

23 charged for illegal cutting of trees in Toledo City

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HEADLINES

By: Michelle Joy L. Padayhag November 18,2015 - 03:28 AM

Criminal charges were filed on Monday against 21 directors and officers of three corporations, a lot owner and a steward after 982 trees were cut down without a permit in Toledo City.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR-7) , in a statement, said it filed the complaint arising from the clearing of land for a solar energy project in barangay Talavera.

The respondents were cited for cutting trees without a license in violation of Section 77 of Presidential Decree 705 or the Revised Forestry Code of the Philippines as amended by Executive Order No. 277 and as renumbered by Republic Act 7161 in relation to Executive Order No. 23.

The charge sheet was signed by Raul Pasoc, the City Environment and Natural Resources Officer of Toledo city.

The companies implicated were Sunasia Energy Inc., Sta. Clara International Corp. and First Toledo Solar Energy Corp. along with property owner Gino Baltao and the farm supervisor Allan Navales.

The complaint named nine members of the Board of Directors and key officers of Sunasia Energy Inc. (SEI), namely, Noel Cariño (chairman), Ma. Theresa Capellan (president) , Cheerelyn Barrameda (treasurer), Ulysses Bautista (secretary) , Diosdado Capellan, Holgerk Schenk, Godofredo Jalasco, Enrique Guanio, and Marcus Joel Ramos, all with address at 902 Paragon Plaza, EDSA cor. Reliance St. Mandaluyong Manila.

Other respondents were dfrom Sta. Clara International Corporation — Nicandro Linao (president), Irma Linao (vice president-treasurer), lawyer Rio Ventura (corporate secretary), Asislo Gonzaga (special adviser to BOD), Carlos Hadap (executive vice president), Nobukazu Kotake (senior vice president for operations), Ulysses Bautista (vice president for business development), Miguel Carlos Linao and Oscar Batol with address at 2/F Highway 54 Plaza, EDSA Wack-wack, Mandaluyong City.

DENR chief: Reclamation projects will slow down the flow of waterDENR chief: Reclamation projects will slow down the flow of water

Also included in the complaints are First Toledo Solar Energy Corporation presented by General Manager Engr. Sammy Baybay with office in Talavera, Toledo City,

The tree cutting took place sometime in September 2015.

A DENR team inspected the area and geo-tagged the evidence on the ground.

Based on the DENR's inventory, 982 naturally grown and planted trees were bulldozed and cut down, including a century-old Lamio forest tree.

Other species that were cut down include Tipolo, Pangantoon, Bangkal, Bagalunga, Lanutan, Acasia, Narra, Mahogany, and Germilina.

A cease-and-desist order (CDO) was issued on October 28 and directed SEI, through its project manager Jose Enrique Tolentino, to immediately stop the further destruction of trees.

Eddie Llamedo, DENR-7 information officer, said the inspecting team noted that operations continued despite the issuance of a CDO.

The volume of trees cut was about 2,190 cubic meters or 928,560 board feet with an estimated value of P18.5 million.

One board foot is equivalent to 20 pesos.

An adjudication hearing was scheduled last week but didn't push through after First Toledo Solar Energy Corp. asked CENRO to reset it to November 26.

In a statement, First Toledo Solar Energy Corp. said the company is committed to comply with rules other relevant policies for their plans to develop a 60-megawatt solar power plant in Toledo City.

The company emphasized that the facility would produce clean energy from the sun.

Pasoc said the company's plan will be referred to their legal office.

"We have no question about their facility. The question is who ordered and cut those trees even if they do not have tree-cutting permit," Pasoc added.

The prohibit against cutting trees is also stated as a condition in the Environmental Compliance Certificate of First Toledo Energy Corp.

Company delivers fallen trees to barangay officials

Firms told to explain cutting of 928 trees

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