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TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING

| COMMITTEE | MEASURES | | SUBJECT MATTER | ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION |
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| | NO. | PRINCIPAL AUTHOR | | |
| Natural Resources (Technical Working Group) | HB 4208 | Rep. Fernando | Authorizing the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) to cut, ball, transfer, dispose or plant trees when implementing national or local infrastructure projects | <p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Arnel Ty (Party-List, LPGMA), reconsidered its previous approval of HB 4208 to give way to additional amendments proposed by the resource persons.</p> <p>Thereafter, the TWG agreed to draft a substitute bill which will be presented to the mother Committee for the latter's consideration and approval.</p> <p>The following were the recommendations of the resource persons that were considered by the TWG:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exempt the DPWH from securing a permit to cut down trees along national highways to give way to road widening projects and for the safety of motorists; • Specify that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is the agency responsible for the proper accounting and disposal of trees that were cut; and • Allow the DENR to determine what kind of seedlings will be planted in a particular location as replacement for the cut trees. <p>Representatives from the DPWH and DENR expressed their support for the bills.</p> <p>Rosemarie del Rosario, division chief of DPWH's Environmental and Social Safeguard Division (ESSD), said that the proposed law will speed up the implementation of infrastructure projects.</p> <p>Adrian de Luna, forest management specialist at the Forest Management Bureau (FMB) of the DENR, disclosed that the cutting of trees in public lands has already been deregulated. On the other hand, De Luna explained that the DPWH still has to secure clearance from the DENR if it intends to cut trees in forest lands for any purpose, including the construction of national roads.</p> <p>The DPWH was requested to submit a copy of its national road plan.</p> |

| FORUM | | |
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| COMMITTEE | SUBJECT MATTER | DISCUSSIONS |
| People's Participation | Forum on the "Federalism 101: The Philippine Context" | <p>The Committee, in partnership with the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), conducted a forum entitled "Federalism 101: The Philippine Context" on October 18, 2017 at the House of Representatives.</p> <p>San Jose del Monte City Rep. Florida "Rida" Robes, the Committee Vice Chair, said that the purpose of this forum was to extend the Committee's support to the President's call for a "genuine change."</p> <p>Atty. Vincent Noel Aureus of the Office of the Speaker welcomed the resource speakers and guests to the forum on behalf of Speaker Pantaleon "Bebot" Alvarez (1st District, Davao del Norte). He said that it is about time that the government's structure be re-examined to address the continuing disparity and inequality in wealth between highly urbanized cities and rural or far-flung provinces. Federalism, he said, would introduce a balanced sharing of power between the federal and regional governments and untie the current tangled system of resource allocation in the country and bring about a responsive delivery of services to the people.</p> <p>DILG Assistant Secretary Epimaco Densing III emphasized that the main objective of federalism is to uplift the lives of every Filipino by addressing the too much centralized system of budget distribution where Manila and nearby cities have the biggest share, to the detriment of other localities. One of the major features of federalism that Densing mentioned were the sharing of revenues, wherein the taxes collected by regional governments shall be retained, remitting only 20% to the federal government.</p> <p>Citing the DILG's efforts at informing the public about the concept of federalism, Densing said that the Department has now achieved a 33% awareness rate, meaning one third of the country's population are now aware of what federalism is.</p> <p>Political scientist Ramon Casiple, member of the Federalism Study Group of the PDP-Laban Federalism Institute, presented the salient features of the Institute's model of federalism, which include a revenue sharing scheme of 60% for the regional/local governments and 40% for the federal government.</p> <p>Casiple emphasized that the Philippine federalism model is a "holding together" type which would maintain national sovereignty despite activating the region's participation in national decision making. He stressed that the key to the success of federalism is "fiscal federalism" wherein taxes collected are shared by the federal, regional and local governments. He quoted former Senator Aquilino "Nene" Pimentel in explaining that federalism is the natural next step after local autonomy.</p> <p>An open forum followed after the presentations.</p> <p>In her closing remarks, Rep. Robes expressed her gratitude to the resource persons and guests who participated in the forum and assured them that the Committee supports the move to have a new Constitution that is reflective of the needs of the citizenry and the future generation.</p> |

Comments, suggestions and requests for copies may be sent to the Committee Publication Staff, Committee Management Support Service I, 3rd Floor, Ramon V. Mitra, Jr. Bldg., Batasan Complex, Constitution Hills, Quezon City. Tel. Nos. 9326118; 9315001 local 7122. Also available at <http://www.congress.gov.ph>