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OVERSIGHT MEETINGS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
House panel of the Joint Congressional Oversight Committee on Public Expenditures jt. w/ Public Works and Highways	Oversight meeting on the performance and expenditures of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) for FY 2017-2019 and on the FY 2020 budget proposal	<p>The Joint Committee, presided by Minority Leader Danilo Suarez (3<sup>rd</sup> District, Quezon), member of the Joint Congressional Oversight Committee on Public Expenditures, and Rep. Bayani Fernando (1<sup>st</sup> District, Marikina City), Chair of the Committee on Public Works and Highways, listened to the presentation of the DPWH on the Department's performance and expenditures for FY 2017 to 2019.</p> <p>DPWH Undersecretary Maria Catalina Cabral presented the DPWH's strategy roadmap toward accomplishing its mandate. The roadmap, Cabral added, is anchored on the Philippine Development Plan which supports the realization of the "Ambisyon Natin 2040," a long-term vision for a better life for Filipinos.</p> <p>Cabral also highlighted the DPWH's fund utilization for FY 2017 and 2018. She said that out of the Department's P662.70 billion budget in 2017, the amount of P537.60 billion has been obligated, of which, P222.70 billion has been disbursed. On the other hand, out of the Department's 2018 budget of P750.30 billion, the amount of P696 billion has been obligated, of which, P299.60 billion has been actually disbursed.</p> <p>Among the Department's accomplishments from July 2016 to December 2018 are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction of 3,066 flood mitigation structures;</li> <li>• Construction, widening, upgrading, and rehabilitation of 2,680 bridges; and</li> <li>• Construction, maintenance, widening, upgrading, and rehabilitation of 6,157 kilometers of road.</li> </ul> <p>Noting the delay in the implementation of DPWH projects, majority of the House Members urged that proper coordination with concerned government offices and private entities should be done to ensure that government infrastructure projects are implemented as scheduled.</p> <p>When asked about the structural integrity of government buildings in Metro Manila, Cabral said that the DPWH has already inspected and assessed more than 3,000 government buildings and has prepared a list of buildings which need retrofitting or demolition.</p> <p>The DPWH was requested to submit a list of infrastructure projects in each district that will be included in the FY 2020 proposed budget.</p>

Special Committee on Visayas Development jt. w/ Energy	Oversight meeting on the challenges faced by the bioethanol industry in the Philippines	<p>The Joint Committee, co-presided by Rep. Melecio Yap (1<sup>st</sup> District, Negros Occidental), Vice Chair of the Special Committee on Visayas Development, and Rep. Carlos Roman Uybarreta (Party-List, 1-CARE), Vice Chair of the Committee on Energy, conducted an oversight meeting to discuss the challenges faced by the bioethanol industry in the country.</p> <p>House Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Pampanga) informed the body that during her visit to a bioethanol plant in San Carlos, Negros Occidental, the producers brought to her attention problems affecting the industry and at the same time gave recommendations to help solve their problems.</p> <p>The representatives of the Ethanol Producers Association of the Philippines (EPAP), Roxol Bioenergy Corporation (RBC), and Roxas Holdings Inc. propose that the industry be allowed to import feedstock (molasses) as raw material in the production of ethanol and to export the finished product (bioethanol). The importation would fill the gap in the supply of local raw materials and increase capacity utilization of bioethanol plants.</p> <p>Under the implementing rules and regulations of RA 9367 (Biofuels Act of 2006), only locally produced feedstock can be used for biofuel. However, Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) Manager Rosemarie Gumera said that the importation of feedstock can be allowed if the finished product will be exported and not sold or distributed locally.</p> <p>Department of Energy (DOE) Undersecretary Jesus Cristino Posadas and Assistant Secretary Leonido Pulido concurred with the statement of Gumera but also expressed concern that producers using imported raw materials may not be able to compete effectively in the world market.</p> <p>Philippine Sugar Millers Association Executive Director Jesus Barrera agreed to the proposal of importing molasses as feedstock for the production of bioethanol products but not sugarcane as doing so will have a negative impact on the local sugar industry.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Department of Agriculture (DA) Assistant Secretary Hansel Didulo said affected sectors such as farmers and millers should be consulted on the proposal to import feedstock for bioethanol production.</p> <p>Replying to the query of Rep. Alfredo "Albee" Benitez (3<sup>rd</sup> District, Negros Occidental) on the local supply and demand of ethanol, Edna Tatel, representing RBC and Roxas Holdings Inc, said that the average ethanol production per year is 300 million liters. On the other hand, Pulido said that the demand per year for ethanol is more than 600 million liters.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to direct the SRA to undertake measures that will allow ethanol producers to import molasses for the production of bioethanol products for re-exportation.</p>
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