

Committee Daily Bulletin



17th Congress
Third Regular Session

A publication of the Committee Affairs Department

Vol. III No. 88
March 5, 2019

COMMITTEE MEETING		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Transportation	Discussion on the nautical highway system or the Roll-on/Roll-off (RoRo) system and the alleged exorbitant shipping charges in the transport of goods using this mode of transportation	<p>The Committee, presided by Rep. Manuel Zubiri (3rd District, Bukidnon), held an oversight meeting on March 5 in Hilongos, Leyte to continue its discussion on the problems affecting the country's nautical highway system, particularly the exorbitant cost of shipping goods via the RoRo system which also leads to higher prices of goods.</p> <p>Rep. Zubiri gave a brief background on the major points discussed during the Committee's meeting on February 13 in Cebu City including the complaints about the high cost of domestic shipping of goods which was attributed mainly to the high cost of trucking services.</p> <p>As an immediate measure, House Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (2nd District, Pampanga) asked the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) to consider waiving the collection of weighbridge (truck scale) fees to reduce the cost of transport. The Speaker emphasized that the purpose of the RoRo system is to provide a more accessible and affordable option of transporting goods across the country. Her request to the PPA, which would be formally conveyed through a Committee Resolution, was supported by the Committee Members as well as the representatives from government agencies and stakeholders present in the meeting.</p> <p>Speaker Macapagal-Arroyo also expressed her appreciation to the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) for its updates on efforts to operate the RoRo missionary routes and to start the construction of the San Fernando Port in Cebu.</p> <p>Rep. Zubiri said that another meeting will be scheduled on March 12 at the House of Representatives to continue discussing the concerns about the RoRo system.</p> <p>Aside from the Speaker and Rep. Zubiri, other House Members present during the meeting were the following: Reps. Yedda Marie Romualdez (1st District, Leyte), Bayani Fernando (1st District, Marikina City), Peter "Sr. Pedro" Unabia (1st District, Misamis Oriental), Roger "Oging" Mercado (Southern Leyte), and Jose Carlos Cari (5th District, Leyte).</p>

AGENCY BRIEFING		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Public Accounts jt. w/ Games and Amusement	Briefing by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) on the Small-Town Lottery (STL) operations and the Nationwide Online Lottery System (NOLS)	The Joint Committee, co-chaired by Minority Leader Danilo Suarez (3 rd District, Quezon), Chair of the Committee on Public Accounts, and Rep. Gus Tambunting (2 nd District, Parañaque City), Chair of the Committee on Games and Amusements,

<p>Continuation... Public Accounts jt. w/ Games and Amusement</p>		<p>continued its discussion on the operations of the PCSO, particularly on the STL.</p> <p>At the outset, Rep. Tambunting said that the meeting will focus on whether the authorized agent corporations (AACs) operating the STL are remitting to the PCSO the required presumptive monthly retail receipts (PMRRs). The PMRR is the amount determined by PCSO as the presumed minimum monthly sales of an AAC.</p> <p>Minority Leader Suarez reiterated his previous observation that based on its charter, the PCSO is but a revenue-generating agency and is therefore not authorized to engage in gaming operations, such as the STL. He added that the PCSO should also not issue a permit to operate an STL, saying that such a permit is in the nature of a legislative franchise that only Congress is empowered to grant.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Prospero Pichay Jr. (1st District, Surigao del Sur) questioned the interlocking functions being exercised by PCSO's Advisory Committee for STL (ACS) head Ted Quijano who is also the Chief of Staff of the PCSO Chair. According to the Deputy Speaker, this runs counter to the principle of check and balance.</p> <p>Quijano sees nothing questionable about holding the two positions, explaining that the ACS merely recommends to the PCSO Board the course of action against erring AACs. However, he admitted that there are instances when some STL operators would approach him to request that their PMRR remittance be reduced.</p> <p>PCSO General Manager Alexander Balutan clarified that STL operators are not allowed to negotiate their PMRRs during the first year of operation.</p> <p>Replying to the query of the lawmakers, PCSO Assistant General Manager for Branch Operations Remeliza Gabuyo disclosed that as of February 2019, the PCSO's outstanding receivables from STL has reached P5.2 billion. Gabuyo said that the PCSO has introduced the soft-payment scheme to facilitate the collection of PMRRs from delinquent AACs. Under this payment scheme, the AACs are allowed to pay 50% of their PMRR shortfall in cash and the other 50% by way of post-dated checks.</p> <p>The lawmakers suggested, however, that stringent measures be imposed against delinquent AACs. Reps. Tambunting and Carlos Roman Uybarreta (Party-List, 1-CARE) called for the outright termination of the contracts of delinquent STL operators.</p>
---	--	---