

# Committee Daily Bulletin

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COMMITTEE MEETING				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
People's Participation	Draft Substitute Bill to HBs 8405 & 8773	Reps. Alejano and Villafuerte	Establishing a framework for citizens participation in legislation and rule-making through the use of information and communications technology platforms	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Maria Valentina Plaza (1<sup>st</sup> District, Agusan del Sur), approved the Substitute Bill to HBs 8405 and 8773 subject to style.</p> <p>The proposed Crowdsourcing Act seeks to allow the citizens and the public at large to participate in the legislative process wherever they are through the use of internet or mobile platforms.</p> <p>The term "crowdsourcing," as defined in the substitute bill, refers to the practice of engaging the individuals or a group for a common goal through the use of new technologies, social media and the internet.</p>

OVERSIGHT MEETINGS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Government Enterprises and Privatization	Discussion on the status of the Government Service Insurance System's (GSIS) investments and all other sources of GSIS income	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Jesus Nonato Sacdalan (1<sup>st</sup> District, North Cotabato), discussed with the GSIS the latter's investments and other sources of income.</p> <p>GSIS Senior Vice President Mario Angay reported that as of April 30, 2019, the GSIS' total assets amount to P1.21 trillion, out of which, P1.17 trillion comprises GSIS' investment assets, distributed as follows: fixed income, P467.06 billion; equities, P266.41 billion; loans to members, P312.49 billion; real estate, P99.21 billion; and cash, P22.53 billion.</p> <p>Mr. Angay also said that there has been a slight decline in the GSIS' stock investments from 2014 to 2018 which could be attributed to the decline in investment interest rates. However, he said GSIS' equity investments performed very well in the stock market during the first four months of 2019, which resulted to a 3.77% return of its investment.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Atty. Jesus Santos, counsel for the Confederation of Government Employees Organizations Inc. (COGEO) and former trustee of the GSIS, questioned the huge investment made by the previous board of the GSIS, then headed by Roberto Vergara, particularly on the local stock market and its sale of the Philcomcen property. He said the former GSIS board refused to furnish COGEO with copies of pertinent documents on the matter because they are strictly and highly confidential in nature.</p>

<p>Continuation... Government Enterprises and Privatization</p>		<p>GSIS President and General Manager Jesus Clint Aranas said that he is inclined to leave the auditing of the investments made by the previous GSIS Board to the Commission on Audit (COA). He, however, said that he really cannot question the wisdom of the investments made by the previous GSIS Board, precisely because of the confidential nature of business secrets. But, if public interest so requires, he expressed willingness to provide information unless it will affect the market. Nevertheless, Aranas said that the GSIS is closely monitoring the foreign investments made by GSIS' previous administration which continue to earn money.</p> <p>Former President and now House Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Pampanga) advised the GSIS to observe the good practices of private corporations in giving annual and periodic progress reports to their shareholders, and to regularly inform its members of GSIS' investments and programs. She said that such efforts will assure GSIS members that the gains from their contributions will eventually redound to their benefit.</p>
<p>Natural Resources</p>	<p>Discussion with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on the alleged granting of permits by the DENR to cut 26,000 trees in the Angat Watershed</p>	<p>The Committee meeting, presided over by its Vice Chair, Rep. Francisco Jose "Bingo" Matugas II (1<sup>st</sup> District, Surigao del Norte), will continue its discussion on the alleged illegal logging activities in Angat Watershed in its next meeting.</p> <p>To address the issue of illegal logging that has been reported in connection with the Angat Watershed rehabilitation program, the Committee conducted an oversight meeting to request the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to shed light on the matter. House Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Pampanga) also asked to be clarified on the alleged granting of permits by the DENR to cut 26,000 trees in the Angat Watershed which were stored in the compound of Hanjin Heavy Industries Corporation at San Lorenzo Norzagaray, Bulacan.</p> <p>DENR Region III Assistant Regional Director Arthur Salazar said that the DENR issued two Special Tree Cutting and Earth Baling permits which allowed the cutting of only 3,000 trees. The permits were issued to Angat Hydropower Corporation (AHC) for the Angat Dam and Dyke Rehabilitation Project upon the request of the National Power Corporation Watershed Management Division. He said that the permits underwent the proper processing and that public consultations were conducted by the AHC prior to the cutting of trees.</p> <p>He also informed the body that out of the subject 3,000 trees only 1,040 trees were actually cut and only 230 trees underwent earth baling procedures. On the issue of storing the trees in the compound of Hanjin Heavy Industries Corporation, he admitted that such measure was resorted to, temporarily, as the DENR does not have enough storage space at the moment. He then assured that only the DENR has jurisdiction and authority over the cut trees.</p> <p>Earth baling is the process of moving a tree to another location by digging out the earth and the roots in a circular shape, leaving most of the root system undisturbed and intact. It provides an environment-friendly alternative to cutting down trees.</p> <p>Rep. Matugas inquired on the status of the Angat watershed after the cutting of trees. Director Salazar replied that an assessment of the project will be conducted and committed to submit to the Committee the report at the soonest possible time.</p> <p>The DENR was also requested to submit all permits and clearances issued for the cutting of trees in the Angat Watershed and the list of</p>

Continuation... Natural Resources		departments and officials who approved the permits. DENR officials who approved the permits will also be invited to attend the next Committee meeting.
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<b>AGENCY BRIEFINGS</b>		
<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>SUBJECT MATTER</b>	<b>DISCUSSIONS</b>
Public Accounts	Discussion on the issues surrounding the conduct of the recently-held May 13, 2019 mid-term elections by the Commission on Elections (COMELEC)	<p>The Committee, chaired by Minority Leader Danilo Suarez (3<sup>rd</sup> District, Quezon), discussed with the COMELEC and concerned private organizations issues surrounding the conduct of the May 13, 2019 mid-term elections.</p> <p>Minority Leader Suarez averred that COMELEC's decision to award the procurement of supplies and equipment for the mid-term elections to the lowest bidder has led to the delivery of low quality and defective election supplies. These include the substandard marker that bleeds right through the second-rate paper of the ballot, corrupted 1,665 secure digital (SD) cards, and malfunctioned 961 vote counting machines (VCM). The Minority Leader said the amount of the winning bid is way below the budget for the approved contracts.</p> <p>COMELEC Spokesperson James Jimenez averred that replacements for the corrupted SD cards were readily available during the election day, and asserted that the allegations of irregularity may be baseless. Nevertheless, the COMELEC shall still conduct a forensic investigation to determine the cause of the reported corruption of the SD cards.</p> <p>The issue on the seven-hour glitch or the delay in the transmission of results from the VCMs to the server of media and other interested parties such as the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPRCV) was also raised during the meeting.</p> <p>Jimenez explained that there was actually no seven-hour delay in the canvassing of votes but a mere transmission problem that prevented real-time file transfer protocol, termed as "pushing" of data, from COMELEC's third server, the Transmission Server, to the online or live projections of the PPRCV and the media. However, Jimenez manifested that the other two servers, Canvassing and Central Servers, did not experience any problem throughout the vote canvassing period for national and local positions.</p> <p>Meanwhile, several party-list representatives aired their sentiments against COMELEC's decision to place the names of the party-list at the back of the ballot. According to Rep. Alfredo Garbin Jr. (Party-List, AKO BICOL), out of the 63 million registered voters, only 27 million votes were cast for party-list representative position. This means that many of the parties' constituents have been disenfranchised, Rep. Garbin added.</p> <p>The Committee will again meet on June 3 to continue its discussion on the matter. Representatives from the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) and other COMELEC bidders and providers will be invited to attend the Committee's next meeting.</p>
Public Accounts jt. w/ Games and Amusements	Briefing on the operations of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO)	The Joint Committee, co-chaired by Minority Leader Danilo Suarez (3 <sup>rd</sup> District, Quezon), Chair of the Committee on Public Accounts, and Rep. Gus Tambunting (2 <sup>nd</sup> District, Parañaque City), Chair of the Committee on Games and Amusements, continued its discussion on the operations of the PCSO.

<p><i>Continuation...</i> Public Accounts jt. w/ Games and Amusements</p>		<p>PCSO Legislative Liaison Officer Gay Nadine Alvor apprised the Joint Committee on the PCSO's schedule of bidding activities in relation to the supply of online lottery equipment for lotto operations nationwide.</p> <p>Likewise, Alvor and PCSO's Legal Department Manager Anna Liza Inciong informed the body of the status of the pending case against one of PCSO's authorized small town lottery (STL) agent corporation, Evenchance Gaming Corporation. PCSO filed a case against Evenchance for non-payment of its outstanding presumptive monthly retail receipt (PMRR) due to PCSO amounting to more than P254 million.</p> <p>However, Regional Trial Court (RTC) Branch 213 in Mandaluyong City, where the case is pending, issued a Writ of Preliminary Injunction against PCSO. The Order prevents PCSO from collecting the PMMR due the agency and allows the continuous operation of Evenchance. Inciong said that the PCSO has already filed an appeal against the Order.</p> <p>Rep. Tambunting urged PCSO to withdraw its personnel deployed in the operations of authorized STL agent corporations, including Evenchance, which deliberately avoid payment of their PMRRs.</p>
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