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CONFERENCE COMMITTEE MEETING

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Conference Committee	HB 7727	Rep. Yap (E.)	The General Appropriations Act of 2021	<p>The Conference Committee, co-chaired by Rep. Eric Go Yap (Party-List, ACT-CIS), Chair of the House Committee on Appropriations, and Senator Juan Edgardo "Sonny" Angara, Chair of the Senate Committee on Finance, will meet again for the purpose of harmonizing and reconciling the proposed amendments to HB 7727.</p> <p>Both the House and Senate panels authorized Rep. Yap and Senator Angara, respectively, to discuss between them the amendments of the House Members and Senators to the proposed 2021 national budget.</p> <p>The two Chairpersons said that they will update their fellow legislators about the decisions and agreements that will be made during their discussion.</p> <p>Aside from Rep Yap, other House Members present during the conference committee meeting were the following: House Majority Leader Ferdinand Martin Romualdez (1st District, Leyte), Minority Leader Joseph Stephen Paduano (Party-List, ABANG LINGKOD), Deputy Speakers Doy Leachon (1st District, Oriental Mindoro), Michael Romero Ph.D. (Party-List, 1-PACMAN), Jose Atienza Jr. (Party-List, BUHAY), Roberto Puno (1st District, Antipolo City), and Loren Legarda (Antique), Reps. Joseph Sto. Niño Bernos (Abra), Edcel Lagman (1st District, Albay), Juan Pablo "Rimpy" Bondoc (4th District, Pampanga), Bernadette Herrera-Dy (Party-List, Bagong Henerasyon), Elenita Milagros "Eileen" Ermita-Buhain (1st District, Batangas), Michael John Duavit (1st District, Rizal), Joey Sarte Salceda (2nd District, Albay), Eleandro Jesus Madrona (Romblon), Francisco "Kiko" Benitez (3rd District, Negros Occidental), Munir Arbison (2nd District, Sulu), Kristine Singson-Meehan (2nd District, Ilocos Sur), Eric Martinez (2nd District, Valenzuela City), and Wes Gatchalian (1st District, Valenzuela City).</p> <p>On the part of the Senate, aside from senator Angara, the other conferees were: Senate Majority Leader Juan Miguel "Migz" Zubiri and Senators Pia Cayetano, Cynthia Villar, Panfilo Lacson, Joel Villanueva, Win Gatchalian, Ramon Bong Revilla Jr., Christopher Lawrence Go, Imee Marcos, Risa Hontiveros, Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan, Maria Lourdes Nancy Binay, Grace Poe, and Emmanuel "Manny" Pacquiao</p>

COMMITTEE MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Economic Affairs	HB 8031	Rep. Quimbo	Providing for additional mechanisms to accelerate the recovery and bolster the resiliency of the Philippine economy, providing funds therefor	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Teodorico Haresco Jr. (2nd District, Aklan), agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to consolidate HBs 8031 and 8059 and come up with a substitute bill.</p> <p>Rep. Haresco and Quirino Rep. Junie Cua will co-chair the TWG.</p> <p>The authors of the two bills, also called as the Bayanihan 3, presented the bills' objectives and features.</p> <p>Rep. Stella Luz Quimbo (2nd District, Marikina City), author of HB 8031, said that despite the passage of RA 11494 or the "Bayanihan to Recover as One Act" (Bayanihan 2) in September, much is still needed for the genuine recovery of the country from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Amid the continued threat of the pandemic and with the recent destructive typhoons that hit the country, Rep. Quimbo stressed the need for another economic stimulus package to provide assistance to affected sectors and the people in general.</p> <p>HB 8031 provides an allocation of P400 billion which shall be used to support measures and operations that address the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the impact of the recent typhoons. The bill also seeks to extend the validity of the Bayanihan 2 from December 19, 2020 to June 4, 2021.</p> <p>Reps. Sharon Garin (Party-List, AAMBIS-OWA) and Joey Sarte Salceda (2nd District, Albay), co-authors of HB 8059, explained that the bill also seeks to provide interventions in the form of an economic stimulus to mitigate the negative effects of the pandemic and the recent natural disasters to the Philippine economy and the society.</p> <p>Rep. Garin added that HB 8059 intends to channel a large part of the funding to local government units (LGUs) because they are in the best position to determine the actual areas in need of support and what their specific needs are.</p> <p>Expressing support for the bills were resource persons from the Departments of Agriculture (DA), Agrarian Reform (DAR), Trade and Industry (DTI), Interior and Local Government (DILG), Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Information and Communications Technology (DICT), and Labor and Employment (DOLE), Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), Development Bank of the</p>
	HB 8059	Majority Leader Romualdez	Providing mechanisms for accelerated economic recovery and socioeconomic relief, appropriating funds therefor	

<p>Continuation... Economic Affairs</p>			<p>Philippines (DBP), Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP), and Philippine Competition Commission (PCC).</p> <p>DA Secretary William Dar asked the Committee to increase government support to farmers and the agriculture sector considering the contribution of this sector to the recovery and stability of the economy. He said that agriculture was one of the very few sectors that posted positive growth during the entire quarantine period. This, according to Dar, proves that the sector continues to be a pillar of economic stability and is a good area for government investment.</p> <p>DAR Undersecretary Luis Meinrado Pañgulayan welcomed the suggestion of Rep. Salceda to condone all loan obligations incurred by farmers and farmer cooperatives during the period of the pandemic.</p> <p>DBP President and CEO Emmanuel Herbosa took the opportunity to request an increase in DBP's authorized capital stock. This would allow the DBP to accommodate additional capital infusions which can be used to provide loans to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).</p> <p>Department of Finance (DOF) Assistant Secretary Ma. Teresa Habitan noted that most of the items in the bills are already covered under the proposed 2021 General Appropriations Act (GAA). She added that funding for the bills might be sourced only from excess revenues of the government.</p> <p>The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) concurred with the DOF's position. The DBM also expressed concern about duplication of the measures with Bayanihan 2 and the implementing agencies' absorptive capacity until the end of 2020.</p> <p>Rep. Quimbo said that considering that there is an unutilized fund of about P1.3 trillion for 2020, which is around 6% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP), deficit spending should only be around 3-4% and not 9% of the GDP as stated by the executive department. She then asked the DOF to provide the Committee with data showing the actual revenues and spending for 2020 to know the government's actual fiscal position. This will help the Committee determine if there are enough funds to provide for the budgetary requirements of both bills.</p> <p>Rep. Quimbo also opined that the government's target budget of around P75 billion for COVID-19 vaccination would not suffice. She estimates the cost to be about P140 billion. The proposed P75 billion budget aims to vaccinate P60 million Filipinos to achieve herd immunity or a situation when a</p>
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Continuation... Economic Affairs				<p>large portion of the population becomes immune from the disease.</p> <p>Muntinlupa City Rep. Rozzano Rufino Biazon suggested to specifically indicate in the proposed law that 70% of the proposed amount of P25 billion for COVID-19 treatment and vaccination should be allocated for the vaccine.</p> <p>Rep. Paul Ruiz Daza (1st District, Northern Samar) noted that many agencies are underutilizing their funds which might prompt the DBM to ask Congress to extend the validity of the utilization of funds under the 2020 GAA. He manifested his opposition to this extension unless there are negotiations on how these funds can be better utilized. Rep. Daza added that it would be best if the funds for 2020 be reexamined to determine if part of these can be allocated to the programs under the proposed Bayanihan 3.</p> <p>Other concerns raised by the Members were about setting the priorities and standards for COVID-19 medication and vaccines, and the inclusion of areas severely affected by the recent typhoons in the government's "Build, Build, Build" infrastructure projects.</p>
Energy	HB 471	Rep. De Jesus	Establishing the Lineman Training Academy of the Philippines, providing for its powers, structure, appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee, presided by its Senior Vice Chair, Rep. Alfredo Vargas III (5th District, Quezon City), agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to discuss further the four bills.</p> <p>Rep. Sergio Dagooc (Party-List, APEC), co-author of HBs 471 and 472, and author of HB 3247, delivered his sponsorship remarks on the three bills. He said that linemen are considered modern day heroes of today as they risk their lives to help bring power back to areas or communities that have been heavily affected by man-made and natural disasters. Given the dangers involved attendant to their job, the linemen deserve to be given additional insurance coverage and benefits by their employers (distribution utilities).</p> <p>According to Rep. Dagooc, the establishment of a Lineman Training Academy is meant to address the growing shortage of linemen in the power utility industry. The Academy is envisioned to play a vital role in providing skills development training to meet the present challenges in the power industry. It shall offer free training to qualified candidates to become skilled power linemen.</p> <p>Rep. Adriano Ebcas (Party-List, AKO PADAYON), co-author of HB 7058, sponsored the bill. He said that the bill seeks to provide an emergency one-time electric bill subsidy to residential consumers or households with only up to 150 kilowatt per hour (kWh) average monthly electricity consumption. The funds for</p>
HB 472	Rep. De Jesus	Proclaiming the first Monday of August every year as Linemen Appreciation Day		
HB 3247	Rep. Dagooc	Providing for additional insurance coverage and benefits for all linemen and other power line workers		
HB 7058	Rep. Dagooc	Providing government assistance to distribution utilities and its electricity end-users and appropriating funds therefor		

<p>Continuation... Energy</p>				<p>this subsidy shall be sourced from the national government's share from the Malampaya Fund.</p> <p>Rep. Ebcas explained that the subsidies that the low-income families and displaced workers received under the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act early this year are not enough to cover their household expenses including their electric bills which are expected to surge this coming summer season. He added that there is no assurance yet that all the jobs and economic activities that people are relying on will return to normal by next year, thus the need to provide another subsidy for electric bills for low-income families and displaced workers.</p> <p>In addition, Rep. Ebcas said that under HB 7058, a budget of P1 billion is being proposed to be transferred from the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund (NDRRMF) to the Electric Cooperatives Emergency and Resiliency Fund (ECERF), which is under the management of the National Electrification Administration (NEA). The amount shall be used for the restoration and rehabilitation of the electric cooperatives' (ECs) damaged infrastructures due to the recent calamities and for the provision of financial assistance to the ECs to pay their unpaid financial obligations due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>Expressing their support to HBs 471 and 472 were the resource persons from the NEA, DBM, Department of Energy (DOE), Department of Finance (DOF), Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), National Power Corporation (NPC), National Transmission Corporation (TransCo), National Grid Corporation of the Philippines (NGCP), Philippine Rural Electric Cooperatives Association, Inc. (PHILRECA), and the Association of Mindanao Rural Electric Cooperatives, Inc. (AMRECO).</p> <p>Commenting on HB 3247, the DOE, NEA, and AMRECO said that not all distribution utilities (DUs), especially the small ones, may have the financial capability to provide insurance coverage and benefits for their linemen. The DOE recommended that the amount of insurance coverage for linemen should depend on the financial capability of the DUs.</p> <p>With regard to HB 7058, the DOE proposed that the proposed financial assistance be limited only to ECs that were severely affected by the pandemic. The DOE also said that the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) should be involved in the crafting of the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of the proposed law.</p>
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Continuation... Energy				<p>NEA Deputy Administrator for Legal Services Rossan Rosero Lee suggested that the proposed emergency electric bill subsidy should not just be a one-time undertaking but should continue for two months or more. She also said that the subsidy should be limited to residential consumers or households with an average electricity consumption not exceeding 150 kWh.</p> <p>DBM OIC-Division Chief for Budget and Management Bureau-C Rosario Dalisay informed the body that the DBM has already submitted its position paper on the Malampaya Fund as the source of funding for the proposed electric bill subsidy. With regard to the P1 billion budget allocation for the ECERF, she said the NEA's 2021 Quick Response Fund (QRF) can be used for this purpose, considering that the use of the NDRRMF would still require an approval from the President.</p> <p>On the proposed protection loans for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) under Section 8 of HB 7058, Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) Assistant Vice President for Program Management Department Generoso David said that the LBP already has several loan programs for MSMEs.</p> <p>The ERC, NPC, NGCP, PHILRECA and the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) expressed their support to HB 7058.</p> <p>The DOF promised to submit its position paper on HB 7058 at a later date.</p>
Natural Resources	Substitute Bill to HBs 265, 3351 & 4860	Reps. Ramirez-Sato, Arroyo, and Deputy Speaker Rodriguez	Providing for a revised Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act, appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Elpidio Barzaga Jr. (4th District, Cavite), approved the Substitute Bill.</p> <p>Likewise, the Committee agreed to consolidate HBs 1684 and 3614 with the Substitute Bill considering that their subject matter is already subsumed under the proposed Revised Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act.</p> <p>Rep. Barzaga noted that a bill with similar subject matter to that of HBs 1684 and 3614 was approved on Third Reading by the House of Representatives during the 17th Congress.</p>
	HBs 1684 & 3614	Reps. Villafuerte and Vargas	Regulating the catching, sale, purchase, possession, transportation, importation, and exportation of all sharks, rays, and chimaeras and any part thereof in the country	

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