

# Committee Daily Bulletin

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COMMITTEE MEETINGS				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Energy	HR 1066	Rep. Lanete	Inquiry into the failure of the Masbate Electric Cooperative (MASELCO) to settle its P240 million obligation which thereby resulted in the disconnection of the power supply in the whole Province of Masbate, for the purpose of resolving the power supply problem in the province	<p>The Committee, presided by Rep. Celso Lobregat (1<sup>st</sup> District, Zamboanga City), will deliberate further on the issues raised in HR 1066 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Scott Davies Lanete M.D. (3<sup>rd</sup> District, Masbate), author of HR 1066, expressed his concern over the power outages in Masbate, due to the failure of Masbate Electric Cooperative (MASELCO) to settle its P240 million obligation with DMCI Masbate Power Corporation (DMPC), which is the supplier of electricity of MASELCO.</p> <p>MASELCO acting General Manager Arnel Aben attributed the power interruptions to the clearing operations of old trees and debris which might have affected the power lines, problems in the acquisition of right-of-way, and old and defective transmission lines. Nevertheless, he assured the Committee that efforts are being undertaken to address these problems.</p> <p>Unconvinced by MASELCO's explanation, Rep. Lanete stressed that more than the technical glitches, the electric cooperative's problems, including the huge unpaid debts, may be due to mismanagement.</p> <p>MASELCO was requested to submit a breakdown of its debt obligations to DMPC, National Power Corporation (NPC), and Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation (PSALM).</p> <p>DMPC Assistant Vice President Lourdes Castro disclosed that DMPC is helping MASELCO find a solution to the unpaid debts, adding that they are hopeful the matter will be settled soon.</p> <p>Energy Undersecretary Felix William Fuentebella said that the Department of Energy (DOE) has identified several infrastructure development projects that are expected to remedy the current power situation in Masbate, such as the construction</p>

Continuation... Energy				of substations to supply homes and businesses with electricity. He added that the Energy Secretary has approved the release of funds to electric cooperatives, which they may use to improve their services to the public.
	HR 1737	Rep. Sambar	Inquiry into the manner by which the Malampaya banked gas, which is at risk of being impaired by 2024, is going to be disposed by the Philippine National Oil Company (PNOC) and/or the DOE	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on the issues raised in HR 1737 in its next meeting.</p> <p>PBA Party-List Rep. Mark Aeron Sambar, author of HR 1737, expressed concern over the PNOC's slow disposal of the remaining 97.67 petajoules banked gas, pointing out that the PNOC could not extract all the remaining banked gas in the Malampaya gas well by 2024 as it can only extract a maximum of 11.8 petajoules per year. The license for Service Contract 38, which allows the exploration of the Malampaya gas field in northwest Palawan, is expiring in 2024. He also underscored the need to sell the banked gas at a competitive price to protect the interest of the government and the public.</p> <p>PNOC President and CEO Reuben Lista explained that the reason why only a small portion of the banked gas had been sold was the restrictive floor price imposed. Under a PNOC's board resolution, the floor price of the banked gas should not be less than the contract price of gas under the Ilijan Gas Sale Purchase Agreement, which is the prevailing market value.</p> <p>Earlier, PNOC Corporate Secretary Lila Aquitania presented the status of the PNOC's banked gas and its continuing efforts to dispose or monetize the same, including the extension of Service Contract 38.</p> <p>The banked gas is the volume of natural gas which was not utilized but was required to be paid for under the take-or-pay clause of the Ilijan Gas Sale Purchase Agreement.</p>
Higher and Technical Education	Substitute Bill to HB 1160	Rep. Maria Lourdes Acosta-Alba	Converting the Northern Bukidnon Community College in the Municipality of Manolo Fortich, Province of Bukidnon, into a state college to be known as the Northern Bukidnon State College, and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Ann Hofer (2 <sup>nd</sup> District, Zamboanga Sibugay), approved the four substitute bills subject to style and amendment.
	Substitute Bill to HB 1281	Rep. Velasco	Converting the Marinduque State College in the Municipality of Boac, Province of Marinduque into a state university to be known as the Marinduque State University, and appropriating funds therefor	
	Substitute Bill to HBs 637 & 6416	Reps. Unico and Panotes	Converting the Camarines Norte State College (CNCS) in the Municipality of Daet, Province of Camarines Norte into a state university to be known as the University of Camarines Norte (UCN), and appropriating funds therefor	

Continuation... Higher and Technical Education	Substitute Bill to HB 5119	Rep. Belaro	Converting the Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges in the Municipality of Nabua, Province of Camarines Sur into a state university to be known as the Polytechnic State University of Bicol, and appropriating funds therefor	
	HB 7114	Rep. Arcillas	Establishing the Polytechnic University of the Philippines - Santa Rosa branch in the City of Santa Rosa, Province of Laguna, appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved HB 7114 subject to style and amendment.

AGENCY BRIEFING		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Higher and Technical Education	Briefing by the Unified Student Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education (UniFAST) Board on the status of implementation of RA 10931, otherwise known as the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Ann Hofer (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Zamboanga Sibugay), listened to the briefing conducted by Commission on Higher Education (CHED) OIC-Chair J. Prospero de Vera III, who is also the Chairperson of the UniFAST Board, on the status of implementation of the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act.</p> <p>De Vera disclosed that prior to the enactment of RA 10931 on August 3, 2017, it was estimated that about 900,000 students would become beneficiaries of the P8 billion-funded free tuition program in state universities and colleges (SUCs). He likewise announced that the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of RA 10931 was released on February 22.</p> <p>According to De Vera, among the problems encountered in the implementation of the free tuition grant are the following: the public perception that there is insufficient funding for the program; under-reporting of tuition income by the SUCs; and the unreadiness of SUCs and local universities and colleges (LUCs) to implement the program.</p> <p>Other emerging issues, De Vera said, are the impact of the free tuition program on private higher education institutions (HEIs) with a huge number of students opting to enroll in public HEIs; and concerns about the “return service” requirement.</p> <p>All students who will benefit from RA 10931 are mandated to render “return service” while they are in college. Respective colleges and universities will be given the discretion to determine the appropriate return service mechanism which can be in the form of community outreach programs or cleanliness drives within the campuses.</p> <p>Several lawmakers, however, questioned the inclusion of such return service mechanism in the IRR of RA 10931 when it was not mentioned in the law itself.</p> <p>Rep. Romeo Acop (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Antipolo City) stressed that the added provision may be challenged in court as it lacks due authorization under the law.</p>