

Committee Daily Bulletin



17th Congress
First Regular Session

A publication of the Committee Affairs Department

Vol. I No. 114
May 22, 2017

COMMITTEE MEETINGS				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Agrarian Reform	HB 187	Rep. Bravo (A.)	Providing for the restructuring and condonation of unpaid interests, penalties and surcharges on loans secured by farmers, fisherfolk, and agrarian reform beneficiaries from the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), Department of Agriculture (DA), People's Credit and Finance Corporation (PCFC), Cooperative Development Authority (CDA), National Food Authority (NFA), and Quedan and Rural Credit Guarantee Corporation (QUEDANCOR)	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Rene Relampagos (1st District, Bohol), approved the Committee Report on HB 187.
	HB 1396	Rep. Amante	Providing a 15-year moratorium on the processing and approval of application for conversion of all irrigated and irrigable lands covered by irrigation projects	The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to discuss further HBs 1396 and 5501. The TWG will be chaired by Deputy Speaker Gwendolyn Garcia (3rd District, Cebu).
	HB 5501	Speaker Alvarez	Prohibiting the acceptance, processing, and approval of applications for land use conversion of agricultural lands, irrigated lands, and irrigable lands to non-agricultural purposes	Deputy Speaker Garcia, who sponsored HB 5501 on behalf of the author, Speaker Pantaleon "Bebot" Alvarez (1 st District, Davao del Norte), said that the bill aims to protect the remaining agricultural and irrigated and irrigable lands from rampant conversions to non-agricultural purposes, threatening not only the country's food security but the country's agrarian reform program as well. Likewise, Rep. Erlpe John "Ping" Amante (2nd District, Agusan del Norte), author of HB 1396, explained that a moratorium on agricultural land conversion is imperative to preserve whatever is left of the country's agricultural lands given the unrelenting pace of industrialization. DAR Undersecretary Luis Meinrado Pangulayan expressed support for the bills, saying that the proposed law will provide the DAR the much needed boost in fulfilling its mandate under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (RA 6657). Representatives from the Department of Agriculture (DA), Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board (HLURB), Presidential Agrarian Reform Council (PARC), Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP), National Irrigation

Continuation... Agrarian Reform				<p>Administration (NIA), National Housing Authority (NHA), Chamber of Real Estate and Builders Association (CREBA), National Federation of Peasant Women, and <i>Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas</i> (KMP) expressed their support for the bills.</p> <p>On the other hand, representatives from the Philippine Association of Real Estate Board (PAREB) and the Organization of Socialized and Economic Housing Developers of the Philippines (OSHDP) expressed their objection to the bills, arguing that there is no clear basis for a moratorium on the conversion of agricultural lands. They explained that the total area of agricultural lands that were converted for non-agricultural purposes over a span of 28 years (1998-2015) is only 1.22% of the total agricultural lands in the country.</p> <p>The NIA was requested to provide the Committee with an inventory of irrigated lands that were reclassified/converted to residential or industrial land.</p> <p>The TWG will invite non-government organizations (NGOs), farmers' associations, land developers, financial institutions, and local government units (LGUs) to attend its deliberations on HBs 1396 and 5501.</p>
Agriculture and Food	HB 4904	Rep. Yap (A)	Amending RA 8178, otherwise known as the Agricultural Tarrification Act and PD 4, as amended, or the law creating the National Grains Authority and approving funds therefor	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Jose Panganiban Jr. (Party-List, ANAC-IP), agreed to create a technical working group to study the bills further.</p> <p>The TWG will be co-chaired by the authors of the proposed measures.</p> <p>Rep. Panganiban, Deputy Speaker Sharon Garin (Party-List, AAMBIS-OWA), and Rep. Cecilia Leonila Chavez (Party-List, BUTIL) explained the merits of their respective bills. They underscored the importance of imposing tariff on rice importation in lieu of Quantitative Restrictions (QR), which is due to expire on June 30 in line with the country's trade obligations with the World Trade Organization (WTO).</p> <p>The authors also said that the proceeds from the tariffs on rice imports shall be used for the benefit of local rice producers to help them become more competitive in the global market.</p> <p>Department of Agriculture (DA) Undersecretary Segfredo Serrano said that the President has signed Executive Order 23 series of 2017 that effectively retains the QR on rice for another three years or until a law imposing tariff on rice imports is enacted.</p> <p>Tariff Commissioner Ernesto Albano said he is amenable to the proposal imposing tariffs on rice imports in lieu of QR.</p>
	HB 5023	Rep. Macapagal-Arroyo	Placing safety nets for Filipino rice producers by imposing tariffs in lieu of quantitative restrictions on rice imports, directing tariff collections from rice imports to projects and programs that enhance rice productivity and increase farmers' incomes	
	HBs 5326, 5433 & 5443	Reps. Chavez, Panganiban, and Deputy Speaker Garin	Replacing quantitative import restrictions on rice with tariffs and creating the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund, amending for the purpose RA 8178	

Continuation... Agriculture and Food				<p>On the request of Rep. Edgar Sarmiento (1st District, Samar) for the DA and the Tariff Commission to recommend appropriate tariff rates, Serrano said that the rates should be adjusted depending on the situation, such as during harvest season when there is sufficient rice produce and therefore rice importation should be discouraged through higher tariffs. Serrano noted, however, that imported rice is way cheaper than local rice even with a 35% tariff.</p> <p>Rep. Estrellita Suansing (1st District, Nueva Ecija) recommended a 100% tariff rate on rice imports, as proposed under HB 5023, authored by Rep. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (2nd District, Pampanga).</p> <p>The resource persons and stakeholders present were requested to submit their respective position papers and all other reports and documents required to be used as reference in the TWG deliberations.</p>
Higher and Technical Education	Substitute Bill to HB 4650	Rep. Gonzales (A.)	Renaming the Don Honorio Ventura Technological State University in the Municipality of Bacolor, Province of Pampanga as the Don Honorio Ventura State University (DHVSU), and expanding its curricular offerings, amending for the purpose RA 9382, and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Ann Hofer (2nd District, Zamboanga Sibugay), approved the Substitute Bill to HB 4650, subject to style and amendment, and the corresponding Committee Report.
	Substitute Bill to HB 4844	Rep. Abellanosa	Including the Cebu City extension campus as a satellite campus of Cebu Technological University, amending for the purpose RA 9744, and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the Committee Report on the Substitute Bill to HB 4844.
	HB 1080	Rep. Lanete	Integrating the Dr. Emilio B. Espinosa Sr. Memorial State College of Agriculture and Technology Campus Learning Site in the Municipality of Cawayan, Province of Masbate, as regular campus of the Dr. Emilio B. Espinosa Sr. Memorial State College of Agriculture and Technology, to be known as the Dr. Emilio B. Espinosa Sr. Memorial State College of Agriculture and Technology-Cawayan Campus	The Committee approved the Committee Report on HB 1080.
	HB 5048	Rep. Mercado	Mandating the integration of Maasin City College into the Southern Leyte State University System	The Committee approved the Committee Report on HB 5048.
	HB 5352	Rep. Vargas	Declaring the 25 th day of August of every year as the National Tech-Voc Day	The Committee approved HB 5352 subject to style and amendment, and the corresponding Committee Report.
	HB 5456	Rep. Zarate	Recognizing the observance of July 25 of every year as the National Campus Press Freedom Day	The Committee approved HB 5456 and the corresponding Committee Report.
	Substitute Resolution to HRs 965 & 972	Deputy Speaker Abueg	Congratulating and commending the Palawan State University School of Law for garnering a 100% passing rate in the 2016 Philippine Bar Examinations	The Committee approved the Committee Report on the Substitute Resolution to HRs 965 and 972, subject to style and amendment.

Continuation... Higher and Technical Education	Substitute Resolution to HRs 968 & 979	Rep. Castelo and Deputy Speaker Garcia	Congratulating and commending University of San Carlos in Cebu City, its new lawyers and bar topnotchers in the 2016 Philippine Bar Examinations	The Committee approved the Committee Report on the Substitute Resolution to HRs 968 and 979, subject to style and amendment.
	HR 911	Deputy Speaker Garcia	Recommending to the Board of Regents of the Cebu Normal University to establish a campus at the City of Toledo, Province of Cebu	The Committee adopted HR 911, subject to style and amendment, and approved the corresponding Committee Report.
	HR 706	Rep. Manalo	Inquiry into the conditions, rights and privileges of the 11 missing student-cadets undergoing shipboard training who fell victims to the maritime accident suffered by M/V Starlite Atlantic	The Committee terminated its inquiry relative to HR 706. The Committee Report on the results of the inquiry will be prepared later.
	HR 1006	Deputy Speaker Garcia	Recommending to the Board of Regents of the Cebu Technological University to establish a campus at the Municipality of Balamban, Province of Cebu	The Committee adopted HR 1006. The Secretariat was directed to prepare the corresponding Committee Report.
Higher and Technical Education jt. w/ Basic Education and Culture	Substitute Bill to HBs 5366, 5586 & 5600	Reps. Tugna, Escudero, and Hofer	Institutionalizing the Philippine Qualifications Framework (PQF) and establishing the PQF-National Coordinating Council	<p>The Joint Committee, co-presided by Rep. Ann Hofer (2nd District, Zamboanga Sibugay), Chair of the Committee on Higher and Technical Education, and Rep. Ramon "Red" Durano VI (5th District, Cebu), Chair of the Committee on Basic Education and Culture, approved the substitute bill, subject to style and amendment, and the corresponding Committee Report.</p> <p>Representatives from the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), and the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) expressed support for the bill.</p> <p>They said that the proposed law aims to make the Filipino workers' competencies and skills at par with international standards, and address the job-skills mismatch in the country.</p> <p>Rep. Salvador Belaro Jr. (Party-List, 1-ANG EDUKASYON) asked CHED about the implementation of Executive Order 83 series of 2012 which institutionalizes the Philippine Qualifications Framework (PQF).</p> <p>Dr. Maria Cynthia Rose Bautista, a former CHED Commissioner who now acts as head of the PQF technical working group (TWG), said that the PQF has not been established yet, explaining that the formulation of PQF entails a long and tedious process. She, however, assured the Committee that the TWG is now working on it and will eventually submit the draft to Congress.</p> <p>The TWG on PQF is composed of representatives from CHED, TESDA, DOLE, PRC, and the Department of Education (DepEd).</p>

Continuation... Higher and Technical Education jt. w/ Basic Education and Culture				Based on the bill, PQF is a “national policy which describes the levels of educational qualifications and sets the standards for qualification outcomes. It is a quality assured national system for the development, recognition and award of qualifications based on standards of knowledge, skills and values acquired in different ways and methods by learners and workers of certain country.”
	HB 5454	Rep. Zarate	Recognizing the observance of November 17 of every year as the International Students' Day	The Joint Committee approved HB 5454 and the corresponding Committee Report.
Justice	Impeach- ment Complaint	Rep. Alejano	Verified complaint for impeachment of President Rodrigo Duterte	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Reynaldo Umali (2nd District, Oriental Mindoro), approved the Committee Report, which recommended the adoption of the formal resolution dismissing the impeachment complaint against President Duterte.
Public Order and Safety	HR 763	Rep. Acop	Inquiry into the manifest breakdown of discipline in the Philippine National Police (PNP) in the light of the recent high-profile criminal incidents allegedly involving officers and members of the organization	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Romeo Acop (2nd District, Antipolo City), will deliberate further on the issues raised in HR 763 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Police Superintendent Maria Leonora Camarao, chief of the Philippine National Police's (PNP) Discipline, Law and Order Division, discussed the performance monitoring and evaluation system adopted by the PNP in determining the effectiveness of its programs, policies and procedures, the accomplishments of its units, and compliance with rules.</p> <p>Camarao also gave an overview of the PNP's 2030 roadmap dubbed as “Peace and Order Agenda for Transformation and Upholding of the Rule of Law (PATROL) Plan 2030.” The roadmap provides the strategic direction towards attaining the PNP's vision of making itself “a highly capable, effective and credible police service by 2030.”</p> <p>National Police Commission's (NAPOLCOM) Legal Affairs Service Acting Chief Chito Noel Bustonera presented NAPOLCOM's “Revised Rules of Procedure Before the Administrative Disciplinary Authorities and the PNP Internal Affairs Service” based on Memorandum Circular 2016-002. The revised rules of procedure intends to expedite the disposition of administrative cases filed against PNP officers and men by prescribing the period within which to resolve a case.</p> <p>These briefings were made in connection with the Committee's call for a review of the PNP's recruitment and training programs and disciplinary mechanisms with the objective of re-instilling a strong sense of discipline within the organization.</p> <p>Rep. Acop, along with Rep. Amado Espino Jr. (5th District, Pangasinan), stressed that high</p>

<p>Continuation... Public Order and Safety</p>				<p>ranking PNP officials who are involved in criminal activities do not only “taint the badge” but may serve as bad influence to the rank and file members of the police force.</p> <p>PNP Deputy Director General for Operations Ramon Apolinario admitted that the PNP’s disciplinary mechanisms need to be improved.</p> <p>Asked by Rep. Jennifer Austria Barzaga (4th District, Cavite) about the status of police officers with pending administrative or criminal case, Apolinario said that they remain in active service until found guilty. However, the PNP Chief has the prerogative to place a police officer accused of wrongdoing or crime under restrictive custody, in which case, he is required to surrender his badge and service firearm.</p> <p>On the power of local chief executives to choose PNP officials who will head the police force in their respective localities, granted under RA 6975 or the Department of the Interior and Local Government Act of 1990, Apolinario commented that he would prefer that the assignment of police officers be free from political intervention or influence.</p> <p>The Secretariat was directed to send another invitation to NAPOLCOM Vice Chair Rogelio Casurao to attend the next meeting of the Committee and to ask him to explain in writing why he failed to attend the Committee’s previous hearings.</p>
<p>Ways and Means</p>	<p>HB 4839</p>	<p>Deputy Speaker Garin</p>	<p>Amending Sections 141, 142 and 143 of the National Internal Revenue Code (NIRC) of 1997, increasing and restructuring the excise tax rates on alcohol</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Quirino Rep. Dakila Carlo Cua, will deliberate further on HB 4839 in its next meeting.</p> <p>The Committee Secretariat was directed to draft a Substitute Bill to HB 4839 for discussion in the next meeting of the Committee.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Sharon Garin (Party-List, AAMBIS-OWA), author of HB 4839, underscored the importance of increasing the tax imposed on alcoholic beverages to generate more revenues for the government.</p> <p>Representatives from the Department of Finance (DOF), Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), National Tax Research Center (NTRC), and Asia Brewery said that they prefer the unitary tax system on all alcoholic beverages instead of the two-tier tax structure being proposed under the bill.</p> <p>According to NTRC Executive Director Trinidad Rodriguez, a single tax rate, as prescribed in RA 10351 or the Sin Tax Reform Law, simplifies the tax administration on alcoholic beverages. Rodriguez added that the imposition of a unitary tax system is in line with the best practices in excise taxation</p>

Continuation... Ways and Means				<p>which ensures a level playing field for all manufacturers of alcoholic beverages.</p> <p>Noting that the bulk of the excise tax collection comes from tobacco, Rep. Cua asked if there is a study on possible leakages in the collection of excise tax on alcoholic beverages.</p> <p>BIR Deputy Commissioner Nestor Valeroso explained that the monitoring of the payment of excise taxes on tobacco products is done through the Internal Revenue Stamps Integrated System (IRSIS), which requires tax stamps to be affixed to all cigarette packs as proof of tax payment.</p> <p>However, in the case of alcoholic beverages, Valeroso said only imported liquors and wines are required to use tax stamps. For locally-manufactured alcoholic beverages, BIR revenue officers are assigned to specific manufacturers or producers of alcoholic beverages to monitor the volume of production to serve as basis for tax collection.</p> <p>Doubtful of the effectiveness of BIR's existing monitoring system on tobacco and alcohol excise tax collection, the Committee agreed to review the implementation of RA 10351.</p> <p>The DOF, BIR, NTRC and the alcohol industry were requested to submit pertinent studies on the impact of the proposed tax increase on the alcoholic beverage industry before the Committee's next meeting.</p>
--------------------------------------	--	--	--	---

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETINGS				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Energy (Technical Working Group)	Draft Substitute Bill to HBs 3353, 4408 & 5167	Rep. Uybarreta and Deputy Speaker Singson	Institutionalizing the Electric Cooperatives Emergency and Resiliency Fund and providing funds therefor	<p>The technical working group ((TWG), chaired by Rep. Carlos Roman Uybarreta (Party-List, 1-CARE), approved the draft substitute bill with amendments.</p> <p>The bill will be presented to the mother Committee for its consideration and approval.</p> <p>The TWG agreed that the initial amount needed to implement the proposed law shall be sourced from the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (NDRRMC) Fund. The initial proposal of tapping the Malampaya Fund as a source of fund for the electric cooperatives was no longer pursued as the TWG heeded the suggestion of the Committee on Appropriations against doing so because it will require a certification from the Bureau of Treasury (BTr) which is a tedious and long process.</p> <p>The TWG also agreed that the proposed</p>

Continuation... Energy (Technical Working Group)				<p>Electric Cooperatives Emergency and Resiliency Fund should be established as a regular fund instead of a revolving fund.</p> <p>Representatives from the BTr and the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) suggested that the proposed Fund should be under the modified disbursement scheme (MDS), which is being utilized by almost all government agencies. Using the MDS, disbursements of national government agencies chargeable against the Treasury are made through authorized servicing banks, such as the Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP).</p>
Social Services (Technical Working Group)	Substitute Bill to HBs 1584, 1586, 1916, 2396, 4865 & 5058	Reps. Vargas, Violago, Sy- Alvarado, Laogan, and Aglipay-Villar	Granting additional privileges to persons with disability, amending for the purpose RA 7277, as amended, otherwise known as the Magna Carta for Persons with Disability, and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Jose Antonio "Kuya Jonathan" Sy-Alvarado (1st District, Bulacan), approved the substitute bill subject to style and amendments.</p> <p>The substitute bill will be submitted to the mother Committee for its consideration and approval.</p> <p>Among the amendments agreed upon are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt the definition of the term "assistive devices and technologies" as used by the World Health Organization (WHO) (Sec. 1); • Mandate the government and private corporations to reserve at least two percent of all positions for persons with disability (PWD) (Sec. 2); • Designate the concerned local government unit (LGU) as the approving authority for requests to hire non-PWD applicants to positions reserved for PWDs in the private sector if there are no qualified PWD applicants after 30 days from the mandatory publication (Sec. 3); and • Include the Civil Service Commission (CSC) as one of the agencies to promulgate the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) (Sec. 6).
	HB 3160	Rep. Tambunting	Establishing a credit assistance program for PWDs	The Committee will deliberate further on HB 3160 in its next meeting.

JOINT CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING

COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Joint Congressional Oversight Committee on the National Health Insurance Program	Review on the implementation of the National Health Insurance Program (NHIP) under RA 10606, otherwise known as the National Health Insurance Act of 2013	The Joint Congressional Oversight Committee, co-chaired by Rep. Angelina "Helen" Tan, M.D. (4th District, Quezon), Chair of the House Committee on Health, and Senator Joseph Victor Ejercito, Chair of the Senate Committee on Health and Demography, listened to the presentations of the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) and the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) on the status of implementation of the NHIP.

<p>Continuation... Joint Congressional Oversight Committee on the National Health Insurance Program</p>		<p>Under RA 10606 or the National Health Insurance Act of 2013, the Joint Congressional Oversight Committee is mandated to conduct a regular review of the NHIP which is being implemented by PhilHealth. The law also provides that NEDA, in coordination with the National Statistics Office (now Philippine Statistics Authority) and the National Institute of Health of the University of the Philippines (UP), shall undertake studies to validate the accomplishments of the Program and submit these studies to the Joint Congressional Oversight Committee.</p> <p>PhilHealth Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Ruben John Basa presented the problems encountered by PhilHealth in the implementation of the NHIP as well as its recommendations to resolve them.</p> <p>On the other hand, NEDA Undersecretary Rosemarie Edillon presented NEDA's assessment of PhilHealth's corporate performance and the utilization of PhilHealth funds, and the result of its validation studies on PhilHealth's membership coverage. NEDA also recommended measures to further improve the performance of PhilHealth, particularly on its implementation of the NHIP.</p> <p>Also present during the joint congressional committee meeting were the following: On the part of the House, Reps. Cheryl Deloso-Montalla (2nd District, Zambales), Arlene Arcillas (1st District, Laguna) and Anna Marie Villaraza-Suarez (Party-List, ALONA); On the part of the Senate, Senate Majority Leader Vicente Sotto III and Senators Risa Hontiveros and Maria Lourdes "Nancy" Binay.</p>
---	--	--

AGENCY BRIEFING		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Ways and Means	Briefing by Dr. Ian Ralby on the relevance of fuel marking as the most viable solution to combatting oil theft and illicit fuel trade or fuel smuggling	<p>The Committee, chaired by Quirino Rep. Dakila Carlo Cua, listened to the briefing conducted by Dr. Ian Ralby on the relevance of fuel marking as the most viable solution to combatting fuel theft and illicit fuel trade or fuel smuggling.</p> <p>Rep. Cua said that the purpose of the briefing is to identify and address the problem on the proliferation of illicit fuel trade or fuel smuggling in the local oil industry.</p> <p>Dr. Ian Ralby is a recognized expert in international law, maritime security, and the interdiction of transnational crime. He is the founder and chief executive officer (CEO) of I.R. Consilium LLC and an expert on downstream oil theft/illicit fuel trade.</p> <p>In his presentation, Ralby said that fuel theft has proliferated and remained unabated in most parts of the world either because of lack of awareness or lack of political will. He mentioned that the illicit downstream hydrocarbon activity, which is a form of fuel theft, is one of the largest criminal activities in the world that has not been largely scrutinized.</p> <p>According to Ralby, a 10-year study on fuel theft revealed that it is increasingly tied with drug trafficking, weapons smuggling, human trafficking, terrorism, and other highly organized crimes.</p> <p>Another form of fuel theft, Ralby said, is adulteration, which is a process whereby kerosene, which is cheap, is used as an additive to diesel fuel by as much as 50% but sold at regular diesel price thereby doubling the profits of unscrupulous traders. Adulterated</p>

<p>Continuation... Ways and Means</p>		<p>fuel mixture proves to be destructive in many equipment, including automobiles; increases carbon emissions; and translates to foregone revenues for the government, Ralby said.</p> <p>Ralby believes that fuel theft can be addressed through “fuel marking,” which is done by using dye as a “signature” in fuels. Citing Uganda as an example, he said fuel marking in this country has significantly reduced adulteration to only 1% from 29%.</p> <p>Some countries in Eastern Europe, however, now use “molecular fuel marking” which is a more sophisticated method than using dye, as notorious groups found a way of countering the dye method, Ralby disclosed.</p> <p>Ralby lauded the Philippine government's efforts in joining the global campaign against fuel smuggling and adulteration.</p> <p>Department of Finance (DOF) Undersecretary Karl Chua reported that, while revenue collection from excise tax on fuel and value added tax (VAT) amounted to P52.56 billion, the government lost an estimated P27.86 billion in revenues in 2016 alone due to fuel smuggling.</p> <p>Chua informed the Committee that the national government considers fuel marking project as its top priority. He said that the terms of reference for the said project have already been approved by the DOF and the same will be transmitted to the Bureau of Customs (BOC) for its final review. The process of procurement for the needed equipment will commence in June and subsequent awarding of government contract by August 2017, he said.</p> <p>BOC Commissioner Nicanor Faeldon recommended that all fuel depots, numbering to about 10,000 situated in various locations nationwide, should be accredited and supervised by the BOC especially those in the southern part of the country where most of the smuggling of fuel products take place.</p>
---	--	---