

Committee Daily Bulletin

17th Congress
Second Regular Session

A publication of the Committee Affairs Department

Vol. II No. 123
June 21, 2018

COMMITTEE MEETING				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Natural Resources	HR 1706	Rep. Ty	Inquiry into the reported establishment of structures in forest areas, including shorelines in Boracay	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Arnel Ty (Party-List, LPGMA), will deliberate further on the issues raised relative to HR 1706 in its next meeting.</p> <p>In today's meeting, the Committee focused its discussion on the ongoing rehabilitation efforts and other programs being implemented by concerned government agencies in connection with the six-month closure of Boracay Island.</p> <p>Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) Assistant Secretary Joji Aragon said that the Department implements the Boracay Emergency Employment Program (BEEP) which provides integrated and comprehensive package of assistance, such as financial support, employment facilitation, and skills training, to displaced workers in the island. Aragon, however, admitted that in a span of two months, only 24% of the displaced workers have availed themselves of the Program, which is way lower than DOLE's target of 85%.</p> <p>The Committee Members, expressing concern over the low rate of availment of the BEEP which has a P450 million budget, advised DOLE to review its implementing guidelines for the Program.</p> <p>In addition, Aklan Rep. Carlito Marquez and Rep. Jesus Nonato Sacdalan (1st District, North Cotabato) suggested including in the program other workers from allied businesses in nearby areas, like porters and drivers, who may not be working inside the island but have also been affected by the closure.</p> <p>Boracay Island Water Co. Inc. General Manager and Chief Operating Officer Joseph Michael Santos reported that only 51% of the commercial establishments and 5% of the residential homes in Boracay are connected to sewerage treatment plants (STPs). The rest have been discharging untreated wastewater into the sea, which is the reason for the increased coliform levels in the waters around the island.</p> <p>Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Undersecretary Ernesto Adobo Jr. said that the entire island will be connected to the sewerage system</p>

Continuation... Natural Resources				<p>by October 26, the target date for the reopening of Boracay for tourism.</p> <p>The Members of the Committee expressed doubt that the target date for the reopening of Boracay will be met because of the seemingly sluggish implementation of the plans and programs for the rehabilitation of Boracay. They said that the members of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Boracay Rehabilitation must systematically coordinate among themselves as well as with the stakeholders to get things done on time.</p> <p>Rep. Ty, also the author of HR 1706, disclosed that during the Committee's on-site public hearing on June 1, the stakeholders present complained about the absence of a government master plan or comprehensive action plan for the island's rehabilitation.</p> <p>Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Undersecretary Epimaco Densing III gave assurance that the agencies involved are exerting utmost efforts to complete the rehabilitation of Boracay as scheduled. Usec. Adobo admitted that the stakeholders are not properly informed of the status of implementation of the rehabilitation process, thus the perception of a sluggish performance.</p> <p>On the relocation of the informal settlers in Boracay, another DENR Undersecretary, Sherwin Rigor, said that there is an ongoing discussion with concerned agencies to fast-track their relocation to the mainland of Malay, Aklan.</p> <p>Rep. France Castro (Party-List, ACT TEACHERS) said that she received information that the demolition of houses, as a result of the ongoing clearing operations in mangrove forests and wetland areas in Boracay, was undertaken without providing relocation sites for affected residents. Atty. Richard Fabila of the DENR-Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) explained that the said demolition does not require relocation because the structures involved were supposedly boarding houses occupied by non-resident workers of Boracay.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Densing suggested strengthening the implementation of Proclamation 801, series of 1978, which declared certain islands, coves and peninsulas in the Philippines as tourist zones and marine reserves under the administration and control of the Philippine Tourism Authority, now called the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA).</p> <p>The Committee will invite the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) to attend its next meeting to comment on the proposal to declare Boracay Island a land reform area.</p>
---	--	--	--	--