

Lastly, small irritants exist between small-scale miners and big mining firms in terms of conflicts in mining claims. For example, the Apex Mining Corp. has barely mined a tenth of its mining claims in the Davao gold rush areas as small-scale miners have allegedly built their own tunnels indiscriminately.

Obviously, there seems to be an absence of a systematic approach to small scale mining activities in the country. Nevertheless, the country's solons have realized the gravity of this problem. There is a pending bill in the Senate which is supposed to offer remedies to all these problems regarding small-scale mining. Senate Bill No. 903, which is otherwise known as the "Small Scale Mining Act of 1988" is meant to rationalize small scale mining activities in the country.

Among the major provisions of the bill are the following:

1. The power of the DENR Secretary to declare and set aside small scale mining areas based on the recommendation of DENR regional executive directors, provided that these areas are not mining areas [2] and the minerals in these areas are technically and commercially suitable for mining activities [3].
2. In the event that an area that is set aside for small scale mining is covered by an existing mining claim, the claim owner is afforded certain rights and privileges in case of a disagreement between the claim owner and the small scale miners in the area.
3. Small scale miners licensed by the regional executive director shall organize themselves into cooperatives.