



<p>Continuation... Appropriations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of Health (DOH)</li> </ul>	<p>any other purpose but as subsidy for local farmers and as a means to stabilize the supply and price of rice and corn.</p> <p>Rep. Nograles made this assertion as he reprimanded the NFA for using P6.12 billion of its P7 billion Buffer Stocking Program Fund in 2018 to pay its debts to the Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) and the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP). Rep. Nograles stressed that such move by the NFA led to a shortfall in the required buffer stock level, shortage of NFA rice in the market, and higher price of rice particularly in Zamboanga and Cagayan de Oro.</p> <p>NFA Administrator Jason Aquino explained that NFA had to use the money to pay its maturing loans, including the P3.7-billion loan for the government-to-government (G2G) rice importation made in 2016, to save on interest.</p> <p>Aquino also disclosed that the NFA had been unable to compete effectively against private traders in buying palay directly from farmers. He said that the NFA Council has set the buying price of palay from local farmers to P17 per kilogram, compared to the P19 to P25 per kilogram buying price of private traders. Hence, farmers sell their yield to the latter. Because of the low utilization of funds for the procurement of palay, NFA decided to use the funds for the payment of its loans instead.</p> <p>Edwin Paraluman, chair of the Philippine Farmers Advisory Board and farmer sector representative to the NFA Council, agrees with Aquino that the NFA's buying price for palay should be increased to P25 per kilogram. Referring to the bills filed seeking to abolish the NFA, Paraluman opined that abolishing NFA is not the solution to the recurring rice shortage and price hikes. Instead, he suggested that the NFA should be converted into a department in order to have its own budget and the flexibility to address the problems at hand.</p> <p>Rep. Carlos Isagani Zarate (Party-List, BAYAN MUNA) stressed that the rice shortage should have been averted had the NFA used the P6.12 billion to purchase palay at a more competitive price.</p> <p>Meanwhile, despite NFA's assurance that the supply of NFA rice in Zamboanga City had been beefed up, Rep. Manuel Jose Dalipe (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Zamboanga City) maintained that there is still rice shortage in his district.</p> <p>The Committee requested the NFA Council to come up with a decision on whether or not the government buying price of palay should be increased on or before the plenary hearing on the NFA's budget.</p> <p>Committee Vice Chair, Rep. Jose Antonio "Kuya Jonathan" Sy-Alvarado (1<sup>st</sup> District, Bulacan), sat as the presiding officer during the budget briefing of the DOH.</p> <p>Health Secretary Francisco Duque III said that under the 2019 NEP, the DOH and its attached agencies/corporations are set to receive a budget of P141.85 billion, which is 17% lower than their current budget of P171 billion. The breakdown of DOH's budget is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office of the Secretary (OSEC) – P70.12 billion;</li> <li>• National Nutrition Council (NNC) – P440 million;</li> <li>• Commission on Population (POPCOM) – P470 million;</li> <li>• Lung Center of the Philippines (LCP) – P230 million;</li> <li>• National Kidney and Transplant Institute (NKTi)– P860 million;</li> <li>• Philippine Children's Medical Center (PCMC) – P1.07 billion;</li> </ul>
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Continuation... Appropriations		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Philippine Heart Center (PHC) – P1.16 billion;</li> <li>• Philippine Institute for Traditional and Alternative Health Care (PITAHC) – P140 million; and</li> <li>• Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) – P67.35 billion.</li> </ul> <p>Duque explained that the 17% decrease in the budget of the DOH can be attributed to the zero allocation for capital outlay (CO) under its Health Facilities Enhancement Program (HFEP) and the budget reduction in the Human Resources for Health Deployment Program (HRHDP).</p> <p>The HFEP aims to upgrade health facilities such as health centers, barangay health stations (BHS), and rural health units (RHUs) to sufficiently provide for emergency and primary care services. While the HRHD is a program that deploys health workers to rural areas and poor communities and assists local government units (LGUs) in paying for the salary of workers when they are financially unable to do so.</p> <p>Replying to the query of Rep. Celso Lobregat (1<sup>st</sup> District, Zamboanga City), Duque said that the budget cut will definitely impact on the delivery of health services of the DOH. Duque, maintained that the decrease in the funding for HRHD Program may result in the loss of about 15,000 jobs for health workers. It would also diminish the number of doctors, dentists, and midwives being deployed in rural areas.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Rep. Nograles asked about the assistance being extended by the DOH to the public school students who were vaccinated with Dengvaxia, an anti-dengue vaccine which turned out to have side effects.</p> <p>DOH Undersecretary Rolando Enrique Domingo replied that after the profiling and examination of the Dengvaxia vaccinees, the DOH continuously monitors their health condition.</p> <p>Duque stressed the need for additional human resource to assist in the profiling and monitoring of the Dengvaxia vaccinees, as he disclosed that the DOH’s supplemental budget which will cover the cost for hiring additional personnel is still pending in the Senate.</p>
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COMMITTEE MEETINGS				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Legislative Franchises	HB 6953	Speaker Macapagal-Arroyo	Renewing for another 25 years the franchise granted to Rajah Broadcasting Network, Inc. to construct, install, establish, operate and maintain radio and television broadcasting stations in the Philippines	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Franz Alvarez (1 <sup>st</sup> District, Palawan), approved the Committee Reports on the three bills.
	HB 7057	Speaker Macapagal-Arroyo	Renewing for another 25 years the franchise granted to Radioworld Broadcasting Corporation to construct, install, establish, operate and maintain radio and television broadcasting stations in the Philippines	
	HB 7876	Rep. Tugna	Renewing for another 25 years the franchise granted to Southern	

Continuation... Legislative Franchises			Broadcasting Network and to expand the coverage of the franchise	
	Consolidated Bill on HBs 8013 & 8015	Deputy Speaker Yap and Rep. Zamora (M.C.)	Granting Solar Para Sa Bayan Corporation a franchise to construct, install, establish, operate and maintain distributable power technologies and minigrid systems throughout the Philippines to improve access to sustainable energy	<p>The Committee approved the Committee Report on the Consolidated Bill with amendments.</p> <p>Upon the recommendation of Rep. Carlos Roman Uybarreta (Party-List, 1-CARE), Deputy Speaker Arthur Yap (3<sup>rd</sup> District, Bohol), author of HB 8013, agreed to include a non-discriminatory provision allowing the grantee open access to the use of transmission lines or distribution system or other associated facilities, subject to existing rules and regulations. In addition, the grantee is also eligible to become a member of the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM).</p>
Welfare of Children	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, presided by Catanduanes Rep. Cesar Sarmiento, approved the Committee Report on the Substitute Bill to HBs 516 and 6955 with amendment.
	Substitute Bill to HBs 5662 & 6295	Reps. Roman and Romero	Imposing stiffer penalties for violations of the child abuse law, amending RA 7610, as amended by RA 9231, otherwise known as the Special Protection against Child Abuse, Exploitation, and Discrimination Act	The Committee approved the Committee Report on the Substitute Bill to HBs 5662 and 6295.