
Intex Resources environmental clearance temporarily suspended

Friday, 20 Nov, 2009

Mr Joselito Atienza secretary Department of Environment and Natural Resources announced that environmental clearance given to Intex Resources has been suspended for 90 days, effectively halting the Norwegian company's nickel mining operations in Mindoro.

Mr Atienza said that during the suspension period, the department will look into the allegations of the protesters. He said that the DENR's Environmental Management Bureau and the Mines and Geosciences Bureau have also been directed to look into the complaints of the residents.

Groups opposing the project decried the lack of public consultation, adding that the nickel facility is located within a watershed.

The Alyansa Tigil Mina an anti mining group said in a statement that the watershed is the source of irrigation for some 50,000 hectare rice fields in the towns of Victoria, Naujan and Calapan City, Oriental Mindoro which account for 51% of total rice production in the province.

Mr Atienza said that but these claims will be ascertained and verified. If the concession is indeed within a watershed, then no operations should really be taking place there.

The protesters led by another group, Alyansa Laban sa Mina said that Moreover, the ECC secured by Intex Resources also violates 25 year moratorium on large scale mining in Oriental Mindoro and poses health and environmental risks to the residents in the area.

Mindoro produces an average 600,000 tonnes of rice a year making the island one of the country's largest sources of the staple. Last month, the DENR approved Intex's environmental clearance certificate, indicating that the project can proceed in an environmentally critical area.

Earlier, then environment secretary Heherson Alvarez also temporarily revoked the company's ECC when the department discovered that the project was located on a critical watershed portion of the island.

(Sourced from Gmanews.tv)

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