

Gov't suspends miner's operations in Surigao

Written by Riza T. Olchondra
Thursday, 26 July 2012 22:46

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) said it had suspended the mining operations of Shenzou Mining Group Corp. in Claver, Surigao del Norte, for causing extensive siltation of coastal areas.

MGB issued the suspension order based on the findings of a multisectoral team led by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources that the company had failed to adequately address the siltation incidents in its area and even made the situation worse by building a “settling pond” on the sea—a malpractice in mining. A settling pond is a structure where silt-laden water is impounded temporarily to allow silt materials to settle down and for water to overflow silt-free.

Prior to the issuance of the suspension order, MGB said it had written Shenzou and five other mining companies in the area about the siltation problem and required them to show cause why their operations should not be suspended. The other firms were Adnama Mining Resources Inc., Platinum Group Metals Corp., C.T.P. Construction and Mining Corp., Sumitomo-led Taganito HPAL Nickel Corp. and Taganito Mining Corp.

All, except Shenzhou, had responded and reported how they were addressing the problem.

Taganito HPAL Nickel Corp. and TMC said they were implementing “several control measures” to address siltation in their areas in Claver, Surigao del Norte.

Taganito HPAL is constructing a processing plant beside the area where TMC operates a nickel mine.

MGB Director Leo L. Jasareno said his office expected further actions and gave the five companies 60 days from the receipt of MGB's latest letter to “fully address” siltation in their area, subject to validation by the multisectoral team led by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

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Taganito HPAL Nickel Corp., a subsidiary of Sumitomo Metal Mining Co., Ltd. (SMM), is building a nickel processing plant using High Pressure Acid Leach or HPAL technology.

TMC is 65 percent owned by Nickel Asia Corp., the local partner in the Taganito HPAL project.

The \$1.3-billion Taganito HPAL plant being built in Surigao del Norte was designed to produce nickel/cobalt mixed sulfide. The initial capacity of mixed sulfide production at Taganito would be 30,000 tons per year.

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