

At the rate water merchants are bottling and selling, even "exporting," precious water from Durianburg—without even the courtesy of informing



# BEHIND THE HEADLINES

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## Unless Davao City protects its water sources, it will one day wake up waterless

the city government and the DCWD— there will come a day in the future when Dabawenyos will go thirsty and probably import their drinking water from elsewhere. If there'll be "water, it'll be polluted too, simply because today's generation failed to protect our water sources.

The DOST regional office here confirmed that as of now there are already four or even five companies "sucking" good, clean potable water from the same sources underneath the land from which the Davao City Water District also gets the water that it pumps through the pipes to serve over one million people in this southern metropolis.

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Because Davao water is one of the best in the world, according to international water authorities, it could sell faster than water from other sources—hence, the demand will be great and the supply (from here) could be drained faster than it could be replenished by the aquifers beneath the surface.

Hence, the urgent need to regulate the outflow of water from Davao City by water bottlers and supplies who are the ones making a lot of money from the city's precious (and finite) water sources.

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First, the city

government (together with DCWD) should give this matter top priority and urgent attention, for unless they act now—future generations suffering from lack of potable water will condemn them for utter lack of foresight, even common sense.

As of now there's not even a semblance of regulation governing the activities of these water bottlers and suppliers—they don't even pay a semblance of royalty to the local government to DCWD for siphoning off thousands/millions of gallons of Davao water and selling these in metro-Manila, Cebu and perhaps even abroad at big profit margins.

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We are supposed to have a water code passed by the City Council—but it's bogged down in the political bureaucracy supposed to be preparing and then fine-tuning it before submitting it to the city council (where it will further undergo the usual legislative lethargy unless there are the usual incentives).

The last alternative is for concerned citizens to resort to democratic action—take the matter directly into their hands.

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The 8th Mindanao Business Conference which closed today in Iligan City crystalized certain issues affecting business and industry in Mindanao

which—like others through the country and the Asian region—have been severely affected, to a lesser or greater

degree, by the Asianwide financial crisis, whose adverse effects are lingering despite positive signs of economic recovery.

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One good news for industries which are heavy users of electricity supplied by the National Power Company is that there could be a big reduction in energy costs for Mindanao-based industries—if the NPC's announcement to this effect will be subsequently validated.

The core of Mindanao's power system is located in the Iligan-Lanao Norte area where NPC's main plants are located due to the abundance of hydropower resources, including the famous Maria Cristina Falls.

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If such drastic cut in the power costs will materialize, Mindanao's economic recovery will be much faster than that of other areas in the country. This move will also generate more agri-based enterprises that could hasten Mindanao's transformation into the food basket of the nation.

Congratulations (before we run out of space) to the very successful 8th Mindanao Business Conference in Iligan City—the confab proved to be an effective catalyst.

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Davao - Water Supply