

MMC compliant with environmental standards

This is to clarify the misleading news report aired by ABS-CBN and ANC this morning that “DENR gives Manila Mining 2 months to neutralize the open pit’s acidity level.” The open pit referred to was the Ntina pit.

The report is misleading because it is incomplete and suggests, whether wittingly or unwittingly, that Manila Mining Corporation (MMC) had failed to meet the environmental standards set by law and regulations for observance by mining companies. In the case of MMC, it is not even in operation presently and is only on care and maintenance status while awaiting the DENR approval of its ECC application. What ABS-CBN and ANC failed to report were the following:

- (1) The Ntina pit in Placer, Surigao del Norte was the site of MMC mining operations until 2001. It contains copper and other minerals and thus, it is but a natural phenomenon for the water in the pit to be acidic. The water in the pit is stored and contained, not discharged to any body of water. There is no law or regulation requiring the neutralization of acidic water in contained pits. In fact, during the visit of Secretary Lopez to MMC yesterday, she asked Mr. Leo Jasareno what the law says about impounded acidic water in open pits, and Mr. Jasareno stated: “The mining law is silent on prohibiting impounding acidic water on open pits. It is only the discharge that is being monitored.” Stated otherwise, there is no law or regulation that is being violated by MMC.
- (2) The day before Secretary Lopez’s visit to MMC on 18 April 2017 and upon her instruction, a team from the DENR /Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) visited MMC to take samples from seven stations in our mine site in Placer to test the water quality from our discharge points and the coastal waters. The sampling was witnessed by MMC representatives. Results show water quality ranging from 7.27pH to 8.89pH which are within the DENR standard of between 5.5pH and 9.5pH. This clearly shows that MMC is compliant with DENR standards.
- (3) A similar water sampling was conducted on 27 February 2017, also upon the instruction of the Secretary, and following her announcement in Butuan City (prior to the actual test) that the waters in MMC’s pits were acidic. The DENR and EMB also certified that the water sampling conducted on 27 February 2017 was compliant and within DENR standards. Outside of the two special tests instructed by Secretary Lopez, a Multi-Partite Monitoring Team (MMT) conducts water sample testing on a regular basis and MMC has always been found to be compliant. The MMT is composed of representatives from MMC, DENR, EMB, MGB, LGUs, church, and NGOs.

MMC will request ABS-CBN and ANC to report this clarification in the interest of truth and of balanced news reporting.