

# Committee Daily Bulletin

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BUDGET BRIEFINGS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Appropriations	<p>Briefing on the proposed FY 2019 budget, plans and programs, and major accomplishments of the following government offices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department of Education (DepEd)</li> </ul>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Karlo Alexei Nograles (1<sup>st</sup> District, Davao City), listened to the presentations on the proposed FY 2019 budget, plans and programs, and major accomplishments of the DepEd and DTI.</p> <p>Committee Vice Chair, Rep. Maria Carmen Zamora (1<sup>st</sup> District, Compostela Valley), sat as the presiding officer during the DepEd's budget briefing.</p> <p>Education Secretary Leonor Briones presented the Department's FY 2019 proposed budget amounting to P528.78 billion, which reflects a 9% decrease from its current year's budget of P580.63 billion.</p> <p>The bulk of the DepEd's proposed 2019 budget will go to DepEd proper, at P527.71 billion; the rest will be distributed to its attached agencies, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Early Childhood Care and Development Council – P531.84 million;</li> <li>National Museum – P376.24 million;</li> <li>Philippine High School for the Arts - P95.71 million;</li> <li>National Book Development Board – P50.77 million; and</li> <li>National Council for Children's Television - P15.63 million.</li> </ul> <p>Dismayed at the P51 billion decrease in the budget of DepEd, several Committee Members asked about the reason behind the said budget cut and how this would affect the DepEd's programs.</p> <p>Briones explained that it was largely because of the Department of Budget and Management's (DBM) policy to shift from obligation-based to cash-based budgeting. Under the new budgeting scheme, the DepEd is given a budget for projects which can be obligated and delivered within the year. With the academic year starting only in May, the DepEd is left with a shorter period to complete its programs and projects compared to other government agencies. Nevertheless, Briones assured the Committee that the DepEd will always do its best to perform its mandate and rise up to the challenge.</p> <p>Baguio City Rep. Mark Go observed that the Department has been slow in filling up vacant positions which leads him to believe that some of these positions might no longer be necessary. He then suggested that the DepEd decrease its allocation for its personnel services (PS) in order to increase its allocations for maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE) and capital outlay (CO).</p> <p>Briones disclosed that the Civil Service Commission (CSC) has recently granted DepEd exemptions to certain requirements which will allow it to expedite the hiring of personnel.</p> <p>The DepEd was requested to submit its guidelines on several of its programs like the Continuing Professional Development (CPD), the special hardship allowance, and the Provident Fund. Likewise, it was also instructed to provide the Committee with a breakdown of its unutilized budget for 2017.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)</li> </ul>	<p>Committee Vice Chair, Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Albay), sat as the presiding officer during the DTI budget briefing.</p>

Continuation... Appropriations		<p>DTI Secretary Ramon Lopez said that under the FY 2019 National Expenditure Program (NEP), the DTI and its attached agencies and corporations will get a total budget of P6.55 billion, which is 30% lower than their 2018 budget of P9.47 billion.</p> <p>The P6.55 billion proposed budget will be distributed as follows: Office of the Secretary (OSEC), P4.52 billion; Board of Investments (BOI), P400 million; Philippine Trade Training Center (PTTC), P104 million; Design Center of the Philippines (DCP), P100 million; Construction Industry Authority of the Philippines (CIAP), P128 million; Aurora Pacific Economic Zone (APECO), P59 million; Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions (CITEM), P244 million; and Small Business Corporation (SB Corp), P1 billion.</p> <p>Rep. Arlene Brosas (Party-List, GABRIELA) inquired about the nature and implementation of the policy on the “suggested retail price” (SRP) for basic commodities and sought an explanation for the spiraling prices of rice.</p> <p>Lopez explained that the DTI determines the suggested retail price of basic necessities and prime commodities that serves as a guide for retailers in pegging the selling prices of their products. When retailers go beyond the SRP, the DTI calls their attention and they usually revert the prices back to the SRP level. On the rice price hikes, Lopez attributes this to the lack of supply but he said the Department of Agriculture (DA) is already attending to this problem.</p> <p>Asked about DTI's action on complaints from airline passengers against certain airlines for not refunding their plane tickets whose flights were cancelled or changed, DTI Undersecretary Ruth Castelo said that such complaints may be filed with the Fair-Trade Enforcement Bureau (FTEB) under the Consumer Protection Group (CPG) of the DTI.</p> <p>Rep. Bernadette Herrera-Dy (Party-List, BAGONG HENERASYON) advised the DTI to be more proactive on cases like this and not wait for complaints to be filed considering that consumer complaints against airlines have been increasing.</p> <p>Upon hearing from Lopez that the DTI recently established seven more <i>negosyo</i> centers in the country and plans to establish at least one per municipality, Rep. Lawrence "Law" Fortun (1<sup>st</sup> District, Agusan del Norte) inquired how the DTI can proceed with this plan under a reduced budget.</p> <p>The DTI was requested to submit to the Committee a detailed list of <i>negosyo</i> centers in the country, per region and per municipality.</p>
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COMMITTEE MEETINGS				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Agriculture and Food	HB 7369	Rep. Sarmiento (C.)	Declaring the Province of Catanduanes as the Abaca Capital of the Philippines	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Jose Panganiban Jr. (Party-List, ANAC-IP), approved HB 7369 subject to style.</p> <p>Catanduanes Rep. Cesar Sarmiento, author of HB 7369, explained that the Province of Catanduanes produces about 92% of the total abaca production in the Bicol Region, and Bicol Region is the top producer of abaca fiber in the Philippines.</p>
	HBs 2038 & 4214	Rep. Sarmiento (C.)	Providing for the establishment of an abaca biotechnology laboratory and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to consolidate the four bills. The Committee Secretary was directed to prepare the reference bill before the meeting of the TWG.

Continuation... Agriculture and Food	HBs 4806 & 6664	Former Rep. Aglipay-Villar and Rep. Villafuerte	Institutionalizing the Philippine Abaca Industry Development Program, providing funds therefor	<p>Rep. Sarmiento was designated as the TWG chair.</p> <p>Philippine Fiber Industry Development Authority (PhilFIDA) Executive Director Kennedy Costales presented the issues and concerns confronting the Philippine abaca industry. He apprised the Committee that a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with industry leaders will be launched in October that would eliminate the practice of an “all-in buying” of abaca and implement instead an abaca trading based on the classification of the fiber.</p> <p>Based on the MOA, the “all-in buying” scheme refers to the practice of buying abaca fibers in a wholesale manner, where there is no classification of fibers as to quality-specifically the color, cleaning, tensile strength, moisture content and length. There is also no prior inspection before abaca fibers are bundled which leads to instances when even foreign matter such as stones and twigs are mixed with the fibers just to add to the weight of the bundles.</p> <p>Costales recommended that farmers be encouraged to organize themselves into cooperatives to strengthen their capacity to produce good quality abaca fiber to be able to demand better prices for their products. In addition, Costales proposed to include a provision in the bill banning the harvesting of abaca “bakkak” (dried abaca leaf sheaths) to prevent the spread of abaca diseases and the decimation of abaca as a source of fiber.</p> <p>Undersecretary Evelyn Laviña of the Department of Agriculture (DA) and Lumen Aloit, supervising budget and management specialist of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) expressed support for the bills.</p> <p>The stakeholders were requested to submit their respective position papers for the TWG’s consideration.</p>
Appropriations	Substitute Bill to HBs 25, 1691, 2977, 3651, 4369, 4785 & 4878	Reps. Abaya, Rodriguez (M.), Yu, Aumentado, Salceda, Speaker Macapagal- Arroyo, and Rep. Salo	Providing for a comprehensive nuclear regulatory framework, creating for the purpose, the Philippine Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Karlo Alexei Nograles (1 <sup>st</sup> District, Davao City), approved the substitute bill with amendments.
	Substitute Bill to HBs 268, 716, 897, 1578, 1851, 1964, 2579, 2798, 3089, 3365, 3441, 3497, 3500, 4707, 5378, 5387,	Reps. Roman, Vargas, Tan (A.), Suansing (E.), Rodriguez (M.), Aragones, Castelo, Escudero, Alejano, Bolilia, Gatchalian,	Institutionalizing a national integrated cancer control program and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the substitute bill with amendments.

Continuation... Appropriations	5763, 6153, 6210, 6280 & 6299, HR 786, and Privilege Speech 195	Nogralas (K.A.), Roa-Puno, Herrera-Dy, and Lanete		
	Substitute Bill to HBs 516 & 6955	Reps. Herrera-Dy and Silverio	Promoting positive and non-violent discipline and protecting children from physical, humiliating or degrading acts as a form of punishment and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the Substitute Bill to HBs 516 and 6955.
	Substitute Bill to HB 2886	Speaker Macapagal-Arroyo	Strengthening the primary healthcare system in cultural and indigenous communities by institutionalizing for the purpose the training and employment of indigenous peoples health workers (IPHWs), and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the Substitute Bill to HB 2886.
	Substitute Bill to HBs 3637, 4275, 4367 & 4623	Reps. Aumentado, Nieto, Salceda, and Rodriguez (M.)	Establishing the Philippine space development and utilization policy and creating the Philippine Space Agency (PhilSA), defining the purpose and scope of its activities and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the substitute bill with amendments.
	Substitute Bill to HBs 4700 & 5588	Reps. Garcia (J.E.) and Zubiri	Establishing a consolidated poverty data collection system, appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the substitute bill with amendment.
	Substitute Bill to HBs 4750 & 7221	Reps. Alejano and Yu	Regulating the practice of occupational therapy in the Philippines, providing funds therefor	The Committee approved the Substitute Bill to HBs 4750 and 7221.
	Substitute Bill to HB 4892 & HR 384	Rep. Batocabe	Establishing the energy virtual one stop shop for the purpose of streamlining the permitting process of energy projects	The Committee approved the substitute bill with amendment.
	Substitute Bill to HBs 5381, 5714, 5839 & 6226	Rep. Yap (V.), Deputy Speaker Hernandez, Reps. Umali and Villafuerte	Preventing the use of motorcycles in the commission of crimes through bigger number plates and identification marks	The Committee approved the substitute bill with amendment.
	Substitute Bill to HBs 6593, 1103, 1265, 1911, 5458, 6837, 6959 & 7168	Reps. Alvarez (P.), Castelo, Biazon, Violago, Alejano, Rodriguez (M.), Sy-Alvarado, and Romero	Restructuring the Philippine national railway system, creating for the purpose the Philippine National Railway Authority, Luzon Railway Corporation, Visayas Railway Corporation, and Mindanao Railway Corporation, appropriating funds therefor, providing penalties for violation thereof, and repealing RA 4156 or the Charter of the Philippine National Railways (PNR), as amended, and EO 603 dated July 12, 1980, creating the Light Rail Transit Authority, as amended	The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to fine-tune some of the provisions of the substitute bill.  Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda (2 <sup>nd</sup> District, Albay) was designated to chair the TWG.

Energy	HB 8082	Rep. Velasco	Reducing electricity rates by allocating the net national government share from the Malampaya Natural Gas Project for the payment of the stranded contract costs and stranded debts of the National Power Corporation (NPC)	<p>The Committee, chaired by Marinduque Rep. Lord Allan Jay Velasco, agreed to consolidate HB 8082 with bills of similar subject matter and refer the same to the technical working group (TWG) currently deliberating on the said measures</p> <p>Rep. Mark Aeron Sambar (Party-List, PBA), sat as the presiding officer during the meeting to allow Rep. Velasco to sponsor his bill.</p> <p>Rep. Velasco said that his bill, also known as the “Murang Kuryente Act,” seeks to allocate all proceeds of the net national government share from the Malampaya Fund to pay the NPC’s stranded contract costs (SCC) and stranded debts portion of the universal charge (UC), thereby reducing the electricity costs to all power consumers.</p> <p>Under the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (EPIRA), the UC is imposed on electricity consumers for the payment of NPC’s SCC and the standard debts.</p> <p>As proposed under the bill, the net national government share from the Malampaya Fund shall be remitted to a special trust fund to be administered by the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management (PSALM) Corporation and the amounts allocated from this fund shall be included in the General Appropriations Act (GAA).</p> <p>According to PSALM President and Chief Executive Officer Irene Joy Besido-Garcia, if P123 billion from the Malampaya Fund is allocated for the purpose stated in the bill, it will translate into an estimated monthly savings of P114.90 and a yearly savings of P1,378.80 for a 200-kWh monthly consumption. A higher allocation from the Malampaya Fund will mean higher savings for the electric consumers, she added.</p> <p>She likewise informed the Committee that the outstanding financial obligation of NPC as of December 31, 2017 amounts to P466 billion with maturing obligations between the years 2018-2031. PSALM may resort to borrowing to pay for these debts, especially its substantial obligations, which will mature in 2019 and 2024.</p> <p>The Bureau of Treasury confirmed that the actual net national government share of Malampaya funds as of July 2018 amounts to P217.8 billion. In December of 2017, the net national government share was at P284 billion.</p> <p>The PSALM was requested to provide the Committee with the following data: list of all assets and properties of NPC/PSALM including those for disposal; and PSALM’s plan on how to pay its existing debts.</p>
Higher and Technical Education	HB 2354	Speaker Macapagal-Arroyo	Authorizing higher education curriculum development and graduate training in advance energy and green building technologies	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Ann Hofer (2 <sup>nd</sup> District, Zamboanga Sibugay), approved HB 2354 subject to style and amendment.

Continuation... Higher and Technical Education	HB 6768	Rep. Gasataya	Recruiting, hiring, and training additional university-based mental health personnel	The Committee approved HB 6768 subject to style and amendment.
	HB 7473	Rep. Zubiri	Converting the Don Carlos Polytechnic College located in the Province of Bukidnon into a state college to be known as the Don Carlos Polytechnic State College	The Committee approved HBs 7473, 7953 and 7988 subject to style and amendment.
	HB 7953	Rep. Nava	Converting the Guimaras State College in the Province of Guimaras into a state university to be known as the Guimaras State University and appropriating funds therefor	
	HB 7988	Rep. Antonino	Establishing a branch of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP) in the Municipality of Cabiao, Province of Nueva Ecija to be known as the PUP-Cabiao Branch, and appropriating funds therefor	
	HR 1662	Rep. Del Mar	Recommending to the Board of Regents of the Cebu Technological University (CTU) to establish a campus at Barangay Guba, 1st District, City of Cebu	The Committee adopted HR 1662 with amendments.
	HB 1187	Rep. Dimaporo (M.K.)	Establishing a state college in the Municipality of Tubod, Lanao del Norte to be known as the Lanao del Norte State College and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to fine-tune HB 1187 in accordance to the recommendations of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED).  Bacolod City Rep. Greg Gasataya was designated as the TWG Chair.
HB 7998	Rep. Noel	Converting the Eastern Visayas State University-Dulag Satellite Campus in the Municipality of Dulag, Province of Leyte into a regular campus of the Eastern Visayas State University to be known as the Eastern Visayas State University - Dulag Campus and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee will deliberate further on HB 7998 in its next meeting.  Rep. Victoria Isabel Noel (Party-List, AN WARAY), author of the bill, explained that converting the Eastern Visayas State University (EVSU)-Dulag Satellite Campus into a regular campus would expand the school's curricular offerings and broaden its academic service such as covering high school graduates of neighboring towns.  Dulag Mayor Mildred Joy Que informed the Committee that the Municipal Government of Dulag donated a 1.2-hectare land to the school. She also mentioned that graduates of the EVSU-Dulag Satellite Campus are having problems supposedly due to questions about the school's status as a satellite campus.	
Public Order and Safety	Substitute Bill to HBs 3153 & 5787	Reps. Alejano and Bataoil	Providing for the transfer of the Philippine National Police Academy (PNPA) and National Police Training Institute (NPTI), from the Philippine Public Safety College (PPSC) to the Philippine National Police (PNP), amending for the purpose Sections 66 and 67 of RA 6975, otherwise	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Romeo Acop (2 <sup>nd</sup> District, Antipolo City), approved the substitute bill subject to amendment.  The Committee agreed to a five-year transition plan that will be formulated and implemented by the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) and the National Police Commission

Continuation... Public Order and Safety			known as the Department of the Interior and Local Government Act of 1990, as amended	<p>(NAPOLCOM) to ensure a smooth transfer of the PNPA and NPTI from the PPSC to the PNP.</p> <p>PNP Chief Oscar Albayalde said that the proposed law is not the key to solving any breakdown of discipline in the organization. Nevertheless, the PNP vows to take full responsibility for the quality of recruits and cadets that the PNPA and NPTI will produce once these two institutions are transferred to the PNP.</p>
Trade and Industry	Substitute Bill to HBs 528, 877, 1324, 2917, 5970 & 7245	Reps. Batocabe, Sarmiento (E.M.), Pimentel, Escudero, former Rep. Roque (H.), and Rep. Romualdo	Providing for the revised Corporation Code of the Philippines	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Ferjanel Biron M.D. (4 <sup>th</sup> District, Iloilo), approved the substitute bill subject to style.
	HBs 3686, 3810 & 5311	Speaker Macapagal-Arroyo and Rep. Rodriguez (M.)	Requiring the mandatory labeling and regulation of food, food products and their derivatives, agricultural products, meat, and poultry products which are genetically-modified organisms (GMOs) or containing substances derived from GMOs and those produced by genetic engineering technologies	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on the three bills in its next meeting.</p> <p>The bills primarily seek to safeguard the public against possible health risks from food, food products and their derivatives, and other agricultural products that contain GMOs through appropriate regulation, awareness campaign, and mandatory labeling.</p> <p>Groups advocating consumers' right to safe food, healthy environment, and equitable economy, such as the Green Convergence Philippines, Consumer Rights for Safe Food, Inc., Philippines for Natural Farming Stand Up, and Laban Konsyumer Inc., expressed support for the bills. They all agreed that the mandatory labeling of GMO food and food products would inform consumers of the nature of the products they are buying and will be eating.</p> <p>On the other hand, representatives from the Department of Agriculture (DA), Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCAARRD) of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), and the Coalition for Agriculture Modernization in the Philippines (CAMP) oppose the bills. They argued that the proposed mandatory GMO labeling should not be based on the premise that GMOs pose health hazards, a belief which lacks scientific justification.</p> <p>DA Undersecretary Segfredo Serrano added that the mandatory GMO labeling would not provide adequate health information to the public but would only cause discrimination against producers and manufacturers of genetically-modified food products. To date, there are no published documents or reports on the negative implications of GMO to human health and the environment, Serrano said.</p> <p>Serrano, along with PCAARRD's Socio-Economic Research Division Director Ernesto Brown said that the proposed law will only duplicate the existing regulatory system on food safety and the functions of existing regulatory bodies such as the Food and</p>

Continuation... Trade and Industry				<p>Drug Administration (FDA). The GMO mandatory labeling would also entail unnecessary costs that will just be passed on to the consumers, they added.</p> <p>CAMP Chair Emil Javier underscored that there is overwhelming scientific consensus that genetically-modified food products are no more risky than or are as safe as conventional food, and that CAMP believes that the reasonable way forward is optional, rather than mandatory GM food labeling.</p> <p>Philippine Chamber of Food Manufacturers, Inc. Corporate Secretary Ernesto Mascenon sought for a clear and balanced policy pronouncement by the State on GM food labeling, adding that the Philippines could benefit from studying similar laws and regulations being implemented in other countries.</p>
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TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Transportation (Technical Working Group)	Draft Substitute Bill to HBs 279, 1577, 2799, 3623 & 7232	Reps. Escudero, Vargas, Espino, Vergara, and Tambunting	Providing for a Magna Carta of Tricycle Drivers and Operators, institutionalizing mechanisms for its implementation	<p>The technical working group (TWG), presided by Rep. Edgar Mary Sarmiento (1<sup>st</sup> District, Samar), will deliberate further on the draft substitute bill in its next meeting.</p> <p>At the outset, Rep. Sarmiento remarked that the proposed law aims to protect the welfare and ensure the safety of the tricycle drivers, in particular, and the commuters, in general.</p> <p>On the appropriate motorcycle model to be used for tricycles, Land Transportation Office (LTO) Chief Edgar Galvante suggested that the minimum requirement should be motorcycles with 150 cc engine displacement.</p> <p>Motorcycle Development Program Participants Association, Inc. (MDPPA) representative Magnus Mateo remarked that while motorcycles with 150 cc engines and above are currently being used by tricycle drivers, the terrain of the tricycle route should also be considered in defining the minimum requirement under the proposed law.</p> <p>Quezon City government's Tricycle Regulatory Unit (TRU) head Roberto dela Cruz said that the city government is in the process of phasing out motorcycles with two-stroke 150 cc engine in favor of four-stroke 150-175 cc engine in compliance with the Clean Air Act.</p> <p>Among the agreements reached during the meeting were the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prohibit the use of tricycles as school service; and</li> <li>• Require tricycle drivers and operators to comply with all the documentary requirements of the Social Security System (SSS) in order to get insurance</li> </ul>

Continuation... Transportation (Technical Working Group)				<p>coverage and other benefits from SSS, as provided for under the proposed law.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their comments and proposed amendments to the proposed law.</p>
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<b>ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION</b>		
<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>SUBJECT MATTER</b>	<b>DISCUSSIONS</b>
Ways and Means	Roundtable discussion on the social benefits programs under RA 10963 or the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) Law	<p>The Committee, chaired by Quirino Rep. Dakila Carlo Cua, continued its discussion with concerned government agencies on the status of the implementation of the social benefits programs under the TRAIN Law.</p> <p>Director Rolando Toledo of the Fiscal Planning and Reforms Bureau, Department of Budget and Management (DBM), reported that the draft joint memorandum circular (JMC), which will provide the guidelines for the implementation of the social benefits programs under the TRAIN Law, has already been finalized. It is expected to be released within the week after the secretaries of the DBM, Department of Finance (DOF), and Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) have signed the JMC.</p> <p>DOF Undersecretary Karl Kendrick Chua disclosed that incremental revenues from TRAIN for this year will amount to more than P60.2 billion, 30% of which shall be earmarked for social protection measures, while 70% shall be for infrastructure programs.</p> <p>National Wages and Productivity Commission (NWPC) Executive Director Maria Criselda Sy said that the DSWD's household targeting system dubbed as "Listahanan," will be used to identify and validate the minimum wage earners who will be included as beneficiaries of the social benefits programs under the TRAIN Law.</p> <p>Meanwhile, DSWD Undersecretary Florita Villar gave an update on the unconditional cash transfer (UCT) payouts to qualified beneficiaries under the law amounting to P2,400 per beneficiary per year. She said that as of August 14, an estimated P15.9 billion was downloaded to the Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP), which handles the UCT payouts to the beneficiaries. The said amount is intended to benefit more than 6.6 million households and social pensioners out of the total 8.8 million identified beneficiaries.</p> <p>With regard to the Pantawid Pasada Program, Department of Transportation (DOTr) Assistant Secretary Mark de Leon apprised the Committee that about 1,200 debit cards with P5,000.00 load each have already been distributed to public utility jeepney (PUJ) drivers nationwide. The Pantawid Pasada Program aims to provide relief to the public transport sector by cushioning the impact of the increases in fuel prices.</p> <p>Upon learning that the debit cards are distributed to PUJ operators and not directly to the drivers, Rep. Gus Tambunting (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Parañaque City) advised the DOTr to put in place a safeguard mechanism that will ensure that the financial assistance goes to the intended beneficiary.</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>