

# Committee Daily Bulletin

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COMMITTEE MEETINGS				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Appropriations	Substitute Bill to HBs 621, 2466, 3924, 4391, 5503, 5914, 6356, 6526, 6667 & 6969 and HRs 244, 1048 & 1490	Rep. Paduano, Deputy Speaker Yap, Reps. Vargas, Tan (A.), Go (M.), Silverio, Deputy Speaker Villarica, Reps. Aquino-Magsaysay, Villafuerte, Hofer, Zarate, Lanete, and former Rep. De Vera	Providing a comprehensive renal replacement therapy (RRT) for patients with end stage renal disease in national, regional, and provincial government hospitals and increasing the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) package rate for renal replacement therapy of members and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee, presided by its Senior Vice Chair Rep. Maria Carmen Zamora (1 <sup>st</sup> District, Compostela Valley), approved the substitute bill subject to style and amendment.
	Substitute Bill to HBs 1828 & 2963	Rep. Vargas and Speaker Macapagal-Arroyo	Establishing an intergovernmental task force for the protection and assistance of tourists	The Committee approved the Substitute Bill to HBs 1828 and 2963.
	Substitute Bill to HB 2163	Rep. Ramirez-Sato	Strengthening the national policy on wealth generation from access and benefit-sharing from the utilization of Philippine genetic resources	The Committee approved the Substitute Bill to HB 2163.
	Substitute Bill to HBs 2258 & 3953	Reps. Enverga and Kho	Institutionalizing the convergence strategy for sustainable rural development, providing the implementing mechanisms therefor	The Committee approved the Substitute Bill to HBs 2258 and 3953.
	Substitute Bill to HB 2354	Speaker Macapagal-Arroyo	Authorizing higher education curriculum development and graduate training in advanced energy and green building technologies	The Committee approved the Substitute Bill to HB 2354.
	Substitute Bill to HBs 2649 & 5619	Reps. Gatchalian and Yap. (V.)	Providing for the Magna Carta of the Out-of-school Youth	The Committee approved the Substitute Bill to HBs 2649 and 5619.
	Substitute Bill to HB 5390	Rep. Alejano	Regulating the practice of fisheries profession in the Philippines, creating for the purpose a Professional Regulatory Board of Fisheries, and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the Substitute Bill to HB 5390 with amendments.
	Substitute Bill to HBs	Reps. Pacquiao,	Creating the Philippine Boxing and Combat Sports Commission and providing	The Committee approved the substitute bill with amendments.

Continuation... Appropriations	6158, 7574 & 8257	Rodriguez (M.), and Pineda	funds therefor	
	Substitute Bill to HBs 8197 & 8414	Deputy Speaker Villarica and Rep. Alejano	Establishing the Office for Social Welfare Attache, amending for the purpose RA 8042, otherwise known as the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995, as amended	The Committee approved the Substitute Bill to HBs 8197 and 8414 with amendments.
	Substitute Bills to HBs 2299, 4841, 4914, 5055, 5247, 5624, 6510 & 6751	Reps. Yap (M.), Tan (A.), Garin (O.), Loyola, Gasataya, Dimaporo (M.K.), Deputy Speaker Escudero, and Rep. Amatong	Creating additional court salas in various parts of the country	The Committee approved the substitute bills to the eight bills.
	HB 4002	Rep. Rodriguez (M.)	Providing for the urban and countryside greening in the Philippines	The Committee approved HB 4002 with amendments.
	HB 4127	Rep. Go	Authorizing the Department of Health (DOH) to set and approve the bed capacity of all DOH hospitals	The Committee approved HB 4127 with amendments.
Health jt. w/ Trade and Industry	Substitute Bill to HBs 884, 885, 917, 925, 4129, 4713, 5204 & 6462, and HR 973	Rep. Tan (A.), former Rep. Roque (H.), Reps. Abaya, Castelo, Fortun, Biazon, Silverio, and Bravo (A.)	Amending RA 9211, otherwise known as the Tobacco Regulation Act of 2003 (by creating the Inter-Agency Committee-Tobacco Control; increasing to 21 years old the minimum age in the sale of tobacco products; and prohibiting smoking in all public places except in designated smoking areas, among others)	The Joint Committee, co-presided by Rep. Angelina "Helen" Tan, M.D. (4 <sup>th</sup> District, Quezon), Chair of the Committee on Health, and Rep. Ferjanel Biron, M.D. (4 <sup>th</sup> District, Iloilo), Chair of the Committee on Trade and Industry, approved the substitute bill subject to style.  The Secretariat was directed to prepare the corresponding Committee Report.
Trade and Industry	HBs 6310 & 8190	Deputy Speaker Yap (A.) and Rep. Gatchalian	Strengthening and modernizing Act 2137 or the Warehouse Receipts Law in order to provide a legal framework that shall facilitate trade and commerce	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Ferjanel Biron, M.D. (4 <sup>th</sup> District, Iloilo), agreed to consolidate the two bills, and thereafter approved the same.  The Secretariat was directed to prepare the corresponding Committee Report.
	HBs 2882, 6609 & 7803	Reps. Villafuerte, Nieto, and Garcia (J.E.)	Providing benefits and programs to strengthen, promote, and develop the Philippine startup ecosystem	The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to consolidate the four bills.  The TWG will be chaired by Rep. Manuel Zubiri (3 <sup>rd</sup> District, Bukidnon).
	HB 3057	Rep. Yap (V.)	Creating the Innovation Council and providing benefits and programs to strengthen, promote, and develop the Philippine startup ecosystem	Rep. Biron informed the Committee that a bill with similar subject matter was already approved on Third Reading at the Senate.
	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	The Committee terminated its discussion on the three bills.  The resource persons were requested to submit their respective position papers on the proposed law.

Trade and Industry jt. w/ Health	HBs 532, 3330, 4325, 4810, 7289, 7935, 7993, 8340 and 8671	Reps. Batocabe, Olivarez, Biazon, Noel, Villafuerte, Barbers, Alejano, and Garcia (J.E.)	Regulating the use, packaging, sale, distribution, and advertisement of electronic cigarettes or vaporized nicotine products (VNPs)	<p>The Joint Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to consolidate the bills.</p> <p>The TWG will be co-chaired by Rep. Tan for the Committee on Health and Camiguin Rep. Xavier Jesus Romualdo for the Committee on Trade and Industry.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their respective position papers on the proposed law.</p>
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AGENCY BRIEFINGS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Housing and Urban Development	Briefing by the Department of Transportation (DOTr) on the status of implementation of government resettlement projects for the informal settler families (ISFs) affected by the Philippine National Railways' (PNR) south commuter and long-haul projects	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Alfredo "Albee" Benitez (3<sup>rd</sup> District, Negros Occidental), listened to the briefing of the DOTr on the status of implementation of government resettlement projects for the ISFs affected by the PNR's south commuter and long-haul railway projects.</p> <p>At the outset, Rep. Benitez said that Executive Order 48 series of 2001, which declares non-core properties of the PNR as socialized housing sites for disposition to their actual bonafide occupants, should be properly implemented. He likewise emphasized the importance of implementing the project using the "people's plan," which is a community development plan that went through a process of consultation involving the beneficiaries themselves.</p> <p>DOTr Undersecretary for Railways Timothy John Batan reported that both the commuter and long-haul railway projects will be funded through the official development assistance (ODA) program. He said the commuter railway project covering the Tutuban-Calamba route, with a total distance of 56 kilometers, will be funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), while the long-haul project covering the Manila to Legazpi segment, with a distance of 639 kilometers, will be funded by the People's Republic of China (PRC). Batan said that the implementation of these projects will affect about 11,300 families.</p> <p>Replying to the query of Rep. Benitez, Batan explained that under the loan agreement for the commuter railway project, the amenities for the ISFs will include not only housing units but also social services such as livelihood, transportation and financial assistance. As regards the long-haul project, only the housing component will be undertaken.</p> <p>Representatives of the Institute of Popular Democracy, Bantay Lansangan – Unisan ng Quezon, Kariles Organization, and Habitat for Humanity Philippines (HFHP) suggested that the beneficiaries be relocated to sites near their workplace and that the "people's plan" should be implemented to ensure that the basic needs of the relocatees are met.</p> <p>Rep. Benitez urged the concerned government agencies to ensure that the resettlement sites are developed according to proper standards to be acceptable to the beneficiaries. He also mentioned the beneficiaries' responsibilities in making the housing</p>

<p>Continuation... Housing and Urban Development</p>		<p>projects a success, especially in terms of paying the monthly amortization.</p> <p>The resource persons were asked to submit their recommendations on the housing projects. Likewise, the Committee required the DOTr to submit an updated report on the projects' fund utilization.</p>
<p>Natural Resources</p>	<p>Briefing by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) on the result of its investigation on the recent landslide that occurred in the Municipality of Naga, Province of Cebu</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Rodrigo Abellanosa (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Cebu City), listened to the briefing by the MGB on the result of its investigation on the recent landslide that occurred in Barangay Tinaan, Naga, Cebu last September 20.</p> <p>Rep. Abellanosa explained that the purpose of the briefing is to guide the Committee in determining whether a legislative measure is needed to better manage and mitigate the effects of similar incidents or disasters.</p> <p>MGB Supervising Science Research Specialist Lisa Socorro Manzano presented the results of the investigation. According to Manzano, landslides are normally induced by either heavy rain or strong earthquake which were not present or recorded in the case of the landslide in Barangay Tinaan. But she said cracks on the ground have been detected in the recent months in some areas prior to the landslide. This made the Bureau to conclude that the landslide was caused by an unpredictable natural phenomenon given Naga's landscape where a collapse of an underlying cave could have triggered the movement.</p> <p>The land area of Naga is composed mainly of karst terrain, a type of topography where the surface water diverts and routes towards the underground and causes dissolution of the calcium carbonate which composes the limestone. It also has cavities and cave system that may or may not contain water and has sinkholes on top of the surface. In the event of subsidence or sinking, it is considered the most dangerous geohazard due to its extreme unpredictability, Manzano explained.</p> <p>After the incident, the Bureau conducted geological and morphological assessment through the use of drone mapping, ground penetrating radar (GPR) and georesistivity survey (GRS) instruments among others, in order to identify tension cracks that are still developing as well as determine the stability or future instability of the site.</p> <p>The MGB then released a geohazard map which indicated the critical zone (actual landslide-affected area), danger zone (outside of critical zone with manifestations of landslide/subsidence) and regulated zones (outside danger zone). Manzano said the Bureau recommends that the local government units (LGUs) review and revise their existing Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plans (DRRMPs) using this updated geohazard map as reference. He also suggested that early warning systems and evacuation protocols be established by the LGUs for inclement weather conditions or calamities.</p> <p>Rep. Gerald Anthony "Samsam" Gullas Jr. (1<sup>st</sup> District, Cebu) commended the MGB for releasing an updated geohazard map and advised the latter to regularly coordinate with the LGUs, and conduct community dialogues and consultations to raise awareness among the residents in the area.</p> <p>On the query of Rep. Peter "Sr. Pedro" Unabia (1<sup>st</sup> District, Misamis Oriental) on the reason for allowing the residents to go</p>

<p><i>Continuation...</i> Natural Resources</p>		<p>back to their homes located in the danger zone, Manzano replied that it is only temporary until the local government finds a relocation site for them. The families were informed of the possible danger of returning but were also assured of an evacuation plan in case of calamities.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Rep. Raymond Democrito Mendoza (Party-List, TUCP) inquired if the advisories of the MGB are being strictly followed by the LGUs. Manzano said that the MGB's role is only recommendatory and that the decision ultimately rests on the LGUs.</p>
<p>Public Accounts jt. w/ Games and Amusements</p>	<p>Briefing by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) on its operations and plans and programs</p>	<p>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, listened to the presentation of PCSO on its operations and plans and programs.</p> <p>PCSO's OIC-Chief for Planning and Policy Formulation Division Pilar Cruz reported that as of October 31, the actual revenues generated from the agency's gaming activities amount to P54.82 billion, which is 27.15% higher than the revenues for the same period last year. Cruz also reported that of the 83 authorized agent corporations (AACs) operating the small-town lottery (STL), 71 have been delinquent in remitting the required presumptive monthly retail receipts (PMRRs) from STL sales.</p> <p>Minority Leader Suarez raised several issues against PCSO's involvement in gaming operations, including the STL, which to him is "technically illegal." He explained that the PCSO, based on its charter, is but a revenue-generating agency and is neither allowed to engage in gaming nor issue a permit to operate an STL, which is in the nature of a legislative franchise that only Congress can grant.</p> <p>Likewise, Rep. Luis Raymund "LRay" Villafuerte (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Camarines Sur) chided PCSO General Manager Alexander Balutan for unilaterally issuing an authority to operate to Evenchance Gaming Corporation without the consent or approval of the PCSO Board. According to Rep. Villafuerte, Evenchance, which is operating in Naga City and Camarines Sur, should not be allowed to operate an STL because of certain violations including the non-payment of about P458 million representing PMRR due to the government. He further said that Balutan is a close acquaintance of Bong Pineda, who is believed to be the owner of Evenchance.</p> <p>Balutan, however, claimed that the PCSO Board gave its consent to issue an authority to operate to Evenchance. PCSO Board of Directors Marlon Balite and Sandra Cam refuted Balutan's claim, saying that there was no board resolution granting Everchance an authority to operate.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Rep. Aurora Enerio Cerilles (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Zamboanga del Sur) questioned the decision of the PCSO to terminate the authority to operate STL given to Mekas Gaming Corporation in Zamboanga del Sur without due process. Rep. Cerilles claimed that the corporation is compliant with the requirements and regulations imposed by the PCSO.</p> <p>PCSO's Advisory Council for STL head Ted Quijano explained that Mekas violated the STL's implementing rules and regulations (IRR) which include receiving bets from minors, installation of betting stations near schools and churches, and use of unauthorized betting slips.</p>

FORUM		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Human Rights	Manila Training on Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) Toolkit and Resources	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Cheryl Deloso-Montalla (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Zambales), in partnership with the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR), conducted a training on FoRB Toolkit on December 12 at the House of Representatives.</p> <p>The event is part of a series of activities in the House in celebration of the Human Rights Consciousness Week, and is a follow up to the previous day's forum on FoRB wherein the participants discussed the legal framework and laws on FoRB in the Philippines and in Southeast Asia as well as the role of legislators or parliamentarians in advancing this advocacy.</p> <p>The resource speakers for today's program include former Pakistan National Assembly Member Farahnaz Ispahani, NDI Director of Governance Programs Scott Hubli NDI, and Asia Program Manager Meghan Burland.</p> <p>As presented by the speakers, the FoRB Toolkit is an online website created for the purpose of providing research documents, issues and updates related to religious freedom contributed by a community of experts, practitioners and other credible people. It will be a useful guide specifically for parliamentarians in effectively advocating the right to freedom of religion or belief.</p> <p>According to Ispahani, the formal launching of the FoRB Toolkit will be timely given that 75% of the world population is experiencing religion-related discrimination.</p> <p>An open forum followed after the presentation which focused on the workability and technical aspect of the FoRB Toolkit.</p> <p>In her closing remarks, NDI Asia Senior Advisor Jacqueline Corcoran emphasized that FoRB is the right of every individual to choose and practice his or her religion or beliefs.</p>

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