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COMMITTEE MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Local Government	HB 5703	Deputy Speaker Rodriguez	Renaming the Cagayan de Oro Convention Center located in Barangay Indahag, Cagayan de Oro City into the Aquilino Q. Pimentel Jr. International Convention Center	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Noel Villanueva (3rd District, Tarlac), approved HB 5703.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Rufus Rodriguez (2nd District, Cagayan de Oro City), author of HB 5703, said that his bill seeks to rename the Cagayan de Oro Convention Center into the Aquilino Q. Pimentel Jr. International Convention Center to recognize the nationalism, patriotism and contributions of former Senate President Aquilino "Nene" Pimentel Jr., who also served as Mayor and Representative of Cagayan de Oro.</p>
	HBs 2583, 2584, & 7642	Reps. Abueg-Zaldivar and Deputy Speaker Legarda	Declaring special nonworking holidays in Brooke's Point and Quezon in Palawan, and in Anini-Y, Antique, respectively, to commemorate special events	<p>The Committee approved HBs 2583, 2584, and 7642.</p> <p>Rep. Cyrille "Beng" Abueg-Zaldivar (2nd District, Palawan), author of HBs 2583 and 2584, said that her bills seek to allow the people of the Municipalities of Brooke's Point and Quezon, both in the Province of Palawan, to celebrate the achievements of the municipalities since their creation.</p> <p>Department of Labor and Employment Undersecretary Benjo Santos Benavidez said that DOLE supports the intent of the bills. He however, recommends that the commemorations be declared as working public holidays instead of special nonworking holidays. He explained that the latter does not really work to the advantage of the workers, particularly those who are hired on a no work, no pay basis. Further, he said that the declaration of a special nonworking holiday forces establishments/employers to either suspend production of goods and services or incur additional labor cost because of the required holiday pay.</p> <p>On the other hand, Deputy Speaker Rodriguez expressed his support for the bills especially because these are supported by the people themselves, who desire to commemorate the history of their area. He stressed that these bills are only about local holidays, the coverage of which is limited to the municipalities concerned.</p>
	HB 4936	Rep. Ramirez-Sato	Creating a barangay to be known as Barangay Naibuan in the Municipality of San Jose, Province of Occidental Mindoro	<p>The Committee approved HB 4936.</p> <p>Occidental Mindoro Rep. Josephine Ramirez-Sato, author of HB 4936, said that</p>

Continuation... Local Government				upon the passage of her bill into law, Barangay Naibuan will be able to avail itself of a share in the Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA) pursuant to Sec. 285 of RA 7160, otherwise known as the Local Government Code of 1991. The IRA will provide the barangay with the much-needed resources that will propel growth and development in the area.
	HB 5126	Rep. Nograles (J.F.F.)	Creating the Barangay of Madilay-dilay, as the 20th barangay of the Municipality of Tanay, Province of Rizal, providing funds therefor	The Committee approved HB 5126. Deputy Speaker Rodriguez sponsored the bill on behalf of the author.
	HB 5798	Rep. Alvarez (P.)	Renaming the Municipality of San Isidro in the Province of Davao del Norte to the Municipality of Sawata	The Committee approved HB 5798. Deputy Speaker Rodriguez sponsored the bill on behalf of the author.
	HBs 3163 & 5600	Reps. Unabia and Cabredo	Declaring special nonworking holidays in the Municipality of Sugbongcogon, Province of Misamis Oriental and in the Municipality of Polangui, Province of Albay, respectively	The Committee deferred consideration of HBs 3163 and 5600.
Public Order and Safety	Substitute Bill to HBs 2242, 3639, 5340, 6635, 7520, 7639 & 7960, and Senate Bill 1563	Deputy Speaker Garcia, Reps. Tupas, Nieto, Cabochan, Villafuerte, Tambunting, and Vargas; and Senator Zubiri	Lowering the minimum height requirement and removing the height waiver for applicants to the Philippine National Police (PNP), Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP), and Bureau of Corrections (BuCor)	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Narciso Bravo Jr. (1 st District, Masbate), approved the Committee Report on the Substitute Bill.
	Draft Substitute Bill to HBs 2247, 3065 & 7734	Reps. Cabochan, Nograles (J.J.), and Barba	Strengthening the Internal Affairs of the Philippine National Police, amending for the purpose certain provisions of RA 8551, otherwise known as the "Philippine National Police Reform and Reorganization Act of 1998"	The Committee will deliberate further on the draft substitute bill. Rep. Bravo supports the proposal to make the proposed Internal Affairs (IA) an attached agency of the National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM) with the Secretary of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) having supervision and control over the IA in his capacity as chairperson of the NAPOLCOM. Rep. Manuel Cabochan III (Party-List, MAGDALO), author of HB 2247, manifested his approval to the version of the substitute bill. DILG Undersecretary Bernardo Florece expressed support for the proposed law. Internal Affairs Service (IAS) Inspector General Alfegar Triambulo maintained that the proposed IA (which replaces the IAS through a reorganization) be retained within the PNP organization, but that the IA office shall continue to maintain its independence. Under the proposed law, an Internal Affairs shall be an independent, impartial, effective, and efficient institutional guardian of integrity within the PNP.

Continuation... Public Order and Safety				<p>Representing the NAPOLCOM, Atty. Nathaniel dela Rosa said that the relationship of the IA with the NAPOLCOM should be clarified in the bill in accordance with the applicable provisions of the Administrative Code. Likewise, he proposed that the disciplinary powers of the IA Office shall be bound by the rules of procedure to be promulgated by the NAPOLCOM.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their official position papers on the proposed law.</p>
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TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING ON HOUSE MEASURES				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Housing and Urban Development (Technical Working Group)	HB 366	Rep. Yap (V.)	Strengthening the vital role of information and communications technology (ICT), amending for the purpose pertinent provisions of PD 957, otherwise known as the Subdivision and Condominium Buyers Protective Decree, as amended by PD 1216	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Paul Ruiz Daza (1st District, Northern Samar), will deliberate further on the bill in its next meeting.</p> <p>The Secretariat was directed to prepare a substitute bill incorporating the suggestions of the resource persons.</p> <p>Rep. Daza said that HB 366 mandates the developers to set aside a space for telecommunications (telecom) equipment and facilities within their subdivisions. He asked if this space will be part of the 30% reserved area for open space in residential subdivisions required under Presidential Decree 1216.</p> <p>Subdivision and Housing Developers Association (SHDA) National President Rosie Tsai posited that the space should be within the required 30% reserved open space. She maintained that allocating additional space for telecom facilities will definitely increase the cost of housing development and will consequently increase the price of housing units.</p> <p>Tsai also suggested that the telecommunications companies (telcos) put up their facilities at their own expense; undertake an information campaign to allay the fears of residents about the health hazards of telecom facilities; and provide just compensation to housing developers.</p> <p>Tsai and Department Manager Sylvia Briones of the National Housing Authority's Community Support Services Department were of the opinion that the 30% required open space should not apply to socialized and high-density housing projects in order to maximize the use of the land for facilities that will better serve the needs of the residents.</p> <p>Globe Telecom's Corporate and Legal Service Group head, Atty. Ariel Tubayan, countered</p>

Continuation... Housing and Urban Development (Technical Working Group)				<p>that telecom facilities and services are all the more needed in high-density areas where there are more subscribers/residents.</p> <p>Rep. Francisco "Kiko" Benitez (3rd District, Negros Occidental), newly elected Chairperson of the Committee, said that the Secretariat could craft the appropriate provision which will in effect require subdivisions or residential areas to reserve a space for telecom facilities, either within or beyond the 30% required open space, but with the telcos paying just compensation to the subdivision. He added that this may be applicable to both low-end and high-end housing projects. Rep. Benitez stressed that internet access should be treated as a utility necessary for development.</p> <p>The TWG also agreed that housing developers and telcos should discuss how to incorporate the plans for telecom equipment and facilities in the subdivision planning and design.</p>
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DISCUSSION WITH AGENCIES/ENTITIES		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Agrarian Reform	Discussion on the recent developments and circumstances surrounding the exclusion of agriculturally viable lands in the Municipality of Sariaya, Province of Quezon from the coverage of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP), in relation to HR 178	<p>The meeting, presided over by the Committee Secretary, Ma. Rita Macabulos, was held to discuss with the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) the circumstances surrounding the exclusion of agriculturally viable lands in Sariaya, Quezon from the coverage of CARP and the recent developments regarding the matter.</p> <p>Macabulos mentioned that the Supreme Court (SC), in a decision dated September 28, ruled in favor of the previous owners of the land in Sariaya, rendering the agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs), who are holders of certificates of land ownership awards (CLOAs), dispossessed of the land they have been tilling for so many years now. She said that the Committee and the Committee Chair himself, Ifugao Rep. Solomon Chungalao, want to consult with the DAR what possible legal remedies may be resorted to in order to help the affected ARBs and what form of assistance can DAR extend to these poor farmers.</p> <p>Rep. Eufemia 'Ka Femia' Cullamat (Party-List, BAYAN MUNA) also manifested her support for the farmers in Sariaya, Quezon. She said the dispute between the farmers and the previous landowners represents the existing gaps in the agrarian reform law that need to be addressed. She expressed her dismay at how lands that have been previously issued with CLOAs can still be taken away from the farmers. She said this is an injustice to the ARBs affected by the ruling.</p> <p>DAR Undersecretary Luis Meinrado Pañgulayan explained that the legal basis used by the landowners was Section 65 of RA 6657 (Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law of 1988) which provides that "the DAR, upon application of the beneficiary or the landowner, with due notice to the affected parties, and subject to existing laws, may authorize the reclassification or conversion of the land and its disposition when the land ceases to be economically feasible and sound for agricultural purposes,</p>

Continuation...
Agrarian Reform

or the locality has become urbanized and the land will have a greater economic value for residential, commercial or industrial purposes.”

Another basis was Department of Justice (DOJ) Opinion No. 44 Series of 1990 and SC decision in Natalia Realty Inc. vs DAR which ruled that the DAR has no jurisdiction over agricultural lands that were reclassified as commercial, industrial or residential lands before June 15, 1988, the date of effectivity of the CARP law.

However, Pañgulayan maintained that the lands in question should not have been excluded from CARP or converted/reclassified into non-agricultural land as these were already irrigated lands. Under Section 22 of RA 9700 or the law strengthening the CARP, irrigable or irrigated lands as determined by the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) shall not be subject to land conversion.

In the meeting conducted by the Committee on July 29 to deliberate on HR 178, which called for the investigation into the exclusion of agriculturally viable parcels of land in Sariaya from CARP, Rep. David "Jay-Jay" Suarez (2nd District, Quezon), author of HR 178, attested that the farmers have been tilling the land for several years, even prior to the lands' exclusion from the coverage of CARP. He also said in that meeting that the farmers have been granted CLOAs to the subject land.

Pañgulayan said that one of the actions the DAR may take regarding the issue is to revisit DOJ Opinion No. 43, series of 2011. This DOJ Opinion found support in the records of the congressional deliberations on HB 40777, which gave birth to RA 9700, that the policy prohibiting conversion of all irrigated and irrigable farmlands was expressly made absolute and permanent. The DOJ Opinion also rejects the argument that agricultural lands coverable under CARP do not include those classified as commercial, industrial, or residential prior to June 15, 1988. It states that such is an “over-generalization and negates the state policy against conversion of irrigated and irrigable lands and that this should not be made to generally apply to irrigated and irrigable prime agricultural lands.”

Pañgulayan also apprised the body that the DAR has already sought the assistance of the Office of the Solicitor General (OSG) on the matter and has requested the NIA for a consolidated data of all irrigable lands nationwide.

Another option of the DAR is to provide disturbance compensation to the farmers affected by the ruling. He assured the body that the DAR will continue to fight for the cause of the affected farmers.

Meanwhile, DAR CALABARZON Director Rene Calocar informed the body that his office had planned to meet with the 252 affected ARBs but was postponed when a number of DAR employees have tested positive for COVID-19. However, he said that they have already conducted an assessment of government lands that could be used to accommodate the affected ARBs in the event that the latter will be required to vacate the contested lands. He added that his office will also provide a support system for the affected ARBs once the SC ruling is implemented.

The DAR was requested to update the Committee on its future courses of action on the matter and to submit the proposed solutions that they presented during the meeting.

<p>Metro Manila Development</p>	<p>Discussion on the issues relative to the closure of most U-turn slots along Epifanio Delos Santos Avenue (EDSA)</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Manuel Luis Lopez (1st District, Manila), discussed with concerned agencies the issues and concerns arising from the closure of most U-turn slots along EDSA.</p> <p>At the outset, Rep. Lopez said that the purpose of the meeting is to address the inconvenience being experienced by the people travelling along EDSA with the closure of the U-turn slots. He also underscored the need to find permanent solutions to the traffic problem in EDSA and not just temporary measures.</p> <p>In September, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) has started to gradually close the U-turn slots on EDSA in line with the EDSA Busway Project. The project, designed to provide faster mobility for the commuting public, designates the innermost lane of EDSA as an exclusive lane for public utility buses (PUBs) plying the national highway, from Monumento in Caloocan to SM Mall of Asia in Pasay City.</p> <p>Rep. Anthony Peter "Onyx" Crisologo (1st District, Quezon City) asserted that the closure of U-turn slots has actually worsened traffic congestion in Metro Manila particularly in Quezon City. He said that the closure of U-turn slots between Congressional Avenue and Quezon Avenue has led to traffic build-up that stretches to a long distance especially during peak hours. He emphasized the need to explore better solutions that will not be a nuisance to Metro Manila residents.</p> <p>MMDA General Manager Jose Arturo Garcia Jr. explained that the heavy traffic being experienced today is not just because of the closure of U-turn slots but also due to the Christmas season wherein people are opting to go outside. He also apprised the body that the long-term solution being envisioned is the construction of elevated bus lanes along EDSA which will effectively decongest the existing lanes. However, the funding source for this project is yet to be determined, thus he sought the help of the House Members in ensuring that this project will be sufficiently funded in the future.</p> <p>Rep. Crisologo suggested that the funding for the elevated bus lane project should be included in the proposed FY 2022 budget which the House of Representatives will review next year.</p> <p>The Committee Members as well as the Department of Transportation (DOTr) and the National Council for Commuter Protection (NCCS) expressed their support to the implementation of the elevated bus lane project and the inclusion of funding for this project in the FY 2022 national budget.</p>
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