

NEWS RELEASE

Zambo Sur Gov. Underscores Role of Responsible Mining in Economic Development

Cited TVIRD as a company that follows and observes the principles of responsible mining



Zamboanga del Sur Governor Antonio Cerilles (left) declares his support for responsible and properly-regulated mining during a mining forum held March 07 in Bayog Municipality, Zamboanga del Sur. With him is Bayog Mayor Leonardo L. Babasa Jr. who also reiterates his support as he urged the people to listen to what responsible mining is. He said that mining, once properly-regulated and responsible, will bring peace and prosperity.

Bayog, Zamboanga del Sur (March 7, 2017) – Responsible and properly-regulated mining found renewed support from top provincial and town officials after Zamboanga del Sur Governor Antonio Cerilles declared his support for the local extractive industry as long it complies with government regulations.

Speaking today in a symposium attended by more than 200 people in Bayog Municipality, Cerilles reiterated his position that mining should be responsible and must pass the necessary government requirements before being allowed to operate. He cited the case of TVI Resource Development Philippines, Inc. (TVIRD) as one of the mining companies that follows and observes the principles of responsible mining.

TVIRD holds a Mineral Production Sharing Agreement (MPSA) covering some 4,779 hectares encompassing the gold-rich mountain of Balabag of this town.

In 2016, the company already received from the DENR its Declaration of Mine Project Feasibility (DMPF),

and in 2013 an approved Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC), which requires the conduct of an Environmental Impact Study – a comprehensive assessment of the long-term effects of mining and the corresponding program for rehabilitating affected areas after mineral extraction.

It also received an approval for its Social Development Management Program from the agency's Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) in May 2014.

Stringent requirements

For a mining operation to be responsible, the governor said, it must demonstrate the capacity to comply with the rigorous processes required by the government.

“How about those (illegal small-scale mining) at the mountains before – do they have the ECC? None. *Idya-idya, aho-aho* (To each his own). They did not have the permit from the town, province, and the DENR,” the governor told the audience of the forum.

In what appears to be his assessment against the small-scale miners, Cerilles said, “A responsible miner will have to get a permit from the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), which will set the conditions” how to conduct the operations to mitigate the effects to the environment.

Cerilles, who served as DENR Secretary during the Estrada administration, pointed out that what destroys the environment and pollutes the waters are the illegal small-scale miners whose operations are not strictly regulated by the government.

For instance, Cerilles explained, the polluted waters in Dumanquillas Bay of the province were due to small-scale miners whose unregulated use of toxic chemicals caused undetermined damage to the environment.

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) had included Dumanquillas Bay in their red tide advisory for years. However, the pollution in the bay was minimized in 2012 when the MGB issued the cease-and-desist order on illegal small-scale mining upon the recommendation of the provincial government.

The governor is optimistic that TVIRD will deliver its commitment to safeguard the environment as it brings its operations on-stream in the area.

He is also convinced that the company can bring the needed development for the community in terms of livelihood, social development projects and improved local government revenues.

Grounded optimism

Mayor Leonardo Babasa, meanwhile, expressed his optimism with what the mining company could bring in terms of peace and development for the town.

“With illegal and small-scale mining around, the town can only do so much because the local government does not have the power to levy taxes and fees,” Babasa said. The mayor also added that the revenue to be generated from the company's operations is a big help for his town.

Babasa called on the national government to allow the company to proceed with its Balabag operations,

challenging the announcement of DENR secretary-designate Gina Lopez last February 14 to cancel 75 MPSAs, including TVIRD's, that are allegedly located in "functional watersheds."

The miner has since refuted the assertion that its MPSA is within a government-proclaimed watershed area.

In a previous statement, TVIRD President Eugene T. Mateo said that the company's Balabag Project "is not located within the vicinity of any lake, spring or tributary enumerated in the country's list of proclaimed watershed forest reserves or any critical watershed that are included in the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA) and National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS)."

Mateo further stated that, "For the lack of study or facts more substantial references to offer than the phrase 'likely to cause impairment,' TVIRD deems the cancellation of the MPSA to have no merit."

About TVI in the Philippines

TVI Resource Development Philippines Inc. ("TVIRD"), is the local affiliate of TVI Pacific Inc. (TSX: TVI), a publicly-listed Canadian mining company focused on the exploration, development and production of precious and base metals from district-scale, large-system, high-margin projects located in the Philippines. Concurrent ownership of ventures is shared with partner company, Prime Resource Holdings Inc.

The commercial operations of Agata Mining Ventures Inc. (AMVI) mark the third successful mining project that TVIRD brought on-stream in a period of 10 years. The company is committed to exploration and mining practices that promote transparency, responsible stewardship of the environment, and the inalienable rights to life, dignity, and sustainable development of its host communities.

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