

Committee Daily Bulletin

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COMMITTEE MEETINGS				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Energy	HB 779	Rep. Abayon	Granting all qualified farmers and fishermen discount on petroleum products	<p>The Committee, chaired by Marinduque Rep. Lord Allan Jay Velasco, will deliberate further on HB 779 in its next meeting.</p> <p>The head of the Oil Industry Management Bureau of the Department of Energy (OIMB-DOE), OIC-Director Rino Abad, said that the private petroleum industry players may no longer be able to absorb the cost of granting additional discounts to other parties, in this case farmers and fishermen, in view of the existing discounts they are already giving to senior citizens and persons with disabilities (PWDs) under existing laws and issuances. Abad also mentioned that kerosene and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), on which senior citizens and PWDs are entitled to special discount privileges, are considered basic necessities.</p>
	HR 415	Rep. Zarate	Inquiry into the alleged predatory pricing of oil products in Mindanao	The Committee will deliberate further on the issues raised in HRs 415 and 853 in its next meeting.
	HR 853	Rep. Go (M.)	Inquiry into the alleged disparity and overpricing of fuel prices in Northern Luzon	<p>BAYAN MUNA Party-List Rep. Carlos Isagani Zarate, author of HR 415, sought an inquiry into the oil price drop in Mindanao which may have been due to predatory pricing or oil smuggling.</p> <p>As stated in HR 415, while the average gasoline prices in most regions are around P35.00 or P37.00 per liter, gasoline prices in Mindanao have fallen by as much as P8.00 to P12 per liter to around P30 since the first week of September 2016. It also stated that while the price drop may have been beneficial to the consumers in Mindanao, but it exposes the fact that under the current pricing regime set by the Oil Deregulation Law, the prices of oil are apparently subject to manipulation by the market players.</p> <p>For the same reason, Baguio City Rep. Mark Go, author of HR 853, urged the Committee to investigate the disparity between the pump prices of fuel in Baguio City against the much cheaper prices in Rosario, La Union. Rep. Go said that the oil products in these areas both come from Poro Point, San Fernando, La</p>

Continuation... Energy				<p>Union, which is about the same distance to Baguio City and Rosario.</p> <p>Former Party-List BAYAN MUNA Rep. Neri Colmenares, who said that he filed a similar measure in the House during the 15th Congress, urged Congress to repeal the Oil Deregulation Law (RA 8479) and instead establish a new regulatory framework for the oil industry to address such issues as questionable oil price movements.</p> <p>The Secretariat was directed to invite again the heads of government agencies and private corporations involved in the oil and gas industry to shed light on the issues raised in the resolutions. They will also be asked to explain in writing the reason for their absence in today's meeting.</p>
Games and Amusements	HB 6111	Rep. Enrico Pineda	Rationalizing and consolidating government regulations relating to all games of chance under the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR), Games and Amusements Board (GAB), Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO), and special economic zones, creating for the purpose the Philippine Amusements and Gaming Authority (PAGA)	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Gus Tambunting (2nd District, Parañaque City), will deliberate further on HB 6111 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Tambunting said that the proposed law would limit PAGCOR's powers to being solely a regulator of all gambling activities in the country instead of the existing set-up wherein it wears two hats: as a regulator and at the same time an operator of casinos. The proposed law also requires all gaming and gambling operators to secure a legislative franchise from Congress.</p> <p>Representatives from the four big gaming operators, Solaire Resort and Casino, Resorts World Manila, Okada Manila, and City of Dreams, expressed their opposition to Section 28-B of the bill which provides that all gaming operations which had been licensed by related laws, and without a legislative franchise, shall have a period of one year from the effectivity of the proposed law to secure a legislative franchise, otherwise such operations shall be deemed illegal. They cited the following reasons for their objection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existing license of the gaming operators is valid for 25 years or until 2033. Securing a new license will cause the gaming operators to go through the tedious and lengthy process of securing a license again which also entails a huge cost; • The provision violates Section 10, Article III (Bill of Rights) of the Constitution which states that "no law impairing the obligation of contracts shall be passed;" and • The move to change the contract in the "middle of the game" will receive negative feedback from foreign investors who have already invested their monies in the casinos. <p>Representatives from the Governance</p>

Continuation... Games and Amusements				<p>Commission for Government Owned or Controlled Corporation (GCG) and the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel (OGCC) expressed support for the bills.</p> <p>OGCC Head Rudolf Philip Jurado opined that Section 28-B of the bill does not violate the Constitution, explaining that the license to operate issued to casinos is only a privilege and that the state can exercise its police power to withdraw such privilege anytime.</p> <p>Several Committee Members agreed to review thoroughly the bill in relation to the Constitution's provision on non-impairment of contracts to avoid being questioned in courts and to prevent driving away potential investors.</p> <p>Other issues raised during the meeting were the displacement of almost 11,000 employees of the gaming agencies; huge revenue losses for non-operation of PAGCOR's 14 casinos; effect of abolishing GAB; and viability of turning PCSO into a purely charitable institution.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their respective positions papers on the bill and other documents requested by the Committee Members.</p> <p>The following will be requested to be present in the Committee's next meeting: officials from the Commission on Audit (COA), and former PAGCOR Chairpersons Cristino Naguiat and Efraim Genuino.</p>
Higher and Technical Education	HB 417	Rep. Escudero	Establishing the Forensic Science Institute in the University of the Philippines (UP) System, defining its functions and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Ann Hofer (2nd District, Zamboanga Sibugay), approved HB 417 subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>Rep. Evelina Escudero (1st District, Sorsogon), author of HB 417, enumerated the objectives for the creation of a Forensic Science Institute in UP, namely: to promote research and development in the various fields of forensic science; enhance the competence and capabilities of existing laboratories to prepare them for accreditation; develop a corps of professionals for a career in forensic science; and train and upgrade the technical, scientific and management skills of personnel involved in forensic science to improve the proper administration of justice.</p> <p>UP Vice President for Legal Affairs Hector Danny Uy and UP College of Medicine's Dr. Raquel Fortun expressed support for the bill, citing the limited number of people involved in forensic science.</p> <p>Likewise, Philippine National Police (PNP) Directorate for Human Resource and Doctrine Development (DHRDD) Director PCSupt. Noli Taliño and Deputy Director for Operations PSSupt. Rea Villavicencio said that the PNP</p>

Continuation... Higher and Technical Education				supports any legislation that will redound to its benefit and improvement of its service.
	HB 4410	Rep. Paduano	Mandating the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) to include in its annual approved budget an allocation intended for trainings and programs for the drug dependents that were already rehabilitated	<p>The Committee approved HB 4410 subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>Rep. Peter John Calderon (7th District, Cebu) sponsored the bill on behalf of the author, ABANG LINGKOD Party-List Rep. Joseph Stephen Paduano.</p> <p>Rep. Calderon emphasized that training is vital in rebuilding the values and confidence of drug dependents, thus making them self-reliant, productive and employable.</p> <p>Wilma Roque, officer-in-charge of TESDA's Budget Division, reported that from July 2016 to July 2017, TESDA has already spent P99.43 million for the training of more than 13,000 drug dependents.</p> <p>Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Commissioner Prospero De Vera III disclosed that CHED has allocated P10 million as initial funding for the continuing education of drug dependents at the mega drug treatment and rehabilitation center in Nueva Ecija, being conducted by the Central Luzon State University (CLSU) and the UP Open University.</p>
	HR 1116	Rep. Tambunting	Congratulating and commending the TESDA and its representatives Mr. Joven Hayagan and Mr. Janie Dimacaling for winning in the 1 st China International Skills Competition 2017 (CISC 2017) held in Suzhou and Shanghai, China	The Committee adopted HR 1116 subject to style and amendment.
HB 820	Rep. Batocabe	Requiring state universities and colleges (SUCs) to prepare and implement a land use development and infrastructure plan which include the construction of dormitories for student and housing sites for employees	<p>The Committee agreed to come up with Substitute Bill to HB 820.</p> <p>AKO-BICOL Party-List Rep. Rodel Batocabe, author of HB 820, said that SUCs, most of which own vast tracts of land which remain untapped, should be required to construct dormitories for students and housing sites for employees which will help ensure the student's continued education and will serve as additional incentive for the faculty and staff to provide better quality of service.</p> <p>With the passage of RA 10931 or the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act, Rep. Hofer said that the number of enrollees in SUCs are expected to increase which may result in a shortage of board and lodging facilities.</p> <p>Rep. Escudero proposed that SUCs be required to submit an annual report to the Committee and to its Senate counterpart on the implementation of their land use, development and infrastructure plan. They should also be asked to provide data on the existing number of student dormitories in their</p>	

Continuation... Higher and Technical Education				<p>campus and their capacity, as well as the housing sites for their employees.</p> <p>Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges (PASUC) Deputy Executive Director Gracias Cunanan said that her association has already sent out survey forms to the different SUCs to gather data on student dormitories and employees' housing provisions.</p> <p>PASUC was requested to consolidate and process the survey results and submit the same to the Committee.</p>
	HB 4254	Rep. Belaro	Providing for an annual research competition among colleges and universities	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on HB 4254 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Jonas Cortes (6th District, Cebu) sponsored the bill on behalf of the author, Rep. Salvador Belaro (Party-List, 1-ANG EDUKASYON).</p> <p>Rep. Cortes underscored the need to promote a research culture among the local academic institutions in order to fast-track the country's developmental goals and objectives. He said one way to attain this is through the holding of an annual research competition among colleges and universities.</p>
Reforestation (Special Committee)	HR 382	Rep. Yu	Inquiry into the alleged irregularities and wrong policies in the implementation of the National Greening Program (NGP) with the end in view of assessing the effectivity of the program	<p>The Committee, chaired Rep. Noel Villanueva (3rd District, Tarlac), will deliberate further on the issues raised in HR 382 in its next meeting.</p> <p>The NGP, implemented by virtue of Executive Order (EO) 26 issued on February 24, 2011, is a multi-billion-peso project which aims to grow 1.5 billion trees in 1.5 million hectares nationwide within a period of six years or from 2011 to 2016. Before the program expired, EO 193 was issued in November 2015 expanding the coverage of the NGP and extending its implementation from 2016 to 2028. The program is anchored on the government's goal of reducing poverty, ensuring food security, conserving the environment and biodiversity, and enhancing climate change mitigation and adaptation.</p> <p>Rep. Joseph Stephen Paduano (Party-List, ABANG LINGKOD) expressed doubt on claims that the program was a success when in fact 85% of what was planted were high value crops instead of trees. He also pointed out that the success of reforestation projects cannot be determined after just two or three years but will take a longer period of time. He believes that the NGP can be sustained through the grant of incentives and involvement of the local community.</p> <p>Likewise, Reps. Vicente "Ching" Veloso (3rd District, Leyte) and Abdullah Dimaporo (2nd District, Lanao del Norte) emphasized the importance of involving the members of the</p>

Continuation... Reforestation (Special Committee)				<p>local community and coordinating with the local government units (LGUs) to ensure the success of the program. They also urged agencies involved to give priority to watershed areas in the implementation of the NGP.</p> <p>Professor Perry Ong of the Institute of Biology of the University of the Philippines (UP) Diliman commented that one of the issues confronting the implementation of the NGP was the use of species that were not suited to local climate. Ong recommended the use of endemic species, citing the more than 3,000 species which can be used under the program.</p> <p>Replying to the query of Reps. Julieta Cortuna (Party-List, A TEACHER) and Arnolfo "Arnie" Teves Jr. (3rd District, Negros Oriental) on anomalies in the implementation of the program, Director Ricardo Calderon of the Forest Management Bureau (FMB), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), admitted that there had been such anomalies and that appropriate charges have already been filed against erring DENR officials.</p> <p>Upon the recommendation of the Members of the Committee present, Rep. Villanueva urged the DENR to review the NGP in order to identify the loopholes in its implementation and determine the needed reform measures considering the huge amount of money involved, and to submit a revised NGP framework.</p> <p>The FMB was requested to submit to the Committee a report on the status of implementation of the NGP and on the status of cases filed against erring DENR officials.</p>
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TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Poverty Alleviation (Technical Working Group)	HB 4700	Rep. Garcia (J.E.)	Institutionalizing community-based monitoring system in all barangays, appropriating funds therefor	The technical working group (TWG), presided by Committee Secretary Ma. Lourdes Sagmit-Mendoza, will deliberate further on the bills.
	HB 5588	Rep. Zubiri	Establishing a nationwide geo-tagging and poverty tracking system and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The members of the TWG agreed on the value of consolidating the existing data collection systems being used by various government agencies.</p> <p>They also agreed that the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) will continue collecting poverty-related data up to the provincial level, while the local government units (LGUs) will undertake lower level data collection through their respective Community-Based Monitoring Systems (CBMS) that have a geo-tagging feature.</p>

Continuation... Poverty Alleviation (Technical Working Group)				<p>The PSA shall be the repository of collected data, but the TWG also agreed that it may later be replaced by the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) in the event that the PSA's leadership will not waive its confidentiality policy which prevents it from disclosing some information regarding the survey respondents.</p> <p>Aside from the PSA and DICT, the following agencies will craft the proposed law's implementing rules and regulations (IRR): Departments of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Agriculture (DA), Agrarian Reform (DAR), and Budget and Management (DBM), National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC), and National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA). The Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP) shall also be involved in this undertaking.</p> <p>The Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) will submit its study on the budget requirement of the proposed law.</p> <p>Mendoza asked the PSA to submit its position paper as soon as possible.</p>
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AGENCY BRIEFING		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Metro Manila Development	Update by the Department of Transportation (DOTr) on the progress of railway projects in Metro Manila	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Winston "Winnie" Castelo (2nd District, Quezon City), listened to the briefing conducted by the DOTr on the progress of railway projects in Metro Manila, which are part of the "Build Build Build" program of the present administration.</p> <p>Rep. Castelo emphasized the importance of conducting extensive consultations with stakeholders to ensure smooth implementation of these railway projects. Reps. Rosenda Ann Ocampo (6th District, Manila), Manuel Luis Lopez (1st District, Manila), and Jesulito Manalo (Party-List, ANGKLA) fully agreed with the Committee Chair.</p> <p>DOTr Undersecretary for Rail and Toll Roads Cesar Chavez gave a status report on the following railway projects in Metro Manila:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Line 1 (Common Station to Niog) – ongoing mobilization for pre-construction works, station improvements, and relocation of Meralco utilities; • For Line 2 (Pier 4 to Masinag) – completed viaduct, two stations for the East extension to be completed by June 2019, and ongoing detailed engineering design (DED) and civil works for the West Extension to be completed by 2021; • For Line 3 (Common Station to Edsa Taft) – procurement of replacement tracks and upgrading of power supply and ancillary system necessary for capacity expansion by November 2017; • Line 7 (San Jose Del Monte to Common Station) – ongoing construction to be completed by 2019, and acquisition of right-of-way (ROW) for depot and intermodal facilities; • PNR North 1 (Manila to Malolos) – completed DED, initial fencing and earthworks to begin by fourth quarter of 2017,

<p>Continuation... Metro Manila Development</p>		<p>and acquisition of ROW for depot site and relocation of informal settler families (ISFs);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PNR North 2 (Malolos to Clark) – survey works and DED to begin by November 2017; • PNR South Commuter (Manila to Los Baños) – ongoing resettlement of ISFs, and survey works and DED to begin by November 2017; and • Mega Manila Subway – approved by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Board, construction to commence in the fourth quarter of 2018. <p>Asked by Minority Leader Danilo Suarez (3rd District, Quezon) on the plan of the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) to enhance the number coding scheme to effectively address traffic, MMDA's Traffic Discipline Office Director Neomie Recio responded that MMDA is still in the process of presenting proposals to the city mayors on ways to improve traffic in Metro Manila including an enhanced number coding scheme.</p> <p>On the query of Malabon City Rep. Federico "Ricky" Sandoval II on the project cost of the Mega Manila Subway, DOTr Assistant Secretary for Railways Timothy John Batan said that the project is a joint undertaking with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the country's counterpart fund, as approved by the NEDA Board, is P355 million.</p> <p>On the need for LGUs and other stakeholders to be informed and consulted about the implementation of railway projects, Chavez said that the DOTr has been doing this all along. He added that a two-day workshop is also underway to explain the concept, alignment and significance of the railway projects.</p> <p>On the recommendation of Rep. Bayani Fernando (1st District, Marikina City) to give priority to the establishment of a railway system in the eastern part of Metro Manila, Chavez said the DOTr is looking into the matter and will hold a separate consultation exclusively for this purpose.</p> <p>The DOTr was requested to submit to the Committee a copy of the contracts and memorandum of agreements (MOA) entered into by the DOTr in relation to the railway projects.</p>
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