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COMMITTEE MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Ecology	HB 144	Deputy Speaker Marcoleta	Providing for the establishment of a national framework for mandatory environmental insurance coverage for certain environmentally-critical projects	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Glona Labadlabad (2nd District, Zamboanga del Norte), created a technical working group (TWG) to consolidate HBs 144 and 8089.</p>
	HB 8089	Rep. Villafuerte	Requiring mandatory environment insurance coverage to promote ecological protection	<p>Deputy Speaker Rodante Marcoleta (Party-List, SAGIP) was designated as head of the TWG.</p> <p>As author of HB 144, Deputy Speaker Marcoleta explained the merits of the bill. He said that with many instances of man-made environmental damages not properly dealt with, his bill requires a national framework that will guarantee sufficient funding coverage for proper compensation to communities affected and the restoration of the environment damaged by these activities.</p> <p>HB 144 requires owners and operators of environmentally-critical projects to secure a Mandatory Environmental Insurance Coverage (MEIC) to cover for damages to health and property, and the costs for environmental rehabilitation, remediation, and cleanup.</p> <p>Expressing support for the bills were representatives from the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA), League of Municipalities, and the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI).</p> <p>However, representatives from the Philippine Insurers and Reinsurers Association (PIRA), Cement Manufacturers Association of the Philippines (CEMAP), Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP), Federation of Philippine Industries (FPI), and the Philippine Green Building Council (PHILGBC) were of the opinion that enough measures are already in place to ensure funding for the rehabilitation, remediation, and cleanup of the environment in case of damages resulting from the operation of industries.</p> <p>FPI's Edgardo Alabastro said that the proposed law is unnecessary, adding that the current system should just be strengthened instead.</p> <p>PHILGBC Board Member Francisco Arellano, along with COMP Executive Director Ronald Recidoro and CEMAP Executive Director Cirilo Pestaño II, viewed the MEIC as a</p>

Continuation... Ecology				<p>duplication of a long list of environmental funds that businesses are already paying for. They mentioned the Environmental Guarantee Fund, Monitoring Trust Fund, Contingent Liability Fund, Rehabilitation Cash Fund, and Social Development Program, all of which are being funded by the private industries. These funds, they said, are able to cover the risks faster and more comprehensively than insurance coverages. They added that the MEIC could end up increasing the cost of their products, killing their industries, and laying-off numerous workers.</p> <p>National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Economic Development Specialist Jacqueline Miel-Soliguin said that there is a need to conduct a comprehensive study to determine the effectiveness and adequacy of existing mechanisms that are supposed to guarantee just compensation for the degradation of the environment.</p>
Information and Communications Technology	Substitute Bill to HB 6303	Deputy Speaker Garcia	Government Mobile Application Act	<p>The Committee, presided by Rep. Francisco "Kiko" Benitez (3rd District, Negros Occidental), approved the Substitute Bill to HB 6303 subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Pablo John Garcia (3rd District, Cebu), author of HB 6303, agreed to a minor modification of the language of Section 6, paragraph (d) of the substitute bill as proposed by the National Privacy Commission (NPC). The particular provision pertains to the uniform standards and characteristics that government mobile applications shall conform to.</p>
	HBs 412, 2338 & 3825	Rep. Romualdo, Deputy Speakers Escudero and Rodriguez	Regulating the use of utility poles, related support structures, and rights of way for the transmission of cable television or telecommunication signals, including the rates and terms for pole attachments	<p>The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to refine the bills and consolidate the inputs of the Members and the resource persons.</p> <p>Rep. Anthony Peter "Onyx" Crisologo (1st District, Quezon City) was designated as TWG Chair.</p>
	HB 4665	Rep. Crisologo	Mandating all utility and telecommunications companies to comply with the regulations on the use of utility poles	<p>The bills seek to regulate the use of utility poles to ensure the proper installation of pole structures, attachments, and cable wires in order to avoid serious accidents and ensure the safety of all citizens, properties, and government structures and facilities.</p> <p>Expressing their support for the bills were representatives from the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), National Telecommunications Commission (NTC), National Electrification Administration (NEA), Globe Telecom, Inc (Globe), and the Federation of International Cable TV and Telecommunications Association of the Philippines (FICTAP).</p>

<p>Continuation... Information and Communications Technology</p>				<p>Although supportive of the measures, FICTAP National Chair Estrellita Juliano-Tamano informed the body of the concerns of the cable industry as follows: big disparity in the pole rentals being charged to telecommunications companies and cable operators, with the latter being charged much higher; refusal of pole owners to allow FICTAP members to use existing poles especially in the unserved and underserved areas which hampered the implementation of the Free Public WIFI Program of the government; and about 300% increase in the rental fees charged by some electric cooperatives for the use of their electric poles.</p> <p>Philippine Cable TV Association (PCTA) President Joel Dabao underscored the need to address the abrupt increase in the rental rates of the poles as this affects the small players which are constrained to reassess their capital expenditures and reduce expansion activities in the rural areas.</p> <p>The NTC, NEA, Globe, PCTA, Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Manila Electric Company (Meralco), and the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company (PLDT) promised to submit a more detailed position paper on the bills.</p> <p>Globe's Policy Division, Corporate and Legal Services Group Head Ariel Tubayan recommended that the Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) be included as member of the Pole Structures Board, proposed to be created under HB 4665.</p> <p>Meralco Senior Vice President William Pamintuan suggested that more emphasis should be placed on the safety aspect of putting up pole attachments. He also requested that the proposed formula for computing the pole attachment fee be reviewed further.</p> <p>Rep. Sergio Dagooc (Party-List, APEC) suggested to incorporate in the proposed law provisions relating to pole usage fees and charges and the carrying capacity of the poles of electric cooperatives. He also recommended that the associations of electric cooperatives be included in the discussion of the proposed law during the TWG meetings.</p>
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