam_medenilla

THE Climate Change Commission (CCC) said its ongoing technical aid from the German Development Corporation (GIZ) will allow it to come out with more evidence-based climate action.

Last Friday, Vice Chair and Executive Robert E.A. Borje met with the representatives of the GIZ to discuss "the next steps in the implementation" of the South-South Collaboration on Climate Information Services (SSCIS) Project.

"The implementation of the SSCIS Project presents an opportunity for CCC and the Philippine government

to further enhance knowledge and capacities in data management, including collecting, generating, and analyzing climate data as a basis of climate action," Borje said.

Borje said among the practical applications of the SSCIS will be in reviewing the Local Climate Change Action Plan submitted by local government units (LGU).

He said they can also use it to help in enhancing climate resilience of communities.

For his part, SSCIS Project Team head Bjoern Surborg committed to continue extending technical aid to the CCC.

"The GIZ Philippines, through the South-South Project, remains

committed to work with the Philippine government in promoting data-driven climate action to enhance local knowledge on climate change," Surborg said.

The SSCIS is a 5-million Euro project that aims to provide climate information services to national and local government, and the academe.

The Germanwatch Institute placed the Philippines in the fourth most affected country by climate change under its 2021 Global Climate Risk Index.

President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. earlier said that one of the priorities of his administration will be to address the causes and effects of climate change.



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REMATE OPINION

ANG INYONG LINGKOD

NI DR. HILDA C. ONG

BAGO magtapos ang taon 2022, ipinaaalala ni Dr. Seville D. David, Jr., Executive Director ng National Water Resources Board (NWRB) na malaking bahagi ang ginagampanan ng tubig sa ating buhay at kalusugan.

"Ang tubig ay buhay," pahayag ni Executive Director David ng NWRB, tungkol sa kahalagahan ng tubig sa buhay ng ba-

wat Pilipino.

Ayon kay Dr. Seville David, Jr. Executive Director ng National Water Resources Board (NWRB), ang lebel tubig sa Angat Dam ay mahigit na sa normal high-water level (NHWL) na 212 meters.

Kung ikukumpara sa nakalipas na taon 2021 at 2022, hindi naabot ang end of the year target na 212 meters.

LEBEL NG TUBIG NG ANGAT DAM, LUMAMPAS NA SA 212 NHWL NGAYONG ENERO

Base sa ulat ng Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), ang antas ng tubig sa Angat Dam ay nasa 213.67 metro noong January 15, 2023, (6:00am).

Ang magandang balita, halos walang tigil ang naging pagbuhos ng ulan, araw-araw na tumataas ang antas ng tubig, sana tuloy-tuloy ang malakas ng pagbuhos ng ulan sa bahagi ng Norzagaray, Bulacan.

May payo si Dr. David, sa mga tahanan at indus-

triya, dapat samantalahin ang malalakas na pag-ulan sa pamamagitan ng pag-iimpok nito sa proseso ng "Rain Harvesting" kung saan ang tubig ulan ay kinukolekta at pwedeng gamitin sa irigasyon, sa mga malalaking industriya, at mag-ing sa mga tahanan.

Malaki ang maitutulong ng pag-iipon ng mga tubig ulan lalo pa't may kalakasan ang pagbuhos ng ulan tuwing hapon.

Gawing alternatibong paraan sa paglilinis ng bahay, sa pagdidilig ng

mga pananim, pambanlaw ng mga damit na nilabhan, panghugas, pambuhos sa banyo at iba pa.

Ipagpatuloy natin ang pagtitipid sa tubig, upang masiguro natin ang sa-

pat at patuloy na suplay ng tubig para sa pangangailangan ng bawat tahanan.

Ayon pa sa NWRB ang

mga pinagkukunan ng tubig ay hindi na sapat sa lumolobong populasyon, lalo na kung sumasapit ang panahon ng tag-init.



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Dambuhalang buwaya niratrat sa Palawan

ISANG 15-talampakang buwaya ang nasawi sa Bataraza, Palawan dahil sa tinamo nitong mga bala.

Ayon sa naunang ulat, nahuli ang saltwater crocodile nitong Hwebes.

Sa isinagawang necropsy sa buwaya, tatlong basyo ng bala ang nakuha sa ribcage nito.

Dahil naman sa tinamong maraming mga bala sa katawan ay nagkaroon umano ito ng komplikasyon sa baga na nauwi sa kanyang pagkamatay.

Masusi naman ngayong iniimbestigahan kung sino ang bumaril sa nasabing buwaya. **(Issa Santiago)**



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7 landslide sa Iligan; bahay natabunan, kalsada barado

Aabot sa pitong landslides ang naitala sa Iligan City na nagresulta sa pagkasira ng ilang mga bahay at mga kalsada sa ilang mga barangay dito dahil sa low pressure area.

Ayon kay City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office, Nouvel Krish Aemery Lagapa, nangyari ang mga landslide sa C3 diversion road; Suarez-Abaga road; malapit sa entrance ng military detachment sa national highway sa Barangay Suarez; Sitio Olas sa Brgy. Ubaldo Laya; Brgy. Upper Hinaplanon; Brgy. Rogongon; at dalawa sa Brgy. Pugaan.

Samantala, ang access road papunta sa Sitio Green Valley sa Brgy. Tubod ay barado sanhi ng mga putik at bato.

Sa Brgy. Tomas Cabili, isang bahay na dating simbahan ay natabunan.

Sinabi naman ni Pastor Antonio Pulgo na walang nasugatan sa insidente. (Catherine Reyes)



Proposed joint oil exploration at WPS seen hitting snag

By MYRNA M. VELASCO

The targeted joint oil and gas exploration at the diplomatically-contested West Philippine Sea could end up to be a "dead proposition, that is, if the country has to take its cue from the recent decision of the Supreme Court declaring the "unconstitutionality" of the joint marine seismic undertaking (JMSU) forged with foreign entity-partners during the Arroyo administration.

With the hypersensitive legal tenets of the talks that shall be carried out with the Chinese government, Senate Committee on Energy Vice Chairman Sherwin T. Gatchalian sounded off that "when you go to the nitty gritty of things, especially the governing law that should prevail, I think we will hit a snag with that issue."

The JMSU refers to the March 2005 deal entered into by state-run Philippine National Oil Company (PNOC) with regional peers PetroVietnam and China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) for a three-year collaborative search for potential oil discovery in the disputed South China Sea, but the seismic survey domain straddled the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of the Philippines.

Back then, the agreed pre-exploration survey prescribes the collection, processing and the need to analyze seismic data within the 142,886 square kilometers covered by the JMSU. The partner-firms shared the \$20 million to \$25 million investment cost for the activity.

Pass forward to this day when the Philippine-China talks for joint exploration and production (E&P) ventures at the disputed territory are being rekindled, the lawmaker asserted,

"Personally, I'm not so optimistic that we can move forward with this joint exploration. It's good that we are talking. It's good that we are open to it. But I think that the best case here or the best evidence will be what was discussed during the last administration."

Gatchalian is referring to the "zero progress" on the same sphere of negotiations with China that was pursued during the Duterte administration.

The solon shared the view that the West Philippine Sea is endowed with oil and gas resources that the country could lean on for its lofty energy security goals, but the major drawback has been the lack of traction despite persistent talks with China on this matter.

"The West Philippine Sea is the most prolific when it comes to oil and gas and it's to our interest to be energy secure. Therefore, we should explore the potential of the West Philippine

Sea. However, we're also looking for ways to work with China," he stressed.

In his assessment, the recent verdict of the Supreme Court is a harbinger of things to come on the proffered joint oil and gas exploration at the West Philippine Sea - primarily the tricky legal and Constitutional aspect that shall be laid on the table for any continued negotiations between the two countries.

"The overarching message of the Supreme Court in (its) decision is that our Constitution should prevail. Our Constitution should be the governing document, and that is a minimum standard that any activity - whether it's a joint exploration, joint venture or production - it should be our Constitution that should be governing the activity," Gatchalian emphasized.



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January 4, 2023

DENR ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
No. 2023 - 01

SUBJECT : ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES GEOSPATIAL DATABASE UNDER THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Pursuant to Executive Order No. 292 also known as the *Administrative Code of 1987* and Presidential directives to establish a national environment and natural resources geospatial database as a platform for the planning and implementation of integrated strategies of the DENR, the creation of an office on National Environment and Natural Resources Geospatial Database is hereby created.

Section 1. Basic Policy.

It is the policy of the state to promote the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for the enhancement of key public services, including promoting sustainable development through technology enabled governance. It is also the policy of the State to undertake exploration, assessment, classification, and inventory of the country's natural resources using ground survey, remote sensing and complementary technologies.

Section 2. Objectives.

This Order aims to:

- 2.1 Establish, operate and maintain a national environment and natural resources geospatial database for DENR;
- 2.2 Promote the utilization of satellite remote sensing, machine learning, artificial intelligence and GIS for policy, planning and decision-making; and
- 2.3 Create an office to ensure the implementation of the national environment and natural resources geospatial database.

Section 3. Scope and Coverage.

This Order shall establish, operate, and maintain a national environment and natural geospatial database in the Department, integrating and harmonizing data from the bureaus, attached agencies, regional offices, PENROs, and CENROs that will include, among others, information as follows:

- 3.1 Natural resources on land, in air, inland water and sea of the country, including biodiversity, coastal and marine, forest, land, minerals and water;
- 3.2 Environmental conditions of these resources;
- 3.3 Inputs to the natural capital accounting program of the government;
- 3.4 Boundary maps, including political, administrative and environmental as created by pertinent laws and DENR policies;
- 3.5 DENR interventions in the form of approved applications, programs, projects and activities; and
- 3.6 Supporting information needed for a more robust, inclusive and integrated strategies for a science-based, risk-informed, ethical and equitable stewardship of our environments.

Section 4. Creation of the Office on the National Environment and Natural Resources Geospatial Database and its Organizational Structure.

There is hereby created the office on National Environment and Natural Resources Geospatial Database under the Office of the Secretary, as the lead implementing office in the planning and implementation of integrated geospatial strategies of the Department.

The Office on National Environment and Natural Resources Geospatial Database shall be composed of the following units and functions:

- 4.1 Geodatabase Management Unit
 - 4.1.1 Create, plan and design the Geodatabase;
 - 4.1.2 Perform database administration and maintenance;
 - 4.1.3 Ensure the backup and recovery of the whole database management system;
 - 4.1.4 Plan and recommend resource needed for the administration and maintenance of database;
 - 4.1.5 Manage users and permission access to the database;
 - 4.1.6 Maintain, monitor and manage performance including the security of the entire database and its IT infrastructure; and
 - 4.1.7 Perform other functions as may be directed by the Office of the Secretary.

4.2 Mapping Unit

- 4.2.1 Create geoprocessing models;
- 4.2.2 Create, design, generate maps and web maps;
- 4.2.3 Create and configure GIS web and mobile applications;
- 4.2.4 Perform geospatial analysis;
- 4.2.5 Coordinate with all appropriate offices in the performance of its functions; and
- 4.2.6 Perform other functions as may be directed by the Office of the Secretary.

The office shall have its own operational working area to be assigned by the Secretary. It shall be provided with the necessary equipment and logistical support coming from the Knowledge and Information Systems Service and the Administrative Service.

Section 5. Staffing.

The Secretary shall determine the staffing pattern and designate the necessary officials and personnel that will compose the office.

Section 6. Funding.

Initial funds for the operations of the office shall be taken from the Office of the Secretary and from the approved budgets of related programs based on the submitted Work and Financial Plan (WFP). For 2024 and thereafter, funds for the office shall be taken from the regular budget of the Department, as may be proposed and approved in the General Appropriations Act, and other appropriate sources subject to the existing accounting and auditing rules and regulations.

Section 7. Support of Other Offices.

All offices in the Department, including bureaus, attached agencies and field offices, are hereby directed to provide the necessary support and logistics in the operations of the office. All units performing GIS or remote sensing - related functions, including DENR Control Map, shall serve as the counterpart of the office in their respective offices and are directed to provide support to the office as needed.

Section 8. Rules of Engagement.

The office shall formulate and recommend appropriate rules of engagement that will guide its operations.

Section 9. Performance Evaluation and Accomplishments.

The office shall submit to the Office of the Secretary a Geospatial Data Roadmap for a period of six (6) years which shall contain tangible deliverables and other outputs including timelines that can be objectively evaluated as an indicator of performance. The Program Monitoring and Evaluation Division (PMED) under the Policy and Planning Service shall undertake the periodic review of the performance and accomplishments of the office.

Section 10. Separability Clause.

If any provision of this Order shall be held invalid or unconstitutional, the other portions or provisions hereof which are not affected shall continue in full force and effect.

Section 11. Repealing Clause.

All Orders and other similar issuances inconsistent herewith are hereby revoked, amended, or modified accordingly.


Section 12. Effectivity Clause.

This Order shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in a newspaper of general circulation and upon acknowledgment of the receipt of the copy thereof by the Office of the National Administrative Register (ONAR).

MARIA ANTONIA YULO LOYZAGA
Secretary







Republic of the Philippines
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
NATIONAL WATER RESOURCES BOARD
8th Floor NIA Bldg., EDSA, Diliman, Quezon City Philippines 1100

LAGUNA BAY WATER, INC.,
Applicant. Case No. 22-3502

NOTICE OF HEARING

This is an application for Certificate of Public Convenience to operate and maintain a waterworks system within Barangays Banca-Banca, Dauliw, Masapang, San Felix, San Francisco, San Roque, Nanhaya and Pagalangan, municipality of Victoria, province of Laguna, with the following proposed rates:

PROPOSED TARIFF

Residential and Institutional						
Pipe Size	0-5 m ³ (min.)	6-10 m ³	11-20 m ³	21-30 m ³	31-40 m ³	Over 40 m ³
½"	₱ 207.50	43.50	49.40	55.40	61.30	67.20

Commercial and Industrial					
Pipe Size	0-15 m ³ (min.)	16-30 m ³	31-500 m ³	501-1000 m ³	Over 1000 m ³
½"	₱ 1,245.00	90.90	102.80	118.60	134.40

This application will be initially heard by the Board on **6 February 2023**. The hearing will start at **9:00 o' clock in the morning** at the NWRB-WUD Conference Room, 8th Floor, NIA Building, EDSA, Quezon City, at which time applicant shall present its evidence.

At least fifteen (15) days prior to the scheduled hearing, applicant shall publish this notice once in a newspaper of general circulation in the province of **Laguna** and serve by personal delivery or registered mail a copy of the (i) application and its attachments, and (ii) this notice, to all affected parties appearing on page 2 hereof.

Parties opposed to the granting of the application must file their written opposition supported by documentary evidence on or before the above scheduled date of hearing, furnishing a copy of the same to the applicant.

Failure on the part of any person affected to file its opposition on time and to appear at the hearing will be construed as a waiver of their right to be heard. The Board will proceed to hear and decide the application based on the evidence submitted.

Likewise, failure by the applicant to appear at the hearing shall amount to lack of interest on its part and the instant application shall be dismissed accordingly.


Witness the Honorable Executive Director of the National Water Resources Board this 2nd day of December 2022.

Affected Parties:

The Secretary
Barangays Office
Victoria, Laguna

The Barangay Chairmen
Barangays Banca-Banca, Dauliw,
Masapang, San Felix, San Francisco,
San Roque, Nanhaya & Pagalangan
Victoria, Laguna

By Authority of the Board:


Dr. SEVILLO D. DAVID, Jr., CESO III
Executive Director