



Congressional Record

PLENARY PROCEEDINGS OF THE 17th CONGRESS, SECOND REGULAR SESSION

House of Representatives

Vol. 2

Tuesday, September 5, 2017

No. 18

CALL TO ORDER

At 10:00 a.m., Deputy Speaker Mercedes K. Alvarez called the session to order.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The session is now called to order.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Everybody is requested to rise for the singing of the Philippine National Anthem.

Everybody rose to sing the Philippine National Anthem.

PRAYER

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Please remain standing for a minute of silent prayer.

Everybody remained standing for the silent prayer.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Floor Leader is recognized.

ROLL CALL

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mme. Speaker, I move that we call the roll.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Secretary General will please call the roll.

The Secretary General called the roll, and the result is as follows, per Journal No. 18, dated September 5, 2017:

PRESENT

Abaya

Abayon

Abellanos

Abu

Abueg

Acharon

Acop

Acosta

Advincula

Agarao

Aggabao

Albano

Alejano

Almario

Almonte

Alvarez (F.)

Alvarez (M.)

Alvarez (P.)

Antonio

Aragones

Arenas

Banal

Barbers

Bataoil

Bautista-Bandigan

Belaro

Belmonte (J.C.)

Bernos

Bertiz

Biazon

Billones

Bolilia

Bondoc

Bordado

Bravo (A.)

Bravo (M.V.)

Brosas

Bulut-Begtang

Calderon

Calixto-Rubiano

Caminero

Campos

Canama

Cari

Castelo

Castro (F.H.)

Celeste

Cerilles

Chavez

Chipeco

Co

Collantes

Cortes

Cortuna

Crisologo

Cua

Cueva

Dalipe

Datol

De Vera

Defensor

Del Mar

Dimaporo (A.)

Dimaporo (M.K.)

Durano

Erice

Ermita-Buhain

Escudero

Espina

Espino

Estrella

Evardone

Fariñas

Ferrer (J.)

Ferrer (L.)

Flores

Fortun

Fortuno

Fuentebella

Garbin

Garcia (G.)

Garcia (J.E.)

Garin (R.)

Gasataya

Gatchalian

Go (A.C.)

Go (M.)

Gonzaga

Gonzales (A.D.)

Gonzalez

Hernandez	Quimbo
Herrera-Dy	Ramirez-Sato
Hofer	Ramos
Jalosjos	Revilla
Kho	Roa-Puno
Khonghun	Rocamora
Labadlabad	Romualdez
Lagman	Roque (H.)
Lanete	Roque (R.)
Laogan	Sacdalán
Lazatin	Sahali
Leachon	Salceda
Lobregat	Salimbangon
Lopez (B.)	Salon
Lopez (C.)	Sambar
Lopez (M.L.)	Sarmiento (E.M.)
Loyola	Savellano
Macapagal-Arroyo	Suansing (E.)
Maceda	Suansing (H.)
Madrona	Suarez
Malapitan	Tambunting
Mangaoang	Tan (A.)
Mangudadatu (S.)	Tan (M.)
Mangudadatu (Z.)	Tan (S.)
Marcoleta	Tejada
Mariño	Teves
Martinez	Ting
Mending	Tolentino
Mercado	Treñas
Mirasol	Tupas
Nava	Umali
Nieto	Unabia
Noel	Ungab
Nogralés (J.J.)	Uy (R.)
Nogralés (K.A.)	Uybarreta
Nolasco	Vargas
Oaminal	Vargas-Alfonso
Ocampo	Velarde
Ong (E.)	Velasco
Ong (H.)	Velasco-Catera
Ortega (P.)	Veloso
Ortega (V.N.)	Vergara
Pacquiao	Villanueva
Paduano	Villaraza-Suarez
Palma	Villarica
Panganiban	Violago
Panotes	Yap (M.)
Pichay	Yu
Pimentel	Zamora (R.)
Pineda	Zarate
Primicias-Agabas	Zubiri

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. Mme. Speaker, the roll call shows that 192 Members responded to the call.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). With 192 Members present, the Chair declares the presence of a quorum.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mme. Speaker, I move for the deferment of the approval of the Journal of the previous session.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mme. Speaker, I move that we now proceed to the Reference of Business, and request...

REP. ERICE. Mme. Speaker.

REP. GARCIA (J.). ... that the Secretary...

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Yes.

REP. ERICE. May I speak on a matter of personal and collective privilege.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. DEFENSOR. I move for a suspension of the session, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The session is suspended.

It was 10:12 a.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 10:14 a.m. the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The session is resumed.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mme. Speaker, I move that we proceed to the Reference of Business.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Secretary General will please read the Reference of Business.

REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

The Secretary General read the following House Bills and Resolutions on First Reading, Communications and Committee Reports, and the Deputy Speaker made the corresponding references:

BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 6301, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING A MINIMUM BASIC QUALIFICATION IN ALL APPOINTIVE OFFICES AND POSITIONS IN GOVERNMENT, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE BOOK V, TITLE 1, SUBTITLE A, CHAPTER 2, SECTION 9 OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 292, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE REVISED ADMINISTRATIVE CODE OF 1987”

By Representative Escudero
TO THE COMMITTEE ON CIVIL SERVICE
AND PROFESSIONAL REGULATION

House Bill No. 6302, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING ALL LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS AND THE APPROPRIATE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES TO DESIGNATE ONE CARPOOL LANE IN ALL ROADS OR THOROUGHFARES WITH AT LEAST FOUR VEHICULAR LANES WITHIN ITS JURISDICTION AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Lopez (M.L.)
T O T H E C O M M I T T E E O N
T R A N S P O R T A T I O N

House Bill No. 6303, entitled:

“AN ACT REQUIRING THE TEACHING OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OWNERSHIP PARTICULARLY COPYRIGHT LAW AS PART OF THE CURRICULUM OF ALL PRIMARY, SECONDARY AND TERTIARY SCHOOLS IN THE COUNTRY, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Nieto
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION
AND CULTURE AND THE COMMITTEE ON
HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Bill No. 6304, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR ARTISTS WELFARE PROTECTION”

By Representative Nieto
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION
AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 6305, entitled:

“AN ACT TO ENSURE EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES TO MUSLIMS AND TRIBAL FILIPINOS”

By Representative Nieto
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND
EMPLOYMENT

House Bill No. 6306, entitled:

“AN ACT RECOGNIZING THE BRITISH SCHOOL MANILA AS AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION OF INTERNATIONAL CHARACTER, GRANTING CERTAIN PREROGATIVES CONDUCIVE TO ITS DEVELOPMENT AS SUCH, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Lacson
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION
AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 6307, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE SAN JOSE CITY - CARRANGLAN PROVINCIAL ROAD GOING TO CASECNAN, NUEVA VIZCAYA, WHICH TRAVERSES BARANGAYS DIGDIG AND GENERAL LUNA IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF CARRANGLAN, NUEVA ECIJA, AND DUPAX SUR, NUEVA VIZCAYA, INTO A NATIONAL ROAD AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Violago
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS
AND HIGHWAYS

RESOLUTIONS

House Resolution No. 1259, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION INTO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8794 OR THE MOTOR VEHICLE USER’S CHARGE LAW WITH THE END IN VIEW OF ENACTING LEGISLATIVE MEASURES TO ADDRESS THE SAME”

By Representative Escudero
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1261, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION EXTENDING CONGRATULATIONS TO TNC PRO TEAM FOR ITS SUCCESSFUL RUN AT THE INTERNATIONAL 7 (TI7)”

By Representative Nieto
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

ADDITIONAL COAUTHORS

Rep. Arthur R. Defensor Jr. for House Bill No. 2716;

Rep. Tricia Nicole Q. Velasco-Catera for House Bill No. 1893;

Rep. Leopoldo N. Bataoil for House Bills No. 2625, 4344, and 5675;

Rep. Franz E. Alvarez for House Bill No. 202;

Rep. Manuel F. Zubiri for House Bill No. 4722;

Rep. Manuel Monsour T. Del Rosario III for House Bills No. 2625, 4344, 4703, 6159, and 6251;

Rep. Angelina “Helen” D.L. Tan, M.D. for House Bills No. 582, 583, 592, and 780;

Rep. Salvador B. Belaro Jr. for House Bill No. 1177;

Rep. Abraham “Bambol” N. Tolentino for House Bills No. 4115, 4116, 5213, 5900, 5985, and 6029;

Rep. Jose Antonio “Kuya Jonathan” R. Sy-Alvarado for House Bills No. 4115, 4344, 4703, 5213, 5828, 5897, 5900, 5985, 6058, 6145, 6181, 6222, 6223, 6224, 6225, 6227, 6252, and 6257;

Rep. Strike B. Revilla for House Bills No. 4115, 4116, 5213, 5900, 5985, and 6029;

Rep. Rozzano Rufino B. Biazon for House Bills No. 123, 3467, and 4898;

Rep. Manuel T. Sagarbarria for House Bill No. 4982;

Rep. Ricardo “RJ” T. Belmonte Jr. for House Bills No. 5799 and 6251;

Rep. Jocelyn Sy Limkaichong for House Bills No. 450, 2622, 2624, 4115, 4116, 4344, 4703, 5213, 5985, and 6029;

Rep. Lorna C. Silverio for House Bills No. 51, 4208, and 6154;

Reps. Fernando V. Gonzalez and Carlos O. Cojuangco for House Bill No. 2716;

Rep. Lawrence H. Fortun for House Bill No. 6204;

Rep. Isidro S. Rodriguez Jr. for House Bill No. 6026;

Rep. Henry C. Ong for House Bills No. 4115, 4383, 4689, 5985, and 6026;

Rep. John Marvin “Yul Servo” C. Nieto for House Bill No. 593;

Rep. Mariano Michael M. Velarde Jr. for House Bill No. 4521;

Rep. Micaela S. Violago for House Bill No. 5964;

Rep. Ramon “Red” H. Durano VI for House Bill No. 5213;

Rep. Marlyn L. Primicias-Agabas for House Bill No. 6308;

Rep. Manuel Jose “Mannix” M. Dalipe for House Bills No. 4344, 4703, 5213, 5985, and 6025; and

Rep. Luis Raymund F. Villafuerte Jr. for House Bills No. 2622, 2624, 2628, and 4703.

COMMUNICATIONS

Letter dated August 3, 2017 of Menardo I. Guevarra, Acting Executive Secretary, Office of the President, Malacañang, transmitting two (2) original copies of Republic Act No. 10931 which was signed by President Rodrigo Roa Duterte, entitled:

“AN ACT PROMOTING UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO QUALITY TERTIARY EDUCATION BY PROVIDING FOR FREE TUITION AND OTHER SCHOOL FEES IN STATE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES, LOCAL UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES AND STATE-RUN TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, ESTABLISHING THE TERTIARY EDUCATION SUBSIDY AND STUDENT LOAN PROGRAM, STRENGTHENING THE UNIFIED STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE SYSTEM FOR TERTIARY EDUCATION, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”
TO THE ARCHIVES

Letter dated August 3, 2017 of Menardo I. Guevarra, Acting Executive Secretary, Office of the President, Malacañang, transmitting two (2) original copies of Republic Act No. 10932 which was signed by President Rodrigo Roa Duterte, entitled:

“AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE ANTI-HOSPITAL DEPOSIT LAW BY INCREASING THE PENALTIES FOR THE REFUSAL OF HOSPITALS AND MEDICAL CLINICS TO ADMINISTER APPROPRIATE INITIAL MEDICAL TREATMENT AND SUPPORT IN EMERGENCY OR SERIOUS CASES, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE BATAS PAMBANSA BILANG 702, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS ‘AN ACT PROHIBITING THE DEMAND OF DEPOSITS OR ADVANCE PAYMENTS FOR THE CONFINEMENT OR TREATMENT OF PATIENTS IN HOSPITALS AND MEDICAL CLINICS IN CERTAIN CASES’, AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8344, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”
TO THE ARCHIVES

Letters dated 23 August 2017 of Salvador C. Medialdea, Executive Secretary, Office of the President, Malacañang, transmitting two (2) original copies each of the following Republic Acts which were signed on even date by President Rodrigo Roa Duterte.

1. R.A. No. 10933, entitled:
“AN ACT DIVIDING BARANGAY NORTH BAY BOULEVARD SOUTH (NBBS) IN THE CITY OF NAVOTAS INTO THREE (3) DISTINCT

- AND INDEPENDENT BARANGAYS TO BE KNOWN AS BARANGAY NBBS PROPER, BARANGAY NBBS KAUNLARAN AND BARANGAY NBBS DAGAT-DAGATAN”
2. R.A. No. 10934, entitled:
“AN ACT DIVIDING BARANGAY TANGOS IN THE CITY OF NAVOTAS INTO TWO (2) DISTINCT AND INDEPENDENT BARANGAYS TO BE KNOWN AS BARANGAYS TANGOS NORTH AND TANGOS SOUTH”
 3. R.A. No. 10935, entitled:
“AN ACT DIVIDING BARANGAY TANZAIN THE CITY OF NAVOTAS INTO TWO (2) DISTINCT AND INDEPENDENT BARANGAYS TO BE KNOWN AS BARANGAY TANZA 1 AND BARANGAY TANZA 2”
 4. R.A. No. 10936, entitled:
“AN ACT CREATING A BARANGAY TO BE KNOWN AS BARANGAY COMAWAS IN THE CITY OF BISLIG, PROVINCE OF SURIGAO DEL SUR”
 5. R.A. No. 10937, entitled:
“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A MULTI-SPECIES MARINE HATCHERY IN THE CITY OF BISLIG, PROVINCE OF SURIGAO DEL SUR AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”
 6. R.A. No. 10938, entitled:
“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A MULTI-SPECIES MARINE HATCHERY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF LOPEZ, PROVINCE OF QUEZON AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”
 7. R.A. No. 10939, entitled:
“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A MULTI-SPECIES MARINE HATCHERY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF ATIMONAN, PROVINCE OF QUEZON AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”
 8. R.A. No. 10940, entitled:
“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A MULTI-SPECIES MARINE HATCHERY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF GUMACA, PROVINCE OF QUEZON AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”
 9. R.A. No. 10941, entitled:
“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A MULTI-SPECIES MARINE HATCHERY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BAROBO, PROVINCE OF SURIGAO DEL SUR AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”
 10. R.A. No. 10942, entitled:
“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A MULTI-SPECIES MARINE HATCHERY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF TAGKAWAYAN, PROVINCE OF QUEZON AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”
 11. R.A. No. 10943, entitled:
“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A MULTI-SPECIES MARINE HATCHERY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF QUEZON, PROVINCE OF QUEZON AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”
 12. R.A. No. 10944, entitled:
“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A MULTI-SPECIES MARINE HATCHERY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF HINATUAN, PROVINCE OF SURIGAO DEL SUR AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”
 13. R.A. No. 10945, entitled:
“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A MULTI-SPECIES MARINE HATCHERY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF PEREZ, PROVINCE OF QUEZON AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”
 14. R.A. No. 10946, entitled:
“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A MULTI-SPECIES MARINE HATCHERY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF CALAUAG, PROVINCE OF QUEZON AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”
 15. R.A. No. 10947, entitled:
“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A MULTI-SPECIES MARINE HATCHERY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF PLARIDEL, PROVINCE OF QUEZON AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”
 16. R.A. No. 10948, entitled:
“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A MULTI-SPECIES MARINE HATCHERY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF GUINAYANGAN, PROVINCE OF QUEZON AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”
 17. R.A. No. 10949, entitled:
“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A MULTI-SPECIES MARINE HATCHERY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF ALABAT, PROVINCE OF QUEZON AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”
 18. R.A. No. 10950, entitled:
“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A MULTI-SPECIES MARINE HATCHERY IN THE CITY OF LIGAO, PROVINCE OF ALBAY AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”
- TO THE ARCHIVES
- Letter dated August 29, 2017 of Salvador C. Medialdea., Executive Secretary, Office of the President, Malacañang, transmitting two (2) original copies of Republic Act No. 10951 which was signed by President Rodrigo Roa Duterte, entitled:
“AN ACT ADJUSTING THE AMOUNT OR THE VALUE OF PROPERTY AND DAMAGE ON

WHICH A PENALTY IS BASED, AND THE FINES IMPOSED UNDER THE REVISED PENAL CODE, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE ACT NO. 3815, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS 'THE REVISED PENAL CODE', AS AMENDED"

TO THE ARCHIVES

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Report by the Committee on Health and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 369), re H.B. No. 6311, entitled:

"AN ACT INCREASING THE BED CAPACITY OF THE NARRA MUNICIPAL HOSPITAL IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF NARRA, PROVINCE OF PALAWAN, FROM TEN (10) TO ONE HUNDRED (100) BED CAPACITY, TO BE NOW KNOWN AS THE GOVERNOR ALFREDO M. ABUEG, SR. MEMORIAL HOSPITAL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR"

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 1846

Sponsors: Representatives Tan (A.), Abueg and Nograles (K.A.)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Legislative Franchises (Committee Report No. 370), re H.B. No. 6314, entitled:

"AN ACT GRANTING STREAMTECH SYSTEMS TECHNOLOGIES INC., A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, ESTABLISH, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN TELECOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS THROUGHOUT THE PHILIPPINES"

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 3118

Sponsors: Representatives Alvarez (F.) and Madrona

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Legislative Franchises (Committee Report No. 371), re H.B. No. 6315, entitled:

"AN ACT GRANTING THE VOLUNTEER LIFECAREMINISTRIES, INC. AFRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, ESTABLISH, MAINTAIN AND OPERATE NON-COMMERCIAL RADIO BROADCASTING STATIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES"

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 4759

Sponsors: Representatives Alvarez (F.) and Treñas

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Legislative Franchises (Committee Report No. 372), re H.B. No. 6316, entitled:

"AN ACT GRANTING NORTHEASTERN BROADCASTING SERVICES, INC. A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, ESTABLISH, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN RADIO AND TELEVISION BROADCASTING STATIONS IN THE ISABELA PROVINCE AND REGION II"

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 5166

Sponsors: Representatives Alvarez (F.), Albano, Dy, Go (A.C.) Aggabao and Panganiban

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Legislative Franchises (Committee Report No. 373), re H.B. No. 6317, entitled:

"AN ACT GRANTING THE MAGNUM. AIR (SKYJET) INC. A FRANCHISE TO ESTABLISH, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL AIR TRANSPORT SERVICES"

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 5303

Sponsors: Representatives Alvarez (F.) and Tugna

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from the Second District of Caloocan City, Cong. Edgar R. Erice.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Gentleman from Caloocan is hereby recognized.

QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE OF REP. ERICE

REP. ERICE. Thank you, Mme. Speaker. My dear colleagues, good morning.

Kahapon ng umaga at ngayong umaga, sa mga pahayagan at sa himpapawid ay nabanggit na naman po ang lungsod ng Caloocan, particularly may isa pong kaganapan na naman sa aking distrito kung saan ang isang 19 na taong gulang na dating estudyante ng University of the Philippines na si Carl Angelo Arnaiz ay pinatay ng mga pulis.

Sinabi po ng mga pulis na ito daw po ay nanghold up ng isang taxi driver at nakipaglaban kaya po napatay. Subalit sa pag-iimbestiga ng Public Attorney's Office at sa autopsy, lumabas po na ang batang ito ay nakaposas na. Ang batang ito ay tinortyur, binugbog at saka po pinagbabaril nang walang kalaban-laban. Ang

masama po, may isa pang bata na 14 na taong gulang ang kasama ni Carlo na hanggang sa ngayon po ay hindi pa mahanap.

Mme. Speaker, about two weeks ago, headline din po ang Caloocan dahil kay Kian Delos Santos, 17 taong gulang, high school student, Grade 11, pinatay po ng mga pulis nang walang kalaban-laban. Ito po ay hindi isolated cases sapagkat isang taon na ang nakakaraan, ito po ay nangyayari na sa aking mahal na lungsod. I am supposed to deliver a speech a year ago after a series of police operations and vigilante killings that claimed hundreds of lives of my constituents last year, subalit minabuti ko pong pansamantalang manahimik at bigyan ng pagkakataon ang pamahalaan at ang Pangulo na gawin ang kanilang programa para sugpuin ang malaking problema ng droga nang walang gambala mula sa oposisyon.

Bagamat noon pa man ay batid ko nang ang anumang programa na nakabase sa karahasan ay di magtatagumpay, subalit alam ko rin na umaasa ang mamamayan at buo ang paniniwala ko sa Pangulo na kaya niyang tapusin ang suliraning ito at malabong pakinggan ang isang maliit na tinig na tulad ko. Labing-apat na buwan pagkatapos ng libu-libong namatay, palagay ko malaking kasalanan nang hindi kumibo.

Maraming bansa na rin sa buong mundo ang sumubok sa drug war subalit iisa ang naging resulta—kabiguan, paglala ng problema at ang pagkapaslang ng mga inosente. Ito po ay ginawa sa Thailand ni Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra at pagkatapos ng tatlong buwan ng patayan at karahasan, ito po ay itinigil at ang resulta ng imbestigasyon ay nakagigimbal sapagkat kalahati ng mga napatay sa Thailand ay napag-alamang inosente, walang kasalanan o kung tawagin ay collateral damage. Ginawa na rin po ang marahas na drug war sa Indonesia ngunit nabigo din po, napuno lang ang kanilang mga prison, kaya hindi rin po nasawata ang problema ng droga. Ginawa din po ito sa Colombia, sa Mexico, pero nabigo po sila. Sa katunayan, ito ay itinigil na sa Colombia at sila ay nagsagawa ng ibang programa. Ang Mexico po na patuloy ang drug war ay nagbunga na ng 170,000 deaths, higit pa sa bilang ng mga tropang Amerikanong namatay sa labanan sa Iraq at sa Middle East countries.

Ang bansang Estados Unidos ay may 40 taon nang nakikipaglaban sa droga, but with all the billions of dollars spent, with the most sophisticated equipment and highly trained police officers, the US drug war failed miserably. Noong una, ninais ng US na pigilan ang pagpasok ng droga mula sa Mexico kung saan nanggagaling ang cocaine. Hinigpitan ang mga borders at halos makipagpatayan ang mga pulis para pigilan ang pagpasok ng droga mula sa mararahas na mga sindikato sa Mexico, subalit tunay na makinang at nakasisilaw ang limpak-limpak na salapi ng droga. Di iilang mga law enforcer ang kahit na tumatanggap na ng maayos

na sweldo mula sa gobyerno ng Estados Unidos ay nasilaw pa rin at nakisawsaw sa kita ng karumaldumal na negosyong ito. Nang humigpit ang supply ng droga dahil sa pagbabantay ng gobyernong Estados Unidos, ang ginawa ng mga drug syndicate ay sa loob mismo ng Estados Unidos nag-manufacture ng droga. If we cannot control the supply, we should control the demand, ito po ang naging prinsipyo ng US government noon. Kaya nagkaroon din ng marahas na engkwentro sa pagitan ng mga law enforcer at ng mga sindikatong may kakayahan ding magkaroon ng mga armas. Pinaghuhuli din po ng gobyerno ng US ang mga kabataang gumagamit at nagbebenta nito. Karamihan po ng mga nahuli ay mga kabataan at karaniwan ay mahihirap na itim. Ano po ang nangyari? Napuno po ang mga kulungan sa Amerika. Bilyong dolyar ang naubos ng gobyerno upang pangalagaan ang mga preso, at ang masakit, iyong mga teenager na napaghuhuli noong maihalo sa mga presong may karanasan na ay lalo pang lumala. Nagkaroon ng mga koneksiyon sa loob, kaya paglabas ng kulungan ay naging mas masahol pa. Kaya nga maging si dating Pangulong Obama ay umamin na the 40-year drug war of the US government has failed and we should no longer treat drug problem as a criminal justice problem alone but more of a health concern.

There was a time Portugal experienced this when one percent of their population became drug addicts. Kaya tulad na ng unang mga nabanggit kong bansa ay agad naglunsad din ng marahas na drug war, subalit sa kabila ng patayan at kamay na bakal na polisiya ng gobyerno, bagsak pa rin po at hindi naging epektibo ang approach na ito.

Fourteen years ago, the President then of Portugal called on the political opposition, together with health experts and social scientists, and came up with a more comprehensive study and program on illegal drugs. Nagkaisa po ang buong lipunan, administrasyon, oposisyon at akademiya at pagkaraan ng 14 na taon ng pag-iimplementa ng isang panibagong programa na hindi marahas, sila po ay nagtagumpay. Sa kasaysayan ng buong mundo, ang drug program ng Portugal ang naging pinakamatagumpay. Ano po ang kanilang ginawa? Sama-sama po nilang pinag-aralan kung ano ba talaga ang sanhi ng drug abuse sa kanilang lipunan. They came up with a hypothesis that drug abuse is a behavioral problem caused by isolation and the solution should be connection and so they did. The government came up with a program providing it compassionate connection to drug abusers. They set a path for addicts where government social and health workers mingle with them and were able to reform many. The government provided subsidies to employers who will accept drug addicts undergoing rehabilitation. They amended a law and allowed the decriminalization of certain violations in the use of illegal drugs. Kung ikaw ay mahulihan ng sampung gramo ng droga, ikaw

ay susuriin. Kung makikita ng gobyerno na ikaw ay sugapa, ikaw ay dadalhin sa rehabilitation centers. Kung hindi naman, ikaw ay pakakawalan at kukumpiskahin na lamang ang droga. After 14 years of implementing this program, the government of Portugal was able to reduce drug abuse by 50 percent and drug-related deaths by 80 percent.

What is my point, Mr. Speaker, my dear colleagues? I have chosen to be silent for 14 months but after what happened to Kian Delos Santos, after what happened to Carl Angelo Arnaiz, I think, it will be a big sin of omission on my part if I will not stand before you and provide you with a different point of view.

Before my proposal, let me present to you some of the people in my district victimized by the drug war, who were reduced to mere statistics. Una po ay si Albert Samson. Nakita ninyo po, napakagandang lalaki, 17 taong gulang, scholar ko po sa University of Caloocan City. Labinlimang nakamaskara ang pumasok sa isang eskinita. Pagpasok po sa kuwarto ni Albert, natutulog po siya, pinagbabaril. Sayang po ang batang ito, napakasipag, nagtitinda ng bulaklak sa simbahan, ulilang lubos, walang ama, walang anak, walang kapatid, walang magtatanggol. Nakokonsensiya po ako dahil noong panahong iyon, gusto ko siyang ipagtanggol pero natakot po ako. Si Albert Samson po, hanggang ngayon, humihingi ng hustisya, napakabait na bata. Nag-imbetiga po ako. Kinausap ko ang aming alkalde, ang ama ni Congressman Malapitan. Kinausap namin iyong mga pulis. Sabi ng Caloocan City Police, hindi namin alam. Labinlimang nakamaskara, hindi ninyo alam? Anong klaseng kapulisan kayo? Eh, palagay ko pulis din iyong 15 na iyon dahil nakakalabas-masok sa mga eskinita sa Caloocan at maraming pinapatay nang walang gumagambala. Sa pag-iimbetiga namin ni Mayor Malapitan, napag-alaman namin na ang dahilan daw ng pagpatay kay Albert Samson, wrong door, maling pintuan ang napasok.

Barangay Captain Francisco Antep Guevarra, isang huwarang barangay captain, matagal na pong naglilingkod sa Caloocan—lumapit po sa akin, ang sabi sa akin, “Cong. Egay, tulungan mo ako. Nakalagay daw ako as drug protector.” Si Antep Guevarra po, simpleng tao, walang baril, walang bodyguard, 29 na taon ng nagtrabaho sa PLDT, at siya po ay magre-retire na sana sa isang taon. Sinamahan ko po siya sa Chief of Police, sa aming Mayor, sa district, sabi wala daw po sa listahan ng drug protector. Pero isang araw po, naglalakad, binaril sa ulo, patay. Tinanong namin ang Chief of Police, tinanong namin ang district, ang sabi, hindi raw po sila. Pero marami raw po ang nag-operate sa Caloocan.

Barangay Captain Prolly Bolo, isang negosyante, lumapit sa akin, “Cong. Egay, tulungan mo ako. Sinita ako ng mga pulis kasi hindi ko raw inilagay sa listahan ng mga drug pusher iyong dalawang tao sa aking

barangay.” “Hindi ko talaga inilagay,” sabi sa akin ni Kapitan Bolo, “dahil papatayin ako ng mga iyon dahil bata ng mga pulis iyon. Malalaman ng mga pusher na iyon, kapag inilagay ko sila sa listahan, na ako ang naglagay.”

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). May we remind the Gentleman from Caloocan that you have exceeded your time.

REP. ERICE. Yes, two minutes.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). May you please wind up as we have important matters to take up today.

REP. ERICE. Mme. Speaker, alam ko po, masidhi ang kagustuhan ng Pangulo na tapusin ang problema ngunit Pangulo na rin ang umamin na mukhang hindi niya makakayang tapusin ang problemang ito sa loob ng anim na taon. Alam ko rin po na kahit limang termino ng Pangulo, hindi matatapos ito kung patayan ang approach. Kaya po ang aking suggestion, we should address the drug problem not just as a criminal justice issue but as an issue encompassing societal problems.

May ilan pong mga adik akong nakapanayam— isang babae, at asawa—tinanong ko kung bakit sila nalulong sa shabu. Iisa po ang dahilan— isolation at kahirapan.

Kaya hinihiling ko po, Mme. Speaker, na sana naman after 14 months, pakinggan din naman ng gobyerno ang ibang tinig. Dapat po siguro pag-usapan natin ito.

Kami naman pong mga nasa oposisyon ay handang makipagtulungan, puwede po kaming tawagan. Tawagan natin iyong mga social scientist, mga health expert. Pag-usapan natin, ano iyong pinakaepektibong paraan para natin masugpo ang drug abuse.

Siguro po after 14 months, panahon na rin para po i-evaluate ng Pangulo at ng gobyerno kung ano ang nangyari sa drug war na isinagawa na kampanya at magkaroon po tayo ng maliwanag na larawan, kung ito po ba ay epektibo o hindi.

Mme. Speaker, dalangin ko po na sa ating mahigit 200, kulang-kulang 300 na naririto, ay magliwanag ang ating mga isipan at tulungan natin ang ating Pangulo na tumingin din sa ibang alternatibo upang maiwasan na ang pagdanak ng dugo, ang pagiging biktima ng maraming inosenteng mga kabataan at mga Pilipino.

Maraming salamat po, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mme. Speaker, the Honorable Erice wishes to no longer answer any interpellations.

I move that we refer the matter of personal and collective privilege raised by the Honorable Eric to the Committee on Rules.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mme. Speaker, before we proceed, may we greet our honorable Majority Leader Rodolfo C. Fariñas. It is his birthday today. (*Applause*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). To our dynamic Majority Leader and an inspiration to many of us here in the House of Representatives, happy, happy birthday, Manong Rudy. (*Applause*)

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mme. Speaker, I move that we now proceed to the consideration of measures under the Calendar of Business.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

Please proceed.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 6215

Continuation

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mme. Speaker, under the Calendar of Unfinished Business, I move that we resume the consideration of House Bill No. 6215 as contained in Committee Report No. 363, submitted by the Committee on Appropriations. For this purpose, may I ask the Secretary General to be directed to read the title of the Bill.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Secretary General is hereby directed to read the title of House Bill No. 6215.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 6215, entitled: AN ACT APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR THE OPERATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES FROM JANUARY ONE TO DECEMBER THIRTY-ONE, TWO THOUSAND AND EIGHTEEN, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Floor Leader is recognized.

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mme. Speaker, I move that we take up the budget of the Department of Energy including its attached corporations, except the ERC and NEA.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the budget of the Department of Energy, including the attached agencies except NEA, the National Electrification Administration, and the ERC will be now tackled.

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mme. Speaker, may we acknowledge the presence of the officials of the DOE family, headed by Hon. Alfonso G. Cusi, Secretary; Admiral Reuben S. Lista, President and CEO of the PNOC; Atty. Pedro A. Aquino Jr., President and CEO of the PNOC-EC; Mr. John J. Arenas, President and CEO of the PNOC-RC; Mr. Pio J. Benavidez, President and CEO of the NPC; Mr. Edgardo R. Masongsong, Administrator of NEA; Mr. Arnold Francisco, VP of PSALM; Atty. Melvin A. Matibag, President and CEO of TransCo; Gloria Victoria C. Yap-Taruc, Commissioner of the ERC; and Josefina Patricia M. Asirit, Commissioner of the ERC.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*) The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mme. Speaker, the parliamentary status of the Bill is that it is in the period of sponsorship and debate. I move that we recognize the Hon. Celso L. Lobregat of the First District of Zamboanga City.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Honorable Lobregat is hereby recognized to sponsor the budget of the Department of Energy.

REP. LOBREGAT. Mme. Speaker, I am here this morning to sponsor the budget of the Department of Energy and two of its attached agencies, the National Power Corporation and the Philippine National Oil Company. We are not yet sponsoring the budget of NEA and we are not yet sponsoring the budget of the ERC as there are still some concerns that have to be discussed.

Today is also the birthday of our Majority Leader, Rodolfo Fariñas, and the best birthday gift we can give to our Majority Leader is to have an abbreviated budget proceedings. We have had extensive budget briefings on the DOE

and its attached agencies. We have also had the pre-plenary wherein all issues and concerns were discussed. So, I hope, I am here only to answer two or three questions, Mme. Speaker.

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the honorable Gentleman from the Third District of Quezon, our honorable Minority Leader Danilo E. Suarez, for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The honorable Minority Leader Suarez is now recognized for his interpellation.

REP. SUAREZ. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

Will the Sponsor be willing to yield the floor for some interpellations?

REP. LOBREGAT. It would be an honor to answer questions from the distinguished Minority Leader.

REP. SUAREZ. Your Honor, you are requesting for a budget approval of P2.65 billion?

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes.

REP. SUAREZ. It is practically the same with last year. You feel there is no need for an increase? Are they comfortable with what they received last year that they do not need additional funds for 2018?

REP. LOBREGAT. It is good that you pointed that out because the Department's budget, if you compare to all the other departments, it is only 0.07 percent of the national budget, the second smallest budget among the various departments.

REP. SUAREZ. I am sorry to intervene, distinguished Sponsor, it is still taxpayers' money regardless of whether it is P1 billion or P1.

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. SUAREZ. It is the same.

Can I just request for a one-minute suspension of the session?

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The session is suspended.

It was 10:39 a.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 10:40 a.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The session is resumed.

REP. SUAREZ. Distinguished Sponsor, Mme. Speaker, let me go back to the history ...

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes.

REP. SUAREZ. ... of the performance of the Department you are sponsoring.

In 2013, the requested budget was P3.255 billion; total budget in billions was P4,134,000,000; utilization rate was 1.20 or a 29.1 percent slippage as against actual expenditures. In 2014, you requested a budget of P3.299 billion; total budget in billions was P6,705,000,000; and you have an unutilization rate of 13.47 percent. In 2015, P3.46 billion; total budget, P7.4 billion; amount utilized, P2.8 billion; utilization rate, 38.21 percent. Year 2016 was somewhat big because I have not gotten it, it was not submitted to me, the exact figure.

On the average, the track record of this Department seems to be not spending what was appropriated. So, there are only two things that we can say: they do not know what they are doing or they do not know what they want. So, this time, you are proposing, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker, a budget of P2.65 billion. Can you somewhat present in a PowerPoint presentation, how you intend to spend this money? Because, I think, the Members of this House is somewhat confused by your utilization rate.

REP. LOBREGAT. Mme. Speaker, one of the big projects of the Department of Energy was the E-Trike Project wherein they would have tricycles powered by electricity. Unfortunately, or fortunately, this project has been cancelled because the amount it would—the cost of a tricycle, I think, would be about P400,000. So, can you imagine, how a tricycle driver can recover the investment costing P405,000? So, that is one of the reasons the budget was not utilized.

REP. SUAREZ. Distinguished Sponsor, Mme. Speaker, let me just come up with a quick reply on that.

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes.

REP. SUAREZ. The intention of having that electrified ...

REP. LOBREGAT. Tricycle.

REP. SUAREZ. ... tricycle is noble.

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes, noble.

REP. SUAREZ. But, I think, we are more concerned about why our electricity is the highest in the region? I think those issues should be the first that should be addressed on their proposal for 2018 Budget.

REP. LOBREGAT. Definitely, Mme. Speaker.

So, on the projects, how they intend to spend the budget, you have locally funded projects and you have a GOP counterpart and you have others, the big items here for 2018 will be the Household Electrification Program or HEP in Off-Grid Areas, Renewable Energy which is the solar panels for households, then you have the Nationwide Intensification of Household Electrification. This involves electrification of households and communities from the tapping point up to the houses. So, those are the two big items under their budget of P271 million for the HEP and P624 million for the Nationwide Intensification of Household Electrification. This is how they intend...

REP. SUAREZ. Your Honor, Mme. Speaker, can we just get our figures synchronized?

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes.

REP. SUAREZ. More than one-fifth of the total operational budget that they are asking for, P93.7 million or 21 percent, will be allocated for the Renewable Energy Development Program. Am I correct there?

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes.

REP. SUAREZ. But it does not tally with your records, so what are the key projects under this program and what is the status on those ongoing projects?

REP. LOBREGAT. Well, you have a breakdown on the locally—on the project itself and you have the off-grid electrification or definitely falls into the electrification of the households and so with nationwide intensification. So, if you are, more or less, breaking down the budget, you can break it down, the PS, the MOOE and the Capital Outlays, but you can also break down the budget in terms of the purpose.

REP. SUAREZ. In your projected target, one percent from the baseline data of your 5,413 megawatts on renewable energy, is that—for your 2018, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker, why is it that your project is higher than the target?

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. LOBREGAT. Your Honor, Mme. Speaker, I move for a one-minute suspension of the session.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The session is suspended.

It was 10:47 a.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 10:49 a.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The session is resumed.

REP. LOBREGAT. In the regular program, you have your PS, MOOE, and Capital Outlays. For 2018, the regular program is P1.263 billion, and the PS is P472 million. MOOE is P620 million and Capital Outlays is P170 million. You have a special account, the General Fund, which is for special projects, the total is P1,353,000,000 and then you have Personnel Services of P8 million, you have MOOE, P1,225,000,000 and Capital Outlays of P120 million.

REP. SUAREZ. What is the total workforce of the Department, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker?

REP. LOBREGAT. The total workforce of the Department of Energy is complemented by total filled plantilla positions of 738 out of 973 authorized positions as of June 30, 2017.

REP. SUAREZ. Do they have unfilled ?

REP. LOBREGAT. They have unfilled positions.

REP. SUAREZ. Of how many?

REP. LOBREGAT. Out of 973, only 738 are filled.

REP. SUAREZ. So, they still have a good number of unfilled positions.

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes, more than 200.

REP. SUAREZ. May we know, considering the number of jobless, Your Honor, why can we not fill up those positions?

REP. LOBREGAT. They are—this is an ongoing process and they have continuously reposted, but they have not yet been able to fill up all the 973 positions.

REP. SUAREZ. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.
Your Honor, this Representation is 74 years old.

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes.

REP. SUAREZ. And I tend to be forgetful sometimes. Baka makalimutan ko lang iyong mga requests noong ibang Members natin. Mayroon tayong policy na doon sa mga bayan, probinsiya at distrito na mayroong power plant, na sa bawat generation, they are supposed to get a certain amount of share.

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes, definitely.

REP. SUAREZ. That is one centavo or...

REP. LOBREGAT. It is P0.01 centavo for every kilowatt-hour. Pareho doon sa Distrito ko, sa siyudad namin, mayroon din kaming power generation, and we are supposed to get also that.

REP. SUAREZ. Ni anino ho hindi pa namin nakikita iyong P0.01 centavo, Your Honor. So, maybe that is one of the most important issues that we will have to tackle and approve in this hearing, ano? May I know the relevance of why that money has to be given to the Department? Bakit hindi ho natin ibigay doon sa local government unit? Sila ho ang nagbe-bear ng brunt ng pollution nitong mga power plant.

REP. LOBREGAT. Siguro ho kung—sang-ayon ako sa inyo pero kailangan natin ng batas dahil iyong sharing ng P0.01 centavo ay nasa batas ho.

REP. SUAREZ. No, the sharing, Your Honor, is—I will not debate with you whether it has to be legislated. Iyong sharing is very clear. Pero sinasabi ba doon sa sharing na dapat ang magde-decide kung saan dadalhin ang pera, ang Department o iyong host community?

REP. LOBREGAT. May mga proseso ho iyon gaya ng sa environment, sa iba-ibang requirement. Actually, iyon—that is what you call ER 1-94. The legal basis ho is Section 5 and under the DOE law of 1992. And the policy objective really is to recognize the contributions made by the communities and people affected, to lessen the conflict of rights and to promote harmony and cooperation among the host local government. Iyong process flow

REP. SUAREZ. Is that part and parcel of the legislated law, Your Honor?

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes, ho, actually Section 5.

REP. SUAREZ. Can I approach the Sponsor and...

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The session is suspended.

It was 10:54 a.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 10:54 a.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The session is resumed.

REP. SUAREZ. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.
May I know how much has been accumulated already on this percentage of share to the local government by this time.

REP. LOBREGAT. Anyway, while they are looking for the figure, one of the issues here is the liquidation. Once a certain project has been approved, then it is implemented. But if the local host community and the EC cannot liquidate, then they cannot be downloaded with additional funds. That is one of the issues that is, more or less, holding up also the downloading of funds.

So far, on the trust account of ER 194, as of June 30, 2017, P5.9 billion, more or less, then you add a collection of P407 million in interest earned refund, the total available balance is P6.3 billion.

I agree with you, Your Honor, this is a...

REP. SUAREZ. Now, ...

REP. LOBREGAT. ...refund that should be used.

REP. SUAREZ. Distinguished Sponsor, now, you can see the problem of underspending.

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes.

REP. SUAREZ. Gaano na ho katagal accumulated iyang P5.9 billion na iyan?

REP. LOBREGAT. Actually, over the years. It started...

REP. SUAREZ. Over the years, ...

REP. LOBREGAT. Since 1994 ho, over the years iyan.

REP. SUAREZ. Now, can we come up with a Resolution in this plenary, to be approved by both

parties, Congress and the DOE, on the proper application of this fund? Kasi, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, do you have coal fire in your district, distinguished Sponsor?

REP. LOBREGAT. Not yet ho.

REP. SUAREZ. Not yet.

REP. LOBREGAT. Wala pa. Bunker.

REP. SUAREZ. We have a lot. Iyan hong cause ng mga respiratory-related diseases that cannot be seen by the naked eye caused by pollution, karamihan ho niyan, they are either coming out from vehicles or power-generation na coal-fired. Ang ginagawa ho ng mga power plant operators, tinataasan iyong chimney para hindi lang ho doon sa lokal magsa-suffer, but mas malaki iyong distribution noong what we call "acid rain."

Kami ho iyong nagbe-bear ng environmental hazard at ang pakunswelo sa atin ay iyan pong 0.01 percent na ibibigay. Why do we not just distribute that to the local government unit ASAP at nang mapakinabangan? At isa sa malaking dapat bigyan niyan are hospitals and rural health units kasi sila ho ang nagkakasakit ng respiratory-related diseases.

REP. LOBREGAT. I am with you, pero ang pwede nating gawin, talagang baguhin natin iyong batas, iyong Republic Act No. 7638, also known as the DOE Act of 1992.

REP. SUAREZ. Maybe you can just address the IRR, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. LOBREGAT. So, ...

REP. SUAREZ. I mean the essence of the law is there. I do not think we have to debate on that. It should go to the benefit of the hosting community.

REP. LOBREGAT. Siguro ho, the proper Committee that should handle this would be the Committee on Energy. The Chairman, Rep. Lord Allan Jay Q. Velasco, is here and I am sure that he is also concerned about this P6.2 billion na hindi...

REP. SUAREZ. Since 1994.

REP. LOBREGAT. ... nagagamit, nandiyan lang. Opo. So,...

REP. SUAREZ. Can you ask your principal, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, for a listing of what they have done so far on finished projects that were funded by this particular point zero one share?

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes, po.

REP. SUAREZ. Pakibigyan lang ho ang office ng Minority para, now I understand when you said ...

REP. LOBREGAT. Can we just provide that list later? I will just ask them to provide the...

REP. SUAREZ. Not now, but you can do that next week, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, now I understand your concerns on the electric tricycle or e-trike. Wala pa pong nadedeploy na e-trike up to now.

REP. LOBREGAT. Actually, there was supposed to be a project. Unfortunately, may dumating...

REP. SUAREZ. May nagastos na ho ba ang DOE.

REP. LOBREGAT. May dumating, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. May nagastos na po ba ang DOE diyang sa e-trike business na iyan?

REP. LOBREGAT. In the original E-trike Project, there was supposed to be 100,000 e-trikes. Unfortunately, may dumating na 3,000, pero ang 97,000, na-cancel na po.

REP. SUAREZ. Bakit po, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor?

REP. LOBREGAT. Papaano ka makakabili ng isang tricycle worth P405,000. Papaano mo mare-recover ito?

REP. SUAREZ. Ang isang e-trike ay P400,000?

REP. LOBREGAT. Opo, P400,000. Kaya nga pagpasok ng bagong administrasyon ...

REP. SUAREZ. Pero ang e-trike ...

REP. LOBREGAT. ... kinansel.

REP. SUAREZ. ...walang pollution iyon?

REP. LOBREGAT. Ang alin?

REP. SUAREZ. Walang pollution.

REP. LOBREGAT. Walang pollution.

REP. SUAREZ. Kasi...

REP. LOBREGAT. Walang ngang pollution, pero paano makaka-recover ...

REP. SUAREZ. ... electric jeep, hindi po ba?

REP. LOBREGAT. ... ng ano ...

REP. SUAREZ. May I know how many horse power is...

REP. LOBREGAT. Parang magta-taxi ka ng Mercedes Benz iyon po.

REP. SUAREZ. Yes. How many is the horse power of the e-trike?

REP. LOBREGAT. So sanay tayo sa horse power hindi ba dahil sa makina, pero this...

REP. SUAREZ. No, okay, so...

REP. LOBREGAT. ... sa e-trike ...

REP. SUAREZ. ... kung hindi nila alam ang horse power, can we put a side car kagaya sa tricycle?

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes. It is designed to have its own cart for four to six passengers. Ang magpa-power ho niyan ay ang battery.

REP. SUAREZ. So it is even more powerful than a standard 125-horse power na motorsiklo?

REP. LOBREGAT. According to them, yes.

REP. SUAREZ. So ang ating debatable issue diyan ay ang P400,000 na e-trike. It can carry more passengers, but it is expensive. We take the brunt of coming up with electric tricycle, na kaya ang tatlong pasahero, pati na ang nakaangkas sa likod, bale apat, pero napakalakas ng pollution.

REP. LOBREGAT. Okay. Sa 3,000 na dumating, the actual cost is P456,000, and there are no takers. Walang gustong sumubok.

REP. SUAREZ. Napaka-pragmatic naman natin, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor. How can you compare the cost of a P400,000 e-trike against a 125-horse power na Kawasaki or Honda? Talagang hindi magiging profitable.

Ang question ko lang, we are risking environmental hazard for the sake of a cheap passenger fare, hindi po ba?

REP. LOBREGAT. Opo, pero masyadong malaki ang disparity.

REP. SUAREZ. I understand.

REP. LOBREGAT. Siguro kung konti lang, ...

REP. SUAREZ. But at the end of the day, ...

REP. LOBREGAT. ... puwede pa.

REP. SUAREZ. ... iyon po ang ating recourse. The Gentleman is saying that it is expensive, but it is clean.

REP. LOBREGAT. But there are no takers.

REP. SUAREZ. Because it is expensive. But if we give subsidy gaya ng sinasabi mo, where government takes 90 percent of the cost, and 10 percent lang sa trike owner, baka po profitable. In the meantime, I suggest—hindi pa pala natin nakuha ang data ng—ilan na ba ang respiratory-related diseases na nagkakaroon tayo because of environmental pollution?

REP. LOBREGAT. Ngayon, they are trying to work out the loan agreement, baka puwedeng maging mas mura. So far, talagang kinansela na ang 97,000 units.

REP. SUAREZ. Mme. Speaker, the Sponsor is defending the budget of the DOE except for the ERC and ...

REP. LOBREGAT. The NEA.

REP. SUAREZ. And what are ...

REP. LOBREGAT. I am also defending the NEA and the ERC, but we will not be going to take it up now. Ang ano lang ...

REP. SUAREZ. Is the PNOC under the Gentleman?

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes.

REP. SUAREZ. I just would like to read to you, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, some of these data that I just received this morning are requesting me to take up the worth of the bunk gas deal. This is the PNOC. Anywhere from P800 million to P2 billion seem to have been bid out without specified terms of preference. Was there a bidding of bunk gas, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor?

REP. LOBREGAT. In September 2009, the PNOC purchased from the DOE all the rights, benefits and entitlements on bunk gas equivalent to 108 petajoules in the amount of P14.4 billion.

REP. SUAREZ. Fourteen point four billion pesos.

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Billion or million?

REP. LOBREGAT. Billion.

REP. SUAREZ. Billion, okay.

REP. LOBREGAT. From these 108 petajoules, the PSALM withdrew 4.6 petajoules in 2013, while 6.3 were sold to Pilipinas Shell consortium amounting to P2.5 billion in 2015. This left the PNOC with a total of 97.6 petajoules of bunk gas. Now, there is still P11.9 billion...

REP. SUAREZ. The Gentleman mentioned about Pilipinas Shell?

REP. LOBREGAT. Actually, we were talking about rights. The bunk gas,...

REP. SUAREZ. Are we talking of avgas here—aviation gas?

REP. LOBREGAT. Liquified.

REP. SUAREZ. Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, my first concern is whether the PNOC purchased this amount of bunk gas during the time—who is the head of the PNOC now?

May I know the name of the head of the agency.

REP. LOBREGAT. He is Admiral Lista.

REP. SUAREZ. Is he with the coast guard before? Hindi ba siya na-involve doon sa isang lumubog na barko?

REP. LOBREGAT. According to him, never po. Actually, the bunk gas ...

REP. SUAREZ. No, I just would like to finish my...

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes.

REP. SUAREZ. ... para hindi mawala ang line of thought ko, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

It seems that there was a term of preference, but instead, an unsolicited offer was considered disregarding the options available from more than 50 offerors. That is one. May I proceed.

In 2016, retrofitting of the PNOC building was approved for P47 million but was cancelled. Is that correct also, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor?

REP. LOBREGAT. The retrofitting is ...

REP. SUAREZ. Only to be reapproved on the same proposal for P68 million.

REP. LOBREGAT. Actually, there is now a budget for retrofitting of the building in 2018.

REP. SUAREZ. No, but the price went up to P68 million.

REP. LOBREGAT. Sa building.

REP. SUAREZ. No. What I am saying is, the original cost in 2016 was P48 million; ultimately, it was awarded for P68 million.

REP. LOBREGAT. They had an original budget of P68 million, but then, they cancelled it because they believe that they did not need it. But now, they put it again in the budget because the crack in the building ay lumaki because of the two earthquakes. Ngayon, nasa budget na naman ng PNOC ang P68 million.

REP. SUAREZ. So, this data is correct, from P48 million to P68 million.

REP. LOBREGAT. Fifty-seven.

REP. SUAREZ. Fifty-seven.

REP. LOBREGAT. Fifty-seven, ngayon P68 million.

REP. SUAREZ. Now, I am more concerned about that unsolicited proposal wherein the agency did not comply with the basic bidding procedure. There were 50 offerors, and instead, you go to an unsolicited proposal. The amount, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker, is not penny-ante; it is in billions.

REP. LOBREGAT. As I said, when they bought the rights from the DOE, the amount was about P14.4 billion. From this P14.4 billion or 108.6 petajoules, PSALM withdrew 4.6 petajoules in 2013, while 6.32 petajoules were bid out and eventually sold to Pilipinas Shell Petroleum in the amount of P2.5 billion. It is perhaps in this P2.5 billion that the Gentleman is referring to, there was no bidding, but according to the PNOC, this was bid out.

REP. SUAREZ. Can we just be clarified on that? It is the PNOC which is buying the bulk, and Pilipinas Shell and other agencies buy from them. Am I correct there?

REP. LOBREGAT. The bunk gas was sold through a consortium.

REP. SUAREZ. No, I mean, was it advantageous to the government?

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes.

REP. SUAREZ. Can you explain why?

REP. LOBREGAT. Ang pagbili ng bunk gas, ito ay nasa ilalim pa ng lupa. Actually, sa mga planta, part ito ng take or pay. Maski hindi nagamit nang planta, babayaran ito kaya take or pay. Nasa ilalim ito ng lupa that is why it is called bunk gas. The rights to this bunk gas were bought by the PNOC which eventually sold them to Pilipinas Shell. The PSALM withdrew 4.6 kaya may natitira pang 97 petajoules which is worth P11 billion. Now, they have to monetize this, so they will have to eventually sell it. But they cannot sell it at the moment because the Ilijan and other gas-generating plants ay may kontrata sa consortium. Kaya nga mayroon pa.

REP. SUAREZ. Please educate this Representation, are you saying that this gas is underground?

REP. LOBREGAT. Underground.

REP. SUAREZ. Are they man-made?

REP. LOBREGAT. Hindi po.

REP. SUAREZ. Is this a natural reserve under that has to be explored or a man-made storage for gas?

REP. LOBREGAT. Actually, nandoon iyon at puwedeng gamitin, puwede nang i-draw, pero ang problema, hindi nila mabenta iyong mga gas plants kasi ang gas plants have a contract with the consortium. The contract is, they will buy everything from the consortium. So, iyong natitira iyong bunk gas, nabayaran na pero hindi nagamit. Kaya nga rights ito ng DOE na ibinenta sa PNOC.

REP. SUAREZ. Okay, i-summarize po natin. The bottomline is, is it black or red? I mean, do we make money or do we lose money?

REP. LOBREGAT. They make money when they sell it. They have to monetize.

REP. SUAREZ. The PNOC made money?

REP. LOBREGAT. The government.

REP. SUAREZ. That is the PNOC.

REP. LOBREGAT. Pero wala pa, nasa ilalim pa ng lupa.

REP. SUAREZ. Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, these are very broad figures and it is a learning curve for me to study it. But I would appreciate it if your agency can submit to this Representation the parameters that you are talking about, this gas that is underground and bought by Pilipinas Shell. Medyo kontrobersiyal kasi ang sinasabi lang, at the end of the day, we made money.

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes, we made money pero ang pera, nandoon pa sa ilalim ng lupa. Kikita lang ng pera kung maibenta na ito.

REP. SUAREZ. Okay. Teka, sandali lang, babaguin ko ang tanong ko. So the money is in the air.

REP. LOBREGAT. It is underground.

REP. SUAREZ. It is not in the air, it is underground, pero hindi natin hawak ang pera.

REP. LOBREGAT. Hindi, hindi natin hawak, ...

REP. SUAREZ. So, it is an assumption that we will make money ...

REP. LOBREGAT. ...magkakapera kung maibenta.

REP. SUAREZ. ... in the event that the consumer will buy that gas.

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes.

REP. SUAREZ. Medyo complicated itong PNOC, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. LOBREGAT. Medyo mahirap talagang intindihin.

REP. SUAREZ. Paki-submit lang sa akin ang total. This agency that the distinguished Sponsor is defending...

REP. LOBREGAT. It is a complicated industry.

REP. SUAREZ. Yes, complicated enough. If they are not spending what is being allocated, that is already complicated enough.

Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, I raised this question earlier, and I hope the good Secretary can answer. Why is it that up to now, out of the entire region in Asia, we are the highest in terms of electricity per kilowatt?

REP. LOBREGAT. The issue here now is that there are no government subsidies on this industry. If you recall, we had, more or less, the EPIRA, because the EPIRA was legislated by Congress, more or less, to stop the hemorrhaging of the NAPOCOR.

REP. SUAREZ. Now, I have a ...

REP. LOBREGAT. Noon, talagang subsidized.

REP. SUAREZ. The Sponsor mentioned earlier the DOE minus the ERC, but can I raise question already on the ERC or not yet?

REP. LOBREGAT. Not yet po, and we are not taking it up.

REP. SUAREZ. Who will be sponsoring the ERC?

REP. LOBREGAT. I will be sponsoring the ERC, but there are certain issues and concerns that more or less have not yet been discussed with the ERC.

REP. SUAREZ. With whom?

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. LOBREGAT. There are some issues and concerns with some Members of Congress.

May I ask for a suspension of the session, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The session is suspended.

It was 11:18 a.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 11:18 a.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The session is resumed.

REP. SUAREZ. Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, siguro nagkakaintindihan naman tayo when we say, for instance, let us talk about Luzon. I raised this question in one of the Committee hearings here. Are we comfortable with our reserves on actual projected consumption in Luzon, and you are saying that we have, maybe, about a thousand megawatts in reserve. Is that correct, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor?

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes, they have the status of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao: what is the demand, what is the supply, and what is the ...

REP. SUAREZ. No. From what I understand, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, Visayas and Mindanao are quite okay. Ang Luzon, okay din. But what I am saying is, ang tanong ko, ang reserve ba the Luzon ay manipis o makapal?

REP. LOBREGAT. Ang reserve ng Luzon—siguro, puwede natin sabihin manipis.

REP. SUAREZ. Manipis, so mayroon ho kaming parochial concern. We are building a 1200-megawatts coal-fired and this is parochial for this Representation because it is in my province and I will not be a hypocrite to say that if that plant operates, the province will get about P400 million a year in RPT. Am I correct there, Your Honor?

REP. LOBREGAT. While they are looking at the figures, anyway, the power situation of the Philippines versus the ASEAN countries, the rates are as follows: the Philippines in terms of industry, it is 5.84; Thailand is 5.37; Indonesia which is really highly subsidized, only 1.66; Malaysia is 4.71; and Singapore is the same as the Philippines at 5.84. You are correct, we are high. In the commercial, the Philippines is 7.49; Thailand is 5.37; Indonesia again, the lowest with 2.15, again, highly subsidized.

REP. SUAREZ. Your Honor, that is on the consumer already.

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes.

REP. SUAREZ. Consumer lang po iyan?

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes, it is in the list. I can submit this to you. You have industry, commercial and domestic. With regard to the ER 1-94 on the one centavo, we will submit this to you. This is a very, very thick folder. Here, this gives you all the details of that. Now, the Luzon demand, we also have it here. We can submit this to you. More or less, it tells you the supply and demand and the reserves.

REP. SUAREZ. Iyan lang ho ang hinihingi namin, distinguished Sponsor, to have a working agreement with the Department na give the leeway of letting the local government units decide for themselves. What structure should be built? Para mawala na ho iyon, kasi iyong pera ibinabalik pa sa Department...

REP. LOBREGAT. Tama po.

REP. SUAREZ. ...when you go to the whims and caprices of these executives who sit down on their asses in air-conditioned offices while we are having problems with our constituents in the far-flung barangays.

REP. LOBREGAT. I agree. It is a very circuitous process and, hopefully, we will join hands in amending the DOE Law, so we can avail of those funds.

REP. SUAREZ. Can I have the assurance of the Sponsor that no less than the Chair of the powerful Committee on Energy is around that, henceforth, the proper shortcut of procedures be given so that our local government unit can avail of this privilege of 0.01 percent, the power generation share.

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes, actually we have gotten the assurance of the Chairman of the Committee of Energy that a bill will be filed and we hope that the Minority Leader and all other Members of Congress will be authors or coauthors of that bill.

REP. SUAREZ. Well, minus the filing of the bill that will be cumbersome, Your Honor, I am asking that maybe a simple switch or twist on the IRR can be done between the Chair of the Committee and the Department concerned on what we call “enhanced implementation” on the use of this fund. Your Honor, this money that is being handled by the Department will not make them rich or poor. It just sits there.

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Wala namang ginagawa iyon, samantalang puwede ho naman nating pakinabangan na yaong mga community na nagho-host noong power plant.

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes, Mr. Speaker, if it can be done through the IRR, and I am sure that the Chairman of the Committee on Energy will do it. But the IRR cannot go against or cannot go beyond the law. So, pag-aralan iyan ho, and if it can be done through the IRR, it will be done.

REP. SUAREZ. On the last issue, distinguished Sponsor. I filed a bill considering the ownership of National Grid, Your Honor.

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes. I have just gotten word that the Secretary of Energy has no objection to amending the provisions. If it can be done to the IRR, then there will be no objection as long as it does not go above the law.

REP. SUAREZ. Your Honor, this Representation, together with some Members of the House, we did a walk-through on the National Grid. Pinuntahan ho namin iyong opisina. We have seen their structure and we have seen for ourselves the flow of electricity nationwide. Nandoon ho sa room ng National Grid iyan.

If I understand it correctly, 40 percent of that operation is owned by foreign nationals.

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes.

REP. SUAREZ. Am I correct there?

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes. In fact, this is being looked into. In fact, there are recommendations that are being—I have read through some of those recommendations.

REP. SUAREZ. I am invoking national security, Your Honor. I mean, we have a very good friendly relationship with our neighboring country that owns 40 percent of this plant but, heaven forbid, if there will be major issues or a conflict of interest and security, this Representation is saying that that country can turn off our electricity with a simple push of a button.

REP. LOBREGAT. Mme. Speaker, I will provide you a letter from the National Transmission Corporation, Atty. Melvin Matibag, the President and CEO and, more or less, this was a memorandum for the Secretary of Energy, from Atty. Matibag, regarding the audit of the National Grid Corporation in compliance with the concession agreement.

The issues taken up were: one, the acceptance of the pre-payment; then, you also have...

REP. SUAREZ. You mentioned Mr. Matibag, I think he is in full accord with my idea that this should be nationalized, Your Honor.

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes, you have violations of the Anti-Dummy Law, then you have the issue of ownership of the...

REP. SUAREZ. Now, maybe this time, even without the perfection of the bill—because I am invoking national security, Your Honor, maybe this time, you can scout already from our local moguls, tycoons who would be willing to buy the 40 percent, if it will be nationalized.

REP. LOBREGAT. Well, the Department of Energy and TransCo are seriously looking into your concerns, and I am sure that Atty. Matibag has discussed this with you, and that is why you are saying that he is in accord with some of your views.

REP. SUAREZ. Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, I would temporarily suspend my interpellation to give way to other Members who would like to raise questions to the Department of Energy.

REP. LOBREGAT. Thank you very much, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Lady from the Third District of Nueva Ecija, Cong. Rosanna “Ria” Vergara.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Lady from Nueva Ecija is hereby recognized to do her interpellation.

REP. VERGARA. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

Mme. Speaker, my question is not about the budget of the DOE at P1.26 billion. In fact, for a Department that provides a very basic vital need—electricity, a major driver of progress in any economy. I feel that its budget is miniscule compared to the Department of Education and the Department of Health.

During the Committee hearing, there was a letter sent to my office from PSALM, dated August 22. I was asking about the universal charge-stranded cost component. In the letter, distinguished Sponsor, it states that the universal charge-stranded cost component at P0.1938 per kilowatt hour will diminish due to the increasing privatization proceeds of eligible IPPs.

I am also aware, distinguished Sponsor, Congressman Lobregat, that you have filed House Bill No. 122, which is the Non-Privatization of the Agus-Pulangi Hydropower Complexes and creation of the Mindanao Power Corporation. I believe this is a step in the right direction. However, among the IPPs owned by NPC, there are still the Unified Leyte Geothermal Power Plant and the Benguet Mini-Hydroelectric Power Plant, both renewable plants, that I also believe should not be privatized but they are not part of your House Bill.

I would like to know, and this is my question, Mme. Speaker, I would like to know the policy direction of the DOE, specifically on power generation. Will they fully comply with the terms of the EPIRA which is to privatize all generation assets or are we now rethinking and seriously considering entering power generation? May we ask on the long-term plans of the DOE on generation and its future plans in the next 5, 10, and 15 years, not only for renewable power but for generation and its totality.

REP. LOBREGAT. It is good that you mentioned about the Bill that I filed. I also made my position very clear when I had a meeting with the DOE and the attached agencies. As I was going to sponsor their budget, I said, if you have plans to really privatize Agus and Pulangi, I will not sponsor your budget. That is how we, Mindanaoans, feel, very strongly feel about any privatization of the Agus and Pulangi.

As to your concern about the privatization of what is left, the Pagbilao Coal-fired Thermal Plant, the Unified

Leyte Geothermal and the Benguet Mini-Hydro, per EPIRA—these are really supposed to be privatized. But, in the recent past, I think that the Department of Energy is studying possible amendments to the EPIRA in the sense that they have even asked for the opinion of DOJ concerning this bunk gas. One possible alternative plan to the bunk gas is to have your own generating plant wherein the bunk gas will be sold to that.

So, I think, the Department of Energy under this administration is, more or less, flexible and, I think, willing to restudy the position of whether the government should have a stake, even a little stake, in power generation.

REP. VERGARA. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

My next statement, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, is not a question but a manifestation. Will the distinguished Sponsor allow me to make a manifestation?

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes.

REP. VERGARA. Currently, the Energy Regulatory Commission has made it mandatory for power users...

REP. LOBREGAT. Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, we are not taking up the ERC. We are—we have ...

REP. VERGARA. Yes, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. LOBREGAT. ... stated earlier that ...

REP. VERGARA. It is an appeal, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, to the DOE.

REP. LOBREGAT. Okay.

REP. VERGARA. May I continue.

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, as long as it is not really ERC-related, because we are not taking the ERC budget as of now.

REP. VERGARA. Yes, Mr. Speaker. It is actually an appeal for the DOE to look at this issue.

So, currently, the Energy Regulatory Commission has made it mandatory for power users of one megawatt and above, referred to as contestable customers, to secure their own power supply agreements with accredited Retail Electricity Suppliers or called RES. This is now a subject of a TRO by the Supreme Court. These Retail Electricity Suppliers do not necessarily own power-generating facilities. They are consolidators, or simply put, middlemen.

As of today, only 6 out of 30 Retail Electricity Suppliers or 20 percent are accredited by the ERC-

owned power plants. I would like to manifest that the DOE should investigate how the ERC issues these RES licenses, how they are being granted and who they are being granted to. We want to lower power rates, and I believe, adding another layer of power players, in this case, the retail electricity suppliers who do not own power plants will only exacerbate the problem of our country which is the high power rates as mentioned by our Minority Leader, Congressman Suarez.

So, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, it is an appeal for the DOE to look at the ERC and who they are granting this retail electricity supply licenses to.

REP. LOBREGAT. You can see that they are nodding. Meaning to say, they would seriously look into your concern. Thank you.

REP. VERGARA. Thank you, Mme. Speaker. Thank you, distinguished Sponsor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from COOP-NATCCO Party-List, Cong. Anthony M. Bravo, Ph.D.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M). The Honorable Bravo is hereby recognized.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you, Mme. Speaker. Good morning.

Will the distinguished Sponsor yield to some questions from this Representation?

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes, gladly.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you, distinguished Sponsor, Mme. Speaker.

While the proposed budget for the Department of Energy is a meager—as we can view, it is only P1.2 billion, 1.263227. Am I correct with the figure?

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes, P1.6 billion.

REP. BRAVO (A.). However, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, the Department of Energy has a huge fund in its coffer which is, in fact, under the responsibility or accountability of the DOE. I am speaking of the Earmarked Revenue you are collecting from—as authorized by different enacted laws?

We start with, distinguished Sponsor, Mme. Speaker, Presidential Decree No. 972, which allows the DOE to collect a certain amount attributed to coal production. Am I correct, distinguished Sponsor, Mme. Speaker?

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes, correct, correct. Yes.

REP. BRAVO (A.). As far as the balance as of December 31, 2016, how much was the total balance as far as Earmarked Revenue of the DOE is concerned?

REP. LOBREGAT. The balance as of June 30, 2017 after this Fund 151 is P210,725,542,423.02.

REP. BRAVO (A.). As of December 31, 2016, the DOE has a balance of P203 billion.

REP. LOBREGAT. P203,174,000,866 ...

REP. BRAVO (A.). Eight hundred sixty-three. This is how big ...

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes.

REP. BRAVO (A.). ... the collection of the Department of Energy which is—if we compare the appropriation that will be appropriated, as proposed for 2018, it is just a drop from the bucket.

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes. Actually, and most of these funds are the Malampaya Funds.

REP. BRAVO (A.). The following laws has also authorized the DOE to collect under Earmarked Revenue such as Republic Act No. 9513 which is the geothermal plant operation, and wind production, hydro production and solar production.

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Am I correct, distinguished Sponsor, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes. Correct.

REP. BRAVO (A.). In the same manner, under laboratory testing, under Presidential Decree No. 1234 and Presidential Decree No. 87, this Presidential Decree No. 87, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, is about the production of petroleum.

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes.

REP. BRAVO (A.). How about, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, the contract signed by the government relative to gas extraction? Gas extraction—can you please educate us relative to this matter? How much has been collected from such and how much was supposed to be the share of the government?

REP. LOBREGAT. Actually, most of this is Malampaya. So, iyong balance is about P190 billion.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Allow me to proceed to the actual expenditure, as reported for 2015. The DOE has incurred P4,863,935,000 in expenditures. Am I correct in this figure?

REP. LOBREGAT. By the way, all funds ho, iyong total is P4.6 billion.

REP. BRAVO (A.). P4 billion?

REP. LOBREGAT. P4.6 billion including continuing funds.

REP. BRAVO (A.). P4.6 or P4.8?

REP. LOBREGAT. P4.6—yes, P4.6 all funds.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. BRAVO (A.). May I request for suspension of the session for one minute, Mme. Speaker, to just compare our notes.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The session is suspended.

It was 11:41 a.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 11:43 a.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The session is resumed.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you, Mme. Speaker. As we compared our notes ...

REP. LOBREGAT. We have reconciled with our figures.

REP. BRAVO (A.). The P4.8 billion is correct.

REP. LOBREGAT. The Gentleman's figures are correct, P4.8 billion.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you, distinguished Sponsor.

Will the Sponsor please educate us on what was the nature of the expenditure of this P4.8 billion?

REP. LOBREGAT. In 2016?

REP. BRAVO (A.). If he does not have the details now, I will appreciate it if I will be given a report...

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes, okay. We will just ...

REP. BRAVO (A.). ...the details of the P4.8 billion, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LOBREGAT. We will just submit the report.

REP. BRAVO (A.). So, that is as far as 2016 is concerned, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor.

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes.

REP. BRAVO (A.). May I proceed now to 2017.

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes.

REP. BRAVO (A.). It appears in the report that in 2017, while it is not yet a completed fiscal year, there is a projection of revenues of P23 billion and a projected expenditure of P6 billion, which is almost P2 billion above or more than the previous expenditure. Again, in the interest of time, I would like to request the DOE to furnish this Representation the details of this.

REP. LOBREGAT. Thank you.

REP. BRAVO (A.). May I proceed, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor.

Another source of fund aside from the Earmarked Revenue is your off-budget account. This is under Republic Act No. 8479, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor. Am I correct?

REP. LOBREGAT. Can the Gentleman, Republic Act...

REP. BRAVO (A.). Republic Act No. 8479.

REP. LOBREGAT. In the interest of time, what is the title of the Republic Act?

REP. BRAVO (A.). In my report, a faithful reproduction from the Net, as of December 31, 2016, you have a balance of P6.2 billion, to be exact P6,274,557,000, Mme. Speaker. Am I correct with the figure?

REP. LOBREGAT. We are checking the figures, Mme. Speaker.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The session is suspended.

It was 11:46 a.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 11:48 p.m., the session is resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The session is resumed.

REP. BRAVO (A.). As conferred with the distinguished Sponsor, Mme. Speaker, it appears that the figures tallied.

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes.

REP. BRAVO (A.). And they committed to this Representation to...

REP. LOBREGAT. That they will submit a report.

REP. BRAVO (A.). ... submit a report relative to the expenditure incurred for off-budget accounts for 2017 and 2016.

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes, they have taken note, and they will do so.

REP. BRAVO (A.). With that commitment, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, I rest my case.

Thank you.

REP. LOBREGAT. Thank you very much, Congressman Bravo.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from the BAYAN MUNA Party-List, Rep. Carlos Isagani T. Zarate.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Gentleman from the BAYAN MUNA Party-List is hereby recognized for his interpellation.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

Good morning to our distinguished Sponsor.

Will the distinguished Sponsor yield to some interpellation?

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes, considering that the Gentleman asked many questions during the briefing and the pre-plenary, I am sure that he has very few questions left.

REP. ZARATE. Yes, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor. These are the questions that I failed to articulate during the briefing and the pre-plenary sessions.

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes.

REP. ZARATE. Mr. Sponsor, Mme. Speaker, last June 28, the President issued Executive Order No. 30, directing concerned government agencies to convene as the Energy Investment Coordination Council or EICC, supposedly to act upon publication of Energy Projects of National Significance or EPNS not exceeding a 30-day period. Failure to act upon such or to decide within that period, specific timeframe, would mean an application for EPNS is deemed approved. Kapag walang ginawa iyong mga ahensya, approved na iyong application nila.

So, under that EO, the Energy Projects of National Significance must have the following qualifications as laid down in Section 2:

- a) significant capital investment of at least P3.5 billion;
- b) significant contribution to the country's economic development;
- c) significant consequential economic impact;
- d) significant potential contribution to the country's balance of payments;
- e) significant impact on the environment;
- f) complex technical processes and engineering designs; and
- g) significant infrastructure requirements.

The EPNS are then facilitated through the creation of the EICC, as I mentioned, which would spearhead and coordinate national government efforts to harmonize, integrate, and streamline regulatory processes requirements. So, there are agencies under that Council.

As provided in this EO, the EICC has this significant function within 30 days from the effectivity of the Order: to establish a simplified approval process and baselines in the approval of the EPNS, like the presumption of prior approvals and what actions should be taken within 30 days.

So, may I ask the following clarificatory questions: first, this "simplified approval process" is apparently a mere formality if all those things are complied with. As with such process, it seems that all the EPNS are virtually approved. In fact, such term as "simplified approval process" is actually, we can say that it is different from "simplified application process", which sounds more judicious. Dito, parang mas pinabilis. It is a simplified approval process instead of a simplified application process.

So, how would the process fit within the 30-day period as provided in that Executive Order? Meaning, how would the 30-day period fit all the respective processes of the concerned agencies, for example, from the DENR, the National Electrification Administration, the NGCP, the Napocor, the TransCo, the DOF, the BIR, the Customs, the Department of Justice, et cetera, Mme. Speaker?

REP. LOBREGAT. Actually, this streamlining is not only in terms of energy but if you look at the policy of the Duterte administration, our administration, basically in all aspects, there is a move to lessen the number of signatures, a move to lessen the time for approval because of so many layers of bureaucracy.

So that is so for energy. That is why, Executive Order No. 30, creating the Energy Investment Coordinating Council, was made in order to streamline the regulatory procedures affecting the energy projects. True, there is a 30-day deadline to act on the application, and if the application is not acted upon, it is considered approved.

Now, all the agencies concerned have been consulted on this matter and the agencies have come out stating that they would need 30 days for the approval process. That is why before the Order was penned, more or less, there was a consultation with all agencies concerned.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor.

Yes, the purpose is to streamline, to fast-track, but are we not sacrificing quality, of seeing to it that all these projects comply with all our existing laws just because we want to fast-track the approval of a particular project? There are a lot of agencies concerned here.

My next question is, will there still be hearings to be conducted within the period of 30 days and would there be public consultations to be conducted by these different agencies involved in the process, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. LOBREGAT. Well, one of the concerned agencies which we have to give due regard to is the NCIP, ...

REP. ZARATE. Yes.

REP. LOBREGAT. ...the National Commission on Indigenous People. They are being consulted on the matter on how, more or less, the process can fit within the 30 days. That is one concern and I share the Gentleman's concern on that, that the NCIP has the IPRA Law and so, again, that is being considered.

REP. ZARATE. Actually, ...

REP. LOBREGAT. All the other agencies are, more or less, committed that they can finish the process within 30 days.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, Mme. Speaker.

Actually po, hindi lang naman NCIP, kahit na, halimbawa, iyong mga magsasaka nating naninirahan sa mga sakahan na dadaanan ng mga proyekto. Kahit na iyong ating mga informal settlers. Sila ba ay kukunsultahin? Kasi po, dito sa panukala, itong Executive Order na ito, mukhang kung gusto ng isang ahensiya o isang applicant for a project na mapabilis iyong approval ng kanyang proyekto, the only thing that puwedeng gawin diyan ay sabihan iyong isang ahensiya, "Huwag mo nang galawin iyan in the next 30 days because that means approved na iyong inyong proyekto." Kaya iyon ho ang itinatanong natin.

REP. LOBREGAT. Actually, the NCIP, indigenous people, the farmers will be consulted.

REP. ZARATE. Yes, because this shortened period, does this not curtail, in fact, the agencies concerned to judiciously review the applications under the EPMS, Mr. Sponsor, Mme. Speaker?

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes, but you see—okay, there is an Executive Order. Now, if there are certain departments that continuously do not act and if we will just approve it, I am sure na may mga sanctions itong mga agencies or departments that do not act because that means they are not doing their function. They are just, more or less, abdicating and saying, "Sige, we did not act, approve it." So, I am sure na there will be, hopefully, administrative sanctions against these agencies that do not act in 30 days.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor.

Dahil ngayon po, we know for a fact na sometimes, our regulators actually do not act within their mandate to regulate the sector.

Under the concept, still in this Executive Order, or the presumption of prior approvals,...

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes.

REP. ZARATE. ...agencies that receive an application for the EPMS, again, as I mentioned, should process the application without waiting for the action of the other agencies.

Now, for example, Meralco, or if I am another generation company, for example, Aboitiz, and I have an EPMS application, where would I start submitting

my application? To any agency or is there a number one, number two, number three, number four?

REP. LOBREGAT. It can be done simultaneously, sabay-sabay.

REP. ZARATE. Sabay-sabay?

REP. LOBREGAT. Puwedeng sabay-sabay.

REP. ZARATE. So, I can just file with a certain agency, say, the DOE or the DENR and I can disregard all the other requirements? Can that be possible, Mr. Sponsor, Mme. Speaker?

REP. LOBREGAT. As long as ...

REP. ZARATE. How does the simplified process work if the ...

REP. LOBREGAT. Basta kailangang kumpleto iyong mga dokumento. Kasi, kung hindi kumpleto iyong dokumento, eh, papaano maaaksiyunan? So, hopefully, you will start with the DOE and then, after that, puwede nang sabay-sabay iyong iba.

REP. ZARATE. Yes. So, just to picture it out, halimbawa, there are six or seven agencies concerned, at iyong tatlong ahensiya, walang ginawa at doon sa apat, may mga requirements silang sinunod. Doon sa apat, dalawa ang ahensiyang nagsabing, “Hindi kayo naka-comply.” So what will happen to the application now after 30 days?

REP. LOBREGAT. Kailangang kumpleto iyong dokumento. Pagkatapos, kung mali-mali iyong dokumento mo o may misrepresentation, that will be a cause for cancellation.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you for stating that, Mr. Sponsor, Mme. Speaker.

Now, my next question is, will this new Executive Order also cover the so-called “greenfield” or even “brownfield” projects that currently have pending applications, for example, the ERC?

REP. LOBREGAT. It will cover all projects.

REP. ZARATE. They will cover.

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes.

REP. ZARATE. Even if they are already pending before the ERC, for example. For the record...

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes, it will cover everything.

Kasi, kung bago lang, isa-subject doon sa 30 days, iyong dati hindi naman subject sa 30 days, unfair naman sa dati—iyong bago aaprubahan; iyong dati, hindi.

REP. ZARATE. So, you are saying that if there are already pending projects now with the ERC, and they are considered the EPNS, then we can apply retroactively the provisions of EO No. 30. Is that what the Sponsor is saying, Mme. Speaker?

REP. LOBREGAT. Both retroactive and prospective.

REP. ZARATE. Okay, thank you.

I inquired on that because there are now power supply agreements pending before the ERC and up for approval by the ERC. Are you saying that this will apply if they complied with the requirements of EO No. 30? Are they now considered approved? Is that what the Sponsor is saying, Mme. Speaker, even if there are still issues that are being considered before the ERC, Mr. Sponsor, Mme. Speaker?

REP. LOBREGAT. Unfortunately, we are not yet taking up the budget of the ERC.

REP. ZARATE. No. I just mentioned the ERC because these projects will ultimately—this EPNS, these projects will ultimately be approved by the ERC.

REP. LOBREGAT. Approved or disapproved, di ba?

REP. ZARATE. Yes, of course. But under the EPNS, if they complied, as you mentioned, admitted earlier, if they complied with the requirements of EO No. 30, then, even if one agency failed to act within the 30-day period, then these projects are already considered approved by virtue of Executive Order No. 30.

REP. LOBREGAT. No. Actually the issue there is that if the agency does not act in 30 days. But if it acts before 30 days and disapproves it, it is disapproved, hindi ba?

REP. ZARATE. Thank you.

REP. LOBREGAT. So, if it has to go to the ERC, the Commission has the option based on their studies to approve or disapprove. It is not automatically approved.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you for clarifying that, Mr. Sponsor. So, even if you say that this will apply retroactively, if the process has already started, because naturally these projects are already with the particular

agency, then it means that the process has already started. Then we have to await the outcome of that process in that particular agency. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor.

Now, earlier, the previous interpellator also asked about the issue of privatization. The good Sponsor, being a fellow Mindanaoan, has already stated clearly his position on privatization. We have privatized almost 74 percent of the country's total capacity of 11,139 megawatts, yet, our people are still paying billions due to the EPIRA.

Now, my particular concern is the Malaya Thermal Plant which is one of the remaining assets still owned and controlled by the government. Yet, recently, Mr. Sponsor, Mme. Speaker, the Department insists on proceeding to privatize the facility, in fact within the year. The Malaya Thermal Plant is an important plant, which has 600-megawatt facility, and I think it is considered a must-run facility in times of shortage in power supply.

Currently, the PSALM is just, I think, waiting for the final wording ...

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes, the Malaya Thermal Plant, the final transaction documents for privatization is for approval of the PSALM Board.

REP. ZARATE. Yes, my question now, Mr. Sponsor, Mme. Speaker, how much would it cost to convert the Malaya Thermal Plant into a baseload plant? Because that is what is in the pipeline, to convert this into a baseload plant.

REP. LOBREGAT. So, there is a plan to convert this into an LNG plant, pero ang plano is for the private sector to fill the plant.

REP. ZARATE. Malaya—so, we are going to sell this so that the buyer or whoever is that will convert this into a baseload plant.

My next question is, hindi po ba puwedeng—dahil sabi ninyo kanina, even the Department is entertaining the idea of amending the EPIRA or either through other means para ang—nakita kasi natin iyong problema talaga sa EPIRA, at hindi naman bawal sa EPIRA na ang gobyerno ay magpatakbo pa rin ng kanyang mga planta.

Ang tanong ko, Mr. Sponsor, Mme. Speaker, can the government not shoulder the cost of converting Malaya Thermal Plant into a baseload plant?

REP. LOBREGAT. Nasa batas ho iyon, sa EPIRA. So, kung sa tingin natin, kailangan na talagang pumasok, even if may stake ang gobyerno sa generation, power generation, amyendahan natin iyong batas.

REP. ZARATE. Yes, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. LOBREGAT. But iyong sa—gaya noong sa Agus and Pulangi, it was really stated na i-hold muna natin iyon. That is why when that law was passed, I was also part of that Congress, and the Mindanao Congressman really insisted na huwag munang i-privatize iyong Agus and Pulangi, but all the others, wala namang condition na huwag munang i-privatize. So, sa tingin mo, sa tingin natin, kung kailangang baguhin iyong batas, baguhin na natin iyong batas para at least puwedeng pumasok ang gobyerno sa power generation.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, Mme. Speaker, that is why I am asking this, kung ano talaga ang policy ng Kagawaran ngayon, ng Departamento. In several hearings, we said na kailangan nang pumasok muli ang gobyerno at hindi naman bawal dahil sa ngayon nga ay mayroong mga planta pa rin na pinapatakbo ng ating gobyerno. At dito sa partikular na usapin ng Malaya, in fact, there was one interview na sinasabi ni Kalihim Cusi na he is afraid that even though a winning bidder might not operate, kung mabili nila itong Malaya Thermal Plant, why insist on privatizing it kung hindi naman pala—kahit na may—iyong manalo ay hindi niya kayang i-operate iyon? So, bakit hindi na lang ang gobyerno, halimbawa, ang mag-operate nito, Mr. Sponsor, Mme. Speaker?

REP. LOBREGAT. I agree with you, but as I have said, palitan natin iyong batas. Sinusundan ng DOE iyong batas, pero I think even the DOE, if we have our hearings, I do not think they will object na pumasok iyong gobyerno sa power generation.

REP. ZARATE. Yes, because even under the EPIRA, there is no need actually to amend if the government wants to operate, continue operating the Malaya Thermal Plant, dahil even under the EPIRA, puwede naman iyon. Kaya ang itinatanong natin, gusto ba ng Kagawaran, gusto ba ng gobyerno na ito ang magtuluy-tuloy na magpatakbo nitong Malaya Thermal Plant?

Sinasabi natin, kailangang i-rehabilitate ito, kailangang i-convert into a baseload plant. May kakayahan ba ang gobyerno? Ang sasabihin ko po, mayroong kakayahan dahil, for example, nandiyan naman po iyong Malampaya Fund na we know for a fact, sabi ng Bureau of Treasury, nandiyan pa rin iyong pondong iyan na puwedeng gamitin para dito.

Taun-taon na lang, iyon ang sinasabi sa atin, kulang na kulang ang supply dito sa Luzon, kay kailangan nang pumasok ng gobyerno para at least hindi tayo nagiging hostage. Kaya iyon po ang ipinupunto natin kung ano ang patakaran ngayon talaga ng Departamento, Mr. Sponsor, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LOBREGAT. Sa batas talaga, kung susundan natin ang batas, idi-dispose. Pero, kaya nga I am with you na kailangan sigurong palitan natin iyong batas.

REP. ZARATE. Yes, kaya nga sa atin sa Mindanao, kahit na nasa batas na dapat two years ago nang n-privatize na ang Agus-Pulangi Hydropower Complex, tuluy-tuloy pa rin iyong operation niyan. But, for as long as hindi ho tama, naamyenda iyong EPIRA, nandiyan pa rin iyong threat of privatization of these remaining assets.

Now, at any rate, may I proceed to other points, Mr. Sponsor. Despite our concurrence with the Paris Accord, it is a fact that coal is still the major baseload of many of the country's energy pipeline. In fact, the Department itself admits that 60 percent of the projects now in the pipeline are coal-fired powerplants. Kanina lang, nabanggit ng ating kagalang-galang na Minority Leader ang masamang epekto nitong coal-fired powerplants at sila ngang mga nasa local government unit ang nahihirapan dito.

So, nine years after the passage, for example, of Republic Act No. 9513 or the Renewable Energy Act of 2008, bakit ho hanggang ngayon ay dependent pa rin tayo dito sa coal, Mr. Sponsor, Mme. Speaker?

REP. LOBREGAT. Iyong sitwasyon ho, iyong policy ng DOE, more or less, iyong dapat technology, neutral. Okay. So, ang policy ng DOE, 70 percent ay dapat baseload.

REP. ZARATE. Okay.

REP. LOBREGAT. Tapos, 20 percent iyong medium. Pagkatapos, 10 percent iyong peaking.

REP. ZARATE. Okay.

REP. LOBREGAT. Now, if you look at the mix, the source of power generation, doon sa 70 percent, sa baseload, kasali iyong coal, kasali iyong LNG o iyong liquefied natural gas, kasali iyong geothermal, kasali iyong biomass. Doon naman sa 20 percent, nandoon pa rin iyong natural gas. Doon sa 10 percent, sa peaking, doon pumapasok iyong mga renewable, karamihan ng renewable which is wind and solar, run-of-river.

So, it is not saying na dapat anti-coal or pro-coal or pro-everything should be renewable because not everything really can be renewable. You have, when it comes to solar, you are really dependent on the day, and during the day, you are dependent kung may ulap o walang ulap. So, kung masyadong marami iyong solar, magkakaalokohan sa supply. Halimbawa, biglang umulap, papaano mo iko-cover up iyong nawala? That is why it really has to be—ang sabi nila technology ay neutral.

REP. ZARATE. Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LOBREGAT. Sa baseload, may renewable, geothermal and big hydroelectric.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor.

We understand that there is a need for a—according to Secretary Cusi nga, there is an energy mix. But, are you saying that up to now, ang problema pa rin ng Pilipinas ay, even as we speak now, na ang problema talaga natin ay dagdag na mga baseload capacity, dahil dito, 63 percent ng lahat ng proyekto ngayon ay coal.

So, dahil sabi ninyo kailangan ito, baseload ito, mayroon ho ba kayong pag-aaral, Mr. Sponsor, ang Departamento na talagang within the 24-hour period iyong—kaya kailangan natin ng more coal-fired power plant dahil ang problema natin doon sa mga baseload plants natin, kulang. Is that what the Sponsor is saying, Mme. Speaker?

REP. LOBREGAT. Well, when it comes to coal, Your Honor, siguro iyong mga planta, iyong dating planta, talagang iyon usok talaga ngayon, that there is new technology pati iyong mga lumang planta ng coal ay pinapalitan ng bago. So, at least medyo hindi masyado iyong mausok.

REP. ZARATE. We can debate on that.

REP. LOBREGAT. Oo, kaya nga hindi tayo matatapos dito.

REP. ZARATE. Ang sinasabi ko po rito, Mr. Sponsor, Mme. Speaker, sa datos mismo ng Kagawaran ng Enerhiya, lahat mayor, malaking numero na coal-fired power plants. In fact, mukhang token, if I may use the term, “tokenismo” lamang ang ating pagtingin doon sa pag-develop, paglinang pa ng mga renewable energy, Mr. Sponsor, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LOBREGAT. Well, as the years go by, iyong technology ay nag-iiba pati iyong—hindi ba iyong renewables noon ay masyadong mahal? Ngayon, bumababa na iyong presyo. Ngayon, pinag-aaralan iyong hybrid, iyong may mga battery storage, kung puwede i-battery storage iyong solar. So, these are being considered and being looked into. But at this point, we cannot say that we will do away with coal or so. We have to, as technology is not yet there, let us say, iyong storage ng energy doon sa battery which more or less will, sa solar iyan, ang ano ng Department of Energy is, iyong walang pinapaboran na technology.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, Mme. Speaker. By the way, sa ilalim ho ng Departamento, anong ahensiya ho ba or attached agency ang may concern doon sa renewable energies?

REP. LOBREGAT. PNOC.

REP. ZARATE. PNOC.

REP. LOBREGAT. May mga project sila sa mga solar panel sa mga bahay. Pagkatapos iyong DOE mismo, iyong mga electrification nila sa mga household using panels, iyon ang isang malaking programa nila.

REP. ZARATE. Yes, PNOC. So, ang PNOC is into this renewable energy also. Iyan kasi iyong ...

REP. LOBREGAT. Oo. May dalawang subsidiaries iyan: one is the PNOC Renewables Corporation.

REP. ZARATE. Are these renewable subsidiaries still existing dahil ho mayroon tayong nabalitaan na these will be dissolved?

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes. Ang president ho, si President John Arenas. Siya ho ang anak ni Cong. Baby Arenas.

REP. ZARATE. So, this is still existing, this subsidiary of the PNOC? Yes, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes, actually lalagyan ng solar ang House of Representatives.

REP. ZARATE. Isa sa mga project nila, gawan ng solar.

REP. LOBREGAT. Oo, isa sa mga project nila

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor. Nililinaw ko lang ho iyan dahil kagaya nga ng sinabi ko kanina, 63 percent coal pa rin tayo hanggang ngayong 2017. Tapos kasama na tayo sa Paris Accord na isa ito sa tinitingnan na malaking problema especially nitong mga naging developed nang mga bansa ngayon.

REP. LOBREGAT. Baka siguro kailangang tingnan din natin iyong nuclear na, hindi ba?

REP. ZARATE. Well, isang usapin din ho iyan na puwedeng pagdebatehan natin dito. Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, may I know, at least, has it been clarified that there is still an agency within the DOE na concerned with renewables?

My last point, dito ho sa usapin ng exploration of the West Philippine Sea, recently the Department—the DOE and the DFA have resumed their talks about lifting the moratorium on oil exploration in the West Philippine Sea.

We know for a fact that this is a resource-rich area especially the Recto Bank or the Reed Bank which was suspended in 2014. A report recently by the United States Energy Information Administration said that the Recto Bank could hold up to 55.1 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and 5.4 billion barrels of petroleum. And, I have read that recently, there is a private partner for the activity to explore that particular area, the PXP Energy Corporation under Service Contract No. 72. So my question now, Mr. Sponsor, Mme. Speaker, since President Duterte has already given the go signal to start possible joint exploration activities with China over the disputed areas, by conducting joint exploration activities with China, are we not legitimizing their claim over the disputed areas?

REP. LOBREGAT. Okay. I have gotten confirmation that there is no such policy yet.

REP. ZARATE. Okay.

REP. LOBREGAT. Now, when it comes to policy issues regarding the West Philippine Sea and any exploration, actually, the DOE will just follow the policy direction established by the President. So, even if we try to squeeze an answer from them, they cannot really give an official answer because they are good soldiers; they will follow whatever policy the President sets.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor.

As I have said, it was in the news recently that the President himself gave the go signal for a possible joint exploration activities with China.

REP. LOBREGAT. There is no written directive, so...

REP. ZARATE. No directive yet from the President.

REP. LOBREGAT. None. So, thank you very much, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor.

REP. ZARATE. So, there is no discussion yet, as far as the Department is concerned, between the PXP Energy Corporation, for example, and the China National Offshore Oil Corporation.

REP. LOBREGAT. None.

REP. ZARATE. None?

REP. LOBREGAT. None.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LOBREGAT. Thank you very much. And, we can wish happy birthday to our Majority Leader.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Floor Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. GARCIA (J.). I move for a one-minute suspension of the session.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The session is suspended.

It was 12:23 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 12:24 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The session is resumed.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize for the Minority, Minority Leader Danilo E. Suarez.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Minority Leader is hereby recognized.

REP. SUAREZ. Thank you, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

I understand that under the family of the DOE is the ERC and NEA.

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes, NEA.

REP. SUAREZ. And, they will be deliberated ...

REP. LOBREGAT. Hopefully, we can take it up later today.

REP. SUAREZ. How about the National Grid Corporation of the Philippines and the National Power Corporation?

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes, the budget that we are taking up...

REP. SUAREZ. Wala ba silang—kasama ba sila sa...

REP. LOBREGAT. ... is the DOE, the PNOC and the NPC.

REP. SUAREZ. Iyong—my good friend, Mr. Matibag, di ba National Power siya?

REP. LOBREGAT. The NPC.

REP. SUAREZ. TransCo? Kasama ka sa family ng...

REP. LOBREGAT. Oo.

REP. SUAREZ. If we approve it, kasama iyong kay Mr. Matibag?

No, I am talking about the National Grid Corporation of the Philippines.

REP. LOBREGAT. No, wala.

REP. SUAREZ. Okay.
How about the TransCo?

REP. LOBREGAT. Wala ho. Actually, Congress does not appropriate and actually ...

REP. SUAREZ. And, NAPOCOR, iba pa ho iyon?

REP. LOBREGAT. Under the DOE law, the three attached agencies that we have to approve their budget would be NEA, the NPC and the PNOC.

REP. SUAREZ. Only?

REP. LOBREGAT. That is Section 13 of Republic Act No. 7638.

REP. SUAREZ. Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, I am moving for the termination of the period of interpellation and debate, with serious concern on the performance of the PNOC. I would like that the head of the agency carefully evaluate those findings that this Representation has manifested. And, if I will not be given a proper answer, then I may be forced to file a resolution to investigate on those issues.

With that, Mme. Speaker, I move to terminate. The Minority has no more question to raise on the proposed budget of the Department of Energy ...

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. SUAREZ. ... and its attached agencies, namely...

REP. LOBREGAT. Namely: the Department of Energy, then you have the National Power Corporation, then the Philippine National Oil Company.

REP. SUAREZ. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mme. Speaker, on behalf of the Majority, we join the Minority in terminating the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Department of Energy and its attached corporations excluding NEA and the ERC.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is hereby approved. (*Applause*)

The Floor Leader is recognized.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mme. Speaker, I move that we take up the budget of the Department of Agriculture including attached agencies and corporations.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the budget of the Department of Agriculture will now be taken up.

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mme. Speaker, may we recognize the Department of Agriculture family, headed by its Secretary, Secretary Emmanuel F. Piñol; its Undersecretaries: Bernadette Fatima Romulo-Puyat, Ariel T. Cayanan, Segefredo R. Serrano, Evelyn G. La Viña, Atty. Ranibai D. Dilangalen, Atty. Francisco M. Villano Jr. and Eduardo B. Gongona.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Welcome to the House of Representatives.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Sponsor, the Hon. Mark Aeron H. Sambar.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Hon. Mark Sambar is hereby recognized to sponsor the budget of the Department of Agriculture.

REP. SAMBAR. Good afternoon, Mme. Speaker. This Representation is now ready to defend the budget of the Department of Agriculture and its attached agencies.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Floor Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mme. Speaker, I move for a one-minute suspension of the session.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The session is suspended.

It was 12:30 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 12:35 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The session is resumed.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. As the first to interpellate, Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the distinguished Minority Leader, the Hon. Danilo Suarez.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Minority Leader is hereby recognized to interpellate on the budget of the Department of Agriculture.

REP. SUAREZ. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

Will the distinguished Sponsor yield the floor for some questions?

REP. SAMBAR. Mme. Speaker, it would be my pleasure to yield to the Minority Leader for some questions.

REP. SUAREZ. First, can I just brief the new Secretary of the Department on the previous historical data that was gathered by the Plenary in terms of utilization rate of his Department.

Your Honor, Mme. Speaker, for 2013, the budget allocation of the DA was P63.5 billion, of which—let me know whether this does not tally with your record—in 2014, it is P68 billion; in 2015, it is P48 billion; 2016, P48 billion; and last year, the requested budget was P44.6 billion. Is that correct?

REP. SAMBAR. Yes, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker, that is correct.

REP. SUAREZ. Well, the track record of the previous head of the agency for 2013 has a 13 percent negative slippage on expenditures; 2014 was 26 percent; 2015, 18 percent; 2016, which is half year of the incumbent Secretary, it is 14 percent. So, there is a marked improvement of about 2 percent in terms of efficiency of spending. I do not have the records for 2017, so the average expenditure percentage of the

DA for the last five years is 81.89 percent or there is an 18 percent negative slippage in terms of expenditure. Considering that this Department is vital because this involves food security, what will be our assurance that the budget proposed for this year will be properly spent, distinguished Sponsor?

REP. SAMBAR. Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, the Department of Agriculture under Secretary Piñol is assuring that there is going to be quick procurement of necessary equipment and prepositioning of projects and programs so that they will be ensured that the utilization of the budget is assured for fiscal year 2018.

REP. SUAREZ. Did you revert funds to the National Treasury for the half year of 2016?

REP. SAMBAR. Yes, there were reverted funds to the National Treasury, Your Honor, amounting to P1.6 billion.

REP. SUAREZ. It is quite big.

REP. SAMBAR. For clarification, that P1.6 billion was from previous year's unspent budget, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. You are talking of the first half of 2016?

REP. SAMBAR. That is the end of the year, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. Yes, but magkasama naman kayo. So, you are saying, when you reverted P1.6 billion to the Treasury, which you did not spend, kasama na rin iyong six months ninyo, hindi ba?

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. SUAREZ. Mr. Speaker, I move for a one-minute suspension of the session.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The session is suspended.

It was 12:41 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 12:43 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The session is resumed.

REP. SUAREZ. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

Distinguished Sponsor, the Department of Agriculture previously called for the importation of rice through government to government purchase in preparation for the lean months. Is this correct, Your Honor?

REP. SAMBAR. Yes, that is correct, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. But there was also news of the proliferation of fake rice which is quite alarming. Is this also correct?

REP. SAMBAR. Your Honor, Mme. Speaker, according to the investigation done by the Department of Agriculture, there was no proof that they actually found fake rice within the Philippines.

REP. SUAREZ. Can you define "fake rice"?

REP. SAMBAR. Well, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, according to the definition of the Department of Agriculture, "fake" is anything that cannot be grown or cannot be naturally grown or naturally planted. That is fake rice. So, if the rice is artificially made through other means rather than planting, that is called "fake rice."

REP. SUAREZ. If you have fake rice, you can have fake mongo and fake tomato. It seems to be very vague, Your Honor. But what is the connotation? What is the effect? What is alarming about the news on fake rice?

REP. SAMBAR. Well, Your Honor, fake rice or the circulation of the news about fake rice was never confirmed. And that is the stance of the Department of Agriculture and even the NFA that wanted to—or even the NFA that investigated this matter, they never did find the existence of fake rice.

Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, the Department of Agriculture thinks that this is probably fake news...

REP. SUAREZ. But this happened, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor. Nagkaroon talaga tayo ng presence of fake rice in the market.

REP. SAMBAR. Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, according to the Secretary, PhilRice conducted a test on the so-called fake rice and found out that these were real. It was real rice but very, very well-polished.

REP. SUAREZ. Where is it from?

REP. SAMBAR. It was locally sourced and found in the markets. So, it was just very well-polished rice, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. Polished rice.

REP. SAMBAR. Very well-polished rice.

REP. SUAREZ. Fake rice.

REP. SAMBAR. Hindi po siya, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, hindi po siya fake.

REP. SUAREZ. We can use fake money to buy fake rice, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor. I am somewhat at a loss here, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor. The Secretary will agree with me that what is the most—I think the dream of the Secretary is rice sufficiency. Is that correct, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor? Are we near there?

REP. SAMBAR. Well, the thrust of the Secretary is greater rice productivity.

REP. SUAREZ. Well, I know. Going back to history, there was only one time when we attained rice sufficiency, during the time of the late President Ferdinand Marcos' Masagana 99, but it came with a cost—very expensive, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

So, let us go back to the fake rice. You mentioned it was better polished, meaning, mas magaling po ang pagkuno, iyong pagkuwan, so maganda ho ang quality, ang physical presence or the looks of the rice is most likely what we call enticing than other rice. Ganoon ho ba?

REP. SAMBAR. That is correct, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor. The rice was well-polished that is why it is very, very—it looked of a very high quality. Kaya nagtataka po ang lahat ng tao at nagdududa po sila na fake rice po ito kasi hindi po tayo umaabot ng ganoong kataas na pagka-polish ng rice. Kaya nagulat lang yata ang tao na nakakita sila ng ganoong klaseng quality sa market.

REP. SUAREZ. Why can we not name it “better-polished rice” than “fake rice”?

REP. SAMBAR. Unfortunately, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, it was social, it was viral social media phenomenon that carried and named it as “fake rice.”

REP. SUAREZ. How were they priced, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor?

REP. SAMBAR. Unfortunately, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, we do not have data on the price for this rice because it was an isolated incident and it was not openly sold in the market.

REP. SUAREZ. Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, I have this particular concern on the Philippine Rural Development Program of the agency. I understand that

the agency intends to build more farm-to-market roads. Is that correct?

REP. SAMBAR. Yes, that is correct.

REP. SUAREZ. We have the same projects before which only led to the construction of roads for the farms of choice politicians. Can we be assured that this time, it would not happen again?

REP. SAMBAR. Yes, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, the policy of the Department of Agriculture is to currently review the PRDP.

REP. SUAREZ. So, the safeguards of the Department is to make sure that the repetition of the past, the corrupted farm-to-market roads will not happen again.

REP. SAMBAR. Well, for the PRDP, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, they have very, very high standards in terms of guidelines because it is a foreign-funded, World Bank-funded program.

REP. SUAREZ. You are aware of what I am trying to define, distinguished Sponsor, Mme. Speaker, ano? Nangyari ho iyan, when we say, a grave abuse on that is that wala na hong discretion kung saan. Ang importante is they raised funds out of the construction of farm-to-market roads. Hindi ho ba? Iyon ang nangyari noong nakaraang mga taon, especially prior to the election of 2016?

So, with the assurance that the incumbent officers will do their best so that this incident will not happen again, may I just ask what are the other rural development programs they have in line?

REP. SAMBAR. Your Honor, they also have the I-REAP, the livelihood, the enterprise facilities and finances, and the proper planning, I-PLAN, to name a few.

REP. SUAREZ. I noticed that the proposed budget for the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources is a billion lower than last year. Is that correct, Your Honor?

REP. SAMBAR. Yes, that is correct, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. Based on the poverty rates from the Philippine Statistics Authority and coming from our distinguished colleague, Rep. Edcel C. Lagman, he said that one of the poorest sectors in the society are the coconut farmers and the lowest are the fisherfolk. I am not going to debate you on that, but I will say, that is an accurate statement.

Our fishermen at present are having a hard time finding fishing grounds due to the inclusion of foreign fishermen, mostly Chinese in the West Philippine Sea and the consequent threat to their safety. Given this problem in our fisheries, why is it that the budget for the BFAR was reduced?

REP. SAMBAR. Sorry, Your Honor, can you repeat the question?

REP. SUAREZ. Why did you reduce it? Eh, ang dami na hong problema, bakit ninyo ni-reduce?

REP. SAMBAR. Your Honor, for the Bureau of Fisheries, unfortunately, their Community Fish Landing Centers Program was the one cut by the Department of Budget and Management. So, because of that, they have the reduced budget for 2018.

REP. SUAREZ. Well, nakaka-disturb iyon, Mme. Speaker. You are telling me that the bright idea of the good Secretary can be overwhelmed by the decision of another Cabinet agency who will say: "I will cut your ceiling." Ganoon ho ba? Then, it is the right of the House to restore it.

Tingnan ho ninyo. I will ask the Secretary. What is the most important staple in the table of a single, simple Filipino family? Rice.

REP. SAMBAR. And fish, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. What is next?

REP. SAMBAR. Fish, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. Fish—alam pala natin, food security. Babawasan pa ninyo iyong budget sa fish.

I came from and grew up in a coastal municipality, Your Honor. When I was young, I used to fish in the coastline. When I was six or seven years old, when I go home, iyon hong isang lata ng Caltex, puno ko na ng isda iyon na nahuhuli ko sa pamimiwas. We call it "pamimiwas." Ngayon ho, palayo na nang palayo ang fishing ground, and it is more difficult to catch fish. We are competing with the foreign fishermen, and yet babawasan ho natin ng support.

On our own, in our province, nagsimula ho kami ng aquaculture, and I think, I can be proud to say that even the Bureau of Fisheries can come, I do not know if they have seen our breeding stations of different breeders of high-value species and common species, and we are producing fingerlings by the millions without a single assistance from the government—on our own.

Now, nakikita na ho natin, sinasabi na ho natin, after rice, it is fish. Babawasan mo pa ang budget ng fisheries. Where is the logic? Well, you cannot just contain your

presence by just nodding your head, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor. I need answers.

REP. SAMBAR. Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, I emphasize with the Minority Floor Leader and I agree with his sentiments. Well, it is well within the ...

REP. SUAREZ. How much did you reduce from the—for instance, iyon pong mga breeders ko na pampano, red snapper and sea bass, it came from Dagupan. Lahat iyon, nanggaling iyan sa Dagupan five years ago. We nursed those fingerlings and now they are breeders.

I understand you cut the budget of Dagupan.

REP. SAMBAR. Your Honor, we do emphasize with your sentiments. It is well within Congress to restore the budget or ask for a higher budget for the Bureau of Fisheries. I agree that it is the staple of a normal Filipino that rice and fish ...

REP. SUAREZ. How much are you allocating this time for the Dagupan Research Center? That is under Mr. Wesley R. Rosario.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. SAMBAR. Mme. Speaker, I move for a one-minute suspension of the session.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The session is suspended.

It was 12:57 p.m.

REP. SUAREZ. Distinguished Sponsor, can I just show you what we have done in Unisan, Quezon—this is my hometown.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 12:57 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The session is resumed.

REP. SUAREZ. Thank you. I am sorry, Mme. Speaker, I did not see you.

Can we just—a few minutes of PowerPoint presentation to show you—this is the open water fish cage. This is in the high sea, Your Honor. These are floating cages. Iyong nakikita ho ninyong parang magugulo roon—those are red snappers. Those are breeders. Open water fish cage, the round one is—these are the pampanos. The other one to the left is sea bass—ah, no, no, I am sorry. The one in the center are

the sea basses, Your Honor. Please proceed. And these are the samples of eggs. It is not visibly clear in human eyes but they are in the millions, Your Honor. These are bangus eggs and the bangus that are raised in salt water taste better than bangus raised in murky water, Your Honor. These are the sample of sea bass that is normally being caught in the production area. This is the production pond, Your Honor—Fishpond 1, Fishpond 2, this is where we raise milkfish and samaral. These are the hatchery facilities, Your Honor. The one in the left are those where we raise fingerlings; the one on the right are breeders. This is the bird's-eye view of the total facilities. Please proceed.

REP. SUAREZ. Now, this may be short, but what I am saying, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, is this, *alam natin na pahirap nang pahirap ang pangngisda*, and you are saying after rice, it is fish. *Ito po ang sagot—aquaculture*.

I am going to propose to the leadership of the House, to the Speaker, *na magkaroon nang congressional project kung saan ang bawat Member ng House na mayroon coastline at gustong maglagay ng mga fishing cages ang kanilang constituents*, be given an ample opportunity to find fingerlings. It can be a joint program between Congress and the Department of Agriculture, with the Bureau of Fisheries on that matter.

So I would just like to present this to you—this is a project in its infancy, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker, and I am not saying this is a perfect system because I am having a problem with the inconsistencies. I can see, one morning, *sa limang breeder ko out of 300, nakalutan, patay*, so I have to analyze. I have technicians to find out *bakit namatay*, it is a learning curve, and we found out that there are species *na hindi puwedeng mabuhay kung hindi sobra ang alat ng tubig*. I think the Bureau of Fisheries is an expert on that. What I am saying is, this is a clear answer of, maybe, what we can do with the proposed budget of the DA.

Now, *binawasan mo ang budget*, so, I will have to ask the head of the agency to sit down again in your drawing board and find out how you can restore it. Now, if you cannot restore it but you are saying that your fund is not enough, then you increase it. We have the power to increase their budget anyway. What is being discussed here is food security, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

Do we have the right meeting of our minds that this has to be given a serious concern, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor?

REP. SAMBAR. Yes, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, the Department of Agriculture fully agrees with your proposal.

REP. SUAREZ. How much money did you set aside for Dagupan?

REP. SAMBAR. For Dagupan, for 2018, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, it is P33 million.

REP. SUAREZ. So, *binawasan ninyo*?

REP. SAMBAR. It was decreased by P5.5 million, which amount was used for repairs in the previous years.

REP. SUAREZ. Off-hand, can you increase it by making it close to P50 million, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor?

REP. SAMBAR. Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, we will study that and consider looking into that proposal.

REP. SUAREZ. Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, do you want me to make a motion? I am asking for your support and to ask the agency to make it P50 million.

REP. SAMBAR. We will ask the agency to increase it to P50 million, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, we are somewhat affected by the bird flu epidemic, and I am happy that the good Secretary came up with some measures. I have to appreciate his effort in that there was no panic in public, there was no scare in eating chicken, there was no problem about birds—we are getting serious here. Mme. Speaker, may I ask our distinguished Sponsor, out of the topic, does he know the bird that symbolizes peace?

REP. SAMBAR. It is the dove, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. The dove.

REP. SAMBAR. That is correct.

REP. SUAREZ. What bird symbolizes war, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor?

REP. SAMBAR. I think it is the eagle, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. The hawk or the eagle. A bird, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, you know, this bird flying with the...

REP. SAMBAR. For war, it is the eagle, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. A bird, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. SAMBAR. Yes, the eagle is a bird.

REP. SUAREZ. Iyong ipinanganak na baby, hindi ba mayroon ding symbol ang bird na iyon?

REP. SAMBAR. That is a stork, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. Stork. How about birth control? The answer is swallow. That is the bird that symbolizes— with my apology to the ladies. Let us proceed.

Regarding the bird flu epidemic, I think we have to praise the good Secretary for his efforts. Can you imagine if there is a pandemonium among people in not buying chicken, its effect, the collateral damage to the industry. My question is, is it contained already?

REP. SAMBAR. Yes, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker, the bird flu epidemic had been contained.

REP. SUAREZ. When will Pampanga, some parts of Bulacan and Nueva Ecija return back to normal?

REP. SAMBAR. According to the Department of Agriculture, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, they are already back to normal. The restrictions with regard to the avian flu had been lifted already.

REP. SUAREZ. It is contained locally in Pampanga, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, and there is none in the Visayas or in Mindanao?

REP. SAMBAR. No, only in the Central Luzon, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker, and it is only contained in three towns.

REP. SUAREZ. What is the position of the good Secretary, does he believe that, maybe, this was carried over by migratory birds, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor?

REP. SAMBAR. According to their panel of experts, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, it is something, it is a possible cause of the avian flu.

REP. SUAREZ. In the first quarter of this year, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, the DA faced legislative investigation. I sat down with my good friend, Senator Villar, because she was also affected by this reported smuggling of agricultural products such as sugar, garlic, onions and Chinese carrots. May we know the position of the Secretary on this news?

REP. SAMBAR. The Department of Agriculture is well aware of these problems, but they can only assist the Bureau of Customs in identifying and studying the problem. It is up to the Bureau of

Customs to apprehend and control the situation, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. There is an existing law, Your Honor, Republic Act No. 10845—I think you are aware of that— the Anti-Agricultural Smuggling Act of 2016, which was enacted, and the implementing rules and regulations were released by the Bureau of Customs in February 2017. Am I correct there? Can we, the Members, be given a learning curve here, that if there is smuggling, then there must be what we call price competition between the local produce and the smuggled items.

REP. SAMBAR. That is correct, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. Ano po ang diperensiya ng local produce natin, simulan natin sa garlic, iyong bawang na nangagaling sa Ilocos.

REP. SAMBAR. Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, the garlic from Ilocos is P60 per kilo.

REP. SUAREZ. So, it is P60 at iyan ay for consumers na. Sa palengke na po iyan?

REP. SAMBAR. No, that is the farmgate price, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, from the farm.

REP. SUAREZ. From the farm, farmgate iyon?

REP. SAMBAR. That is correct. Hindi pa po market price.

REP. SUAREZ. Pagdating po sa palengke, magkano na ito?

REP. SAMBAR. It ranges from P100 to P120 per kilo, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. Per kilo?

REP. SAMBAR. Yes, that is correct, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor. That is for locally-sourced garlic. Now, if it is sourced outside of the country, it is P20 per kilo, landed cost.

REP. SUAREZ. It is P20?

REP. SAMBAR. Yes, that is correct.

REP. SUAREZ. As against P100?

REP. SAMBAR. As against P60, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. Against P60?

REP. SAMBAR. Yes, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. So, may P40 ang diperensiya ng imported sa local?

REP. SAMBAR. It is because of our low productivity in garlic, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, that is per hectare, and which is something that the DA is looking to improve and enhance in their programs.

REP. SUAREZ. Okay, I will single out garlic, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor. You are saying that the price spread is P20 and P60 and so, you have a difference of P40.

REP. SAMBAR. That is correct, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. That makes our locally-produced garlic non-competitive. Is that not correct?

REP. SAMBAR. Yes.

REP. SUAREZ. Walang bibili noon.

REP. SAMBAR. That is correct.

REP. SUAREZ. What happened to the garlic, nabubulok po iyong ating garlic?

REP. SAMBAR. According to the Department of Agriculture, the quality of our locally-sourced garlic is much better compared to the internationally-sourced one.

REP. SUAREZ. You are saying that locally-produced garlic tastes better than the smuggled garlic?

REP. SAMBAR. Yes, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. But the smuggled garlic is cheaper?

REP. SAMBAR. Our garlic is more flavorful and more pungent than the imported garlic, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, and that is why we prefer local garlic.

REP. SUAREZ. The good Secretary must be well-versed already on the production method in farming of the Chinese and so, bakit po napakababa ng production cost nila as compared to ours?

REP. SAMBAR. Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, in comparison to China, I think they have a higher productivity—the Chinese production is 10 tons of garlic per hectare, and we produce only 3.5 tons per hectare. So, the Department of Agriculture is working on programs to increase the productivity of our farmers to grow more locally-sourced garlic. In one of the programs of the Department of Agriculture, they are offering P100,000 per hectare to financing the growing of more garlic, including fertilizers, to improve their productivity.

REP. SUAREZ. Is the Sponsor saying that the inputs needed to produce is—that is for five tons per hectare, Mme. Speaker?

REP. SAMBAR. It is 3.5, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. That is for 3.5 tons per hectare as compared to the Chinese who produces 10 tons per hectare—are we on the same note, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor?

REP. SAMBAR. Yes, that is correct.

REP. SUAREZ. With my limited knowledge on garlic, I think this is one product that is very choosy with land, with soil, right? Hindi ka naman puwedeng magtanim ng garlic kung saan-saan lang.

REP. SAMBAR. That is correct, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. Preferably, this is in the northern area of the country.

REP. SAMBAR. There are a lot of conditions that need to be present for garlic to grow properly.

REP. SUAREZ. If you are saying that namimili ng lupa ang garlic, maybe the Department can throw its efforts to make sure that the farmers become more competitive by producing more so that the price can be somewhat be reasonable and attractive to consumers.

REP. SAMBAR. Yes, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, the Department of Agriculture has been identifying new areas to grow garlic based on the soil's suitability.

REP. SUAREZ. Can I have that measure in writing, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. SAMBAR. Yes, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, we will submit it to your office.

REP. SUAREZ. For the benefit of our colleagues who are from the North, maybe they should be given some pointers since the Department will be coming up with measures to make their farmers produce more, to have a better bounty in terms of harvests, so that they can be competitive.

REP. SAMBAR. Yes, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, the DA would happily share this information to everybody.

REP. SUAREZ. Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, this Department will not be defending other agricultural products like the Philippine coconut. So, that is another agency. Am I correct there?

REP. SAMBAR. That is correct, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. We will just have to repeat iyong napag-usapan ho natin, iyong support sa fishing centers natin, at ang research sa aquaculture sa Dagupan. Doon po nanggagaling ang aming fingerlings noong araw. That is why it is for sentimental reasons for us to make sure that that agency survives kasi nga binawasan ng budget. Second, if there is an increase—when the Secretary will go back to his drawing board—as manifested by this Representation that better support should be given to the fishing industry, and if there is a need for the Department to ask for an increase on their allocations, then they should inform the good Sponsor. I already asked for authority from the leadership of the House that there might be a need for us to increase the budget of some agencies.

REP. SAMBAR. Yes, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. With that, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, I will temporarily yield to some Members who would like to raise questions.

Thank you very much.

REP. SAMBAR. Thank you, Minority Leader.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from the Lone District of Catanduanes, Cong. Cesar V. Sarmiento.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Gentleman from Catanduanes is hereby recognized for his interpellation.

REP. SARMIENTO (C.). Magandang hapon po sa ating lahat.

We all know the famous Filipino folk song which goes: “Magtanim ay di biro, maghapon nakayuko, di man lang makaupo, di man lang makatayo.” This song shows both the hard work of our farmers and the difficulty of the job they are in. Mahirap maging isang magsasaka, hindi po biro. Kailangang magtiyaga sa pagtatanim; kailangang magtiyaga sa paghihintay; at kailangang magtiyaga sa pag-aani. Kailangan ding matiyagang manalangin na sana hindi masira ng kalamidad ang pinaghirapang pananim. Our farmers deserve our respect and support. They serve as a major backbone to our daily lives and economy.

Mme. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, let me reiterate strongly what I said in last year’s budget season, specifically about the plight of our abaca farmers. Kailangan kong banggitin ito ulit dahil hindi binibigyan nang sapat na suporta ng national government ang kalagayan ng ating abaca farmers. Kahit sumisigaw na sila para humingi ng tulong, hindi po naririnig ang boses ng mga kababayan nating abaca farmers. I am sure that you know by now that the abaca farmers are the reason behind our country having the honor of being the top producer of abaca in the world. In 2016 alone, the Philippines produced a total of 496,069 bales of abaca, and the credit for this is due to more than 13,000 abaca farmers in my island province of Catanduanes, in our 33,000 hectares of abaca farms which produced 34.9 percent of the country’s total production. This produce of Catanduanes alone translates to 85 percent of the total production of abaca worldwide.

Mme. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, hindi lang po tayo ang nangunguna sa produktong ito, you also have to understand that there is presently a global demand for abaca. Alam po iyan ng DA at PhilFIDA. Abaca fiber can be turned into many handicraft products, has medical and industrial applications too, and is even used in the production of our paper bills, ang pera natin and many other security papers.

We are at an advantage kasi ang abaca po ay isang indigenous crop sa atin. Other countries, I think, like Ecuador and Indonesia, also recognize the global demand and are cultivating this crop kahit hindi naman indigenous sa kanila. Despite the global demand and the fact that the bulk of production comes from Catanduanes, there was no significant support given to us in the 2017 Budget. Secretary Manny Piñol, who knows all these figures, committed P100 million only to the abaca industry in Southern Leyte, leaving Catanduanes out. This showed that there is no holistic program for abaca production in Catanduanes. There was also no support given to us despite the onslaught of typhoon Niña during the Christmas of 2016. Malaking ektarya ng mga pananim ng abaca ang nasalanta sa Catanduanes at natural, bumaba ang produksiyon ng abaca at nawalan

ng kita ang mga magsasaka. Yet, despite the obvious need, the P50-million financial assistance pledged by the President who went to Catanduanes two days after the typhoon had not been delivered to date.

Ang katuwiran ng DA ay hindi raw inaprubahan ng DBM ang kanilang request kaya hindi raw na-release ang pondo. Ang tanong lang po namin, paano natin mapapabilis na ma-release ang pondong kailangan ng ating mga abaca farmers, considering the fact that was the commitment of President Duterte to the abaca farmers of Catanduanes? Kung alam lang ninyo ang halaga at potensyal ng abaca industry ay gagawin ninyo ang lahat para ipaglaban ang ating mga abaca farmers.

Sa isang basketball team, kagaya ng Cleveland Cavaliers or Golden State Warriors, kapag nagka-injury si LeBron James or si Kevin Durant, pinababayaan na lang ba sila? Hindi po ba inaalalayan sila at binibigyan ng nararapat na atensyon? Yet, here we are, Catanduanes is the top producer of abaca in the whole world, isa pong superstar kumbaga pero noong napilayan kami dahil sa bagyo, wala pong atensiyong ibinigay at hindi po kami inalalayan.

We cannot stay competitive and meet the global demand if that is the case. The DA and the PhilFIDA have failed the abaca industry; you failed to do everything to support us. Lately, we have heard na posible kami makakuha ng grant and loan mula sa Agricultural Credit Policy Council. We are thankful for that possibility but why only now have you thought of such a proposal? Hanggang kailan kami maghihintay? Ang bilis ng aksiyon ninyo sa ibang kalamidad katulad po doon sa bird flu outbreak pero kami na nasalanta dati pa, noong Disyembre 2016, araw ng Pasko, ilang buwan na po kaming nag-aantay, nakakalimutan kami. Anniversary na po namin sa Pasko; anniversary na po ang pangako ninyong rehabilitation ng aming abaca industry.

As a side note, I want to express my appreciation for giving the Quick Response Fund back to the DA and the DepEd in the 2018 Budget. Nahirapan po tayo this 2017 since walang QRF ang DA, pati na ang DepEd. With the said QRF reverted back, siguro naman, mas mabilis na tayo umaksyon sa mga kalamidad.

Again, Catanduanes gave this country the honor of being the top abaca producer in the world. There is also global demand for abaca, but the problem is, parang kulang ang suportang ibinigay sa abaca industry sa Catanduanes. For 2018, the budget given is not sufficient to the abaca production in Catanduanes. The DA and the PhilFIDA are proud in showing that for Region V MOOE, there is a P10.7 million allotment, pero alam po natin ang halagang ito ay paghahatian pa ng anim na mga probinsiya ng Bicol. Using simple arithmetic, lumalabas na P1.8 million po lamang ang makukuha ng Catanduanes. Ito na po ba ang adequate support ng

gobyerno para sa abaca industry natin? Sapat na ba ang halagang ito upang pausbungin pa lalo ang industriyang tayo ang nangunguna sa buong mundo?

Even your additional proposal of P1 billion for the Fiber Industry Development Program, we know that if that is ever approved and we break down the items included, ay walang substantial fund support sa abaca program and walang substantial support para sa Catanduanes. Even with the projects under the PRDP—these are support mechanisms for abaca and we are thankful for them—without the crops themselves, since you are not supporting the rehabilitation, these support mechanisms will be rendered useless. Let me wrap up by asking all of us, especially the officials of the DA and the PhilFIDA, these questions: do you honestly intend to develop and support the abaca industry holistically and take advantage of the global demand? If yes, then why is Catanduanes constantly left out?

May I ask a reaction from the DA family regarding the manifestation.

REP. SAMBAR. Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, after watching the presentation of the Hon. Cesar Sarmiento, it was very educational and quite alarming to see those figures and the state of the abaca industry in his good province. Rest assured, the good Secretary has taken note and he is offering to, at least, reprioritize the funding for the PhilFIDA for Catanduanes, and not only that but they will look at other programs that they have under the Department of Agriculture to help the abaca farmers in your district, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SARMIENTO (C.). Paalala lang po, noong 2017, kapinggot ang budget allocation given for Catanduanes, aggravated by the fact that we were strongly hit by a typhoon and promised a corresponding commitment from the President himself, witnessed by Secretary Piñol, to give P50 million. Even the President promised that in a week's time, the said amount will be released but sad to say, up to now, we have yet to see and feel the amount of P50 million to be used for the rehabilitation of the abaca industry in Catanduanes.

Again, medyo sasaya sana ako perong noong nakita ko ang NEP for 2018, ang MOOE for Region V is only P10 million. So, again, mangangako muli, and we will again wait for the budget hearing for next year para ma-call iyong attention. Anong klaseng commitment po iyan? Again, I am not speaking for myself, I am speaking for the people of Catanduanes dahil matagal na pong hinihintay po ito. Hindi pa po nakikita iyong P50 million that will greatly rehabilitate the abaca industry in Catanduanes. Alam ko, napakabait po ng ating Secretary, napakarami sigurong trabaho ni Secretary, pero iyong munting isla ng Catanduanes na ipinagmamalaki bilang abaca capital of the world, tila ba nakakalimutan na.

REP. SAMBAR. Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, the commitment of the Secretary is still there and the P50 million that he committed in terms of the PLEA Program to help the abaca farmers is still there. Then, there is another P50 million from the Calamity Fund for the typhoon Niña rehabilitation that is still awaiting verification of the NDRRMC.

So, rest assured, we will ask the Department of Agriculture to fast-track these commitments to Catanduanes and make sure that the proper assistance and support is given to its abaca farmers.

REP. SARMIENTO (C.). Nahiyha na nga ako dahil lagi kong binabanggit ito. Baka nakukulitan na si Secretary Manny Piñol pero sa palagay ko, ito ay nararapat para sa abaca industry sa Catanduanes. Kung hindi po ako mangungulit, sino pa ang kukulit kay Secretary Piñol? Sana po sa lalong madaling panahon, tutal, mapapabilis ang pag-aprub ng badyet natin siguro by December or January, or probably, if there are enough savings sa Department of Agriculture—mabilis nga iyong responde nila sa avian flu samantalang iyong bagyo namin ay nangyari noong December 2016 but until now, wala pa pong nangyayari.

REP. SAMBAR. We agree, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker, and we will make sure that the Department of Agriculture does more for Catanduanes in terms for our abaca farmers.

REP. SARMIENTO (C.). With your intervention, Rep. Mark Sambar, alam ko naman napakasipag mo na tumulong, sana po ay tulongan po ninyo ang Catanduanes and remind ang ating mahal na Kalihim na mapabilis po ang inaasahang tulong ng Catanduanes mula sa Department of Agriculture.

Maraming, maraming salamat po. Trabaho lang po.

REP. SAMBAR. Thank you, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mme. Speaker, may we recognize the Lady from BUTIL Party-List, Cong. Cecilia Leonila V. Chavez.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The Representative from BUTIL Party-List is hereby recognized for her interpellation.

REP. CHAVEZ. Mme. Speaker, number one in the list of the Special Provisions is the allocation of P1.8 billion for the ACEF and its use should

already be pursuant to Republic Act No. 10848. This Representation has been asking the Department for a copy of the IRR of the law that was already approved since May 23, 2016, and finally, yesterday afternoon, I was in receipt of the said IRR. I was following this up so that the agricultural sector can benefit from the ACEF at the soonest possible time.

I would like to ask from our honorable Sponsor, what mechanisms are in place that would ensure the proper implementation of the ACEF? I am asking this question because I would like to hear for the record, in behalf of the farmers sector that I represent in this august Chamber, that it will be expeditiously made available for the benefit of its true and rightful beneficiaries. Mme. Speaker.

REP. SAMBAR. Well, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, in terms of the ACEF, the IRR is the ultimate guideline and that is what the Department of Agriculture follows, so there will be strict adherence to what is written in the IRR. This IRR was promulgated with the help of the CHED, with the help of LANDBANK, the Department of Agriculture, the farmers, of course, and fisherfolk, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker.

So, in terms of assurances that this will not be abused, it is a policy of the Department of Agriculture to closely monitor the implementation of this ACEF so that it will not be corrupted or be abused.

REP. CHAVEZ. Mme. Speaker, I have read the status of the ACEF and it is dismal to learn that out of the project cost of P9 billion, only 316 projects were implemented. The ACEF Law was created to help the sector compete globally, however, this never became possible from the start. For one, its release was delayed for four years due to the absence of clear procedures. In 2011, its loan operations were suspended because of numerous problems such as mishandling of funds, and for every extension made to the law, limitations on its use were made. This is so sad for those farmers who never benefitted from it.

Towards this end, Mme. Speaker, may I ask if the ACEF EXCOM has been convened and if consultation mechanisms with farmers and fisherfolk associations are already put in place. How about the COCAFAM or the Congressional Oversight Committee on Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization? Would the distinguished Sponsor know if the COCAFAM already looked into the IRR of the ACEF?

REP. SAMBAR. Your Honor, the Department of Agriculture admits that in the previous administrations, there had been lapses in the use of the ACEF, but with the crafting of the IRR, the EXCOM was convened in order to implement the IRR and because of that, there were strict restrictions in terms of the usage of

these funds. Consultations were made with the various stakeholders to make sure that all the stakeholders will be properly represented in terms of the IRR. Now, the LANDBANK is the fund manager to prevent abuses in the usage of these funds.

So, in that sense, the ACEF—the policy of the Department of Agriculture on the ACEF—is that they will be very, very strict in monitoring the funds. They will be working in close coordination with, of course, Congress as an oversight and LANDBANK as a fund manager, the different stakeholders in the CHED and in the farming sector, with the stakeholders thereat.

REP. CHAVEZ. Mme. Speaker, I would like to put on record that Congress should scrutinize further the ACEF to ensure, together with the DA, that the fund will trickle down to the farmers. I represent the farmers sector, Mme. Speaker, yet I am not aware of any undertakings by the ACEF EXCOM or the COCAF. Mme. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, I entreat your support on this matter through a congressional oversight beginning with the IRR of the ACEF.

Let me now move on to another concern, Mme. Speaker.

Mme. Speaker, during the Committee deliberations, this Representation requested for a more detailed explanation of the P1.1 billion allocation for seed buffer stocks, again, to no avail. Well, I was furnished with the documents but it is very important to clarify as to how they are going to make use of the fund because seeds have a shelf life, making these complicated to handle. It has been the experience of our farmers that, when there is a subsidy problem, it affects the delivery, timing and quality of seeds. Therefore, Mme. Speaker, I am now taking the liberty of asking the Department, through our honorable Sponsor, for a more specific plan on how they will go about procuring the seeds, storing the seeds and delivering the seeds to geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas as stated specifically in the Special Provisions.

We need to be informed clearly about this provision because even with the most ideal environment for storage, the shelf life of the seeds will only last for a year and so, it may be worthwhile to know when procurement starts, whether this is in the beginning of the cropping season. Do you even procure even if there is no calamity?

REP. SAMBAR. Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, the Honorable Chavez is correct that it is very tricky to store and transport seeds in that manner. That is why the policy for the Department of Agriculture for their seed program is to preposition them based on a 10-year program, 10-year data on calamities, and the type of seeds that would be needed for every area. In prepositioning them, they procure them from certain

areas and at certain times so that the seeds do not expire.

So, they will look at the 10-year period of a certain area as to the kind of calamities, the kind of disasters that affect the area. What kind of seeds and what kind of plants have been affected in that area? Then, they plan out accordingly, they preposition and plan how to procure these seeds at a timely manner without them expiring, and at the same time, how to transport them at the timely manner without them being lost or expiring as well. So, that is their policy at the DA right now. If you would like, they will furnish you a copy of a more in-depth program to your office. It is a very complicated and a very comprehensive program, Your Honor.

REP. CHAVEZ. Thank you, Mme. Speaker, to our honorable Sponsor. That is precisely the reason I asked for that in the Committee deliberations. I asked for an in-depth plan because I cannot fathom the fact that we have a specific figure of P1.1 billion here and I wanted to know if what you gave me is a general guideline.

I want to know how they came up with the amount? I mean, there should be a breakdown of buffer seed requirements by quantities and units and prices, by types of crop by region, the existing inventories as of date. It is important that the DA provides us with these assumptions that were used to establish the budget requirements. This should also include the projected calamities as supported by projections from PAGASA. I could go on and on but again, there is still no explanation on how you arrived at the specific amounts. Mme. Speaker, this Representation would like to be assured of proper identification of farmer recipients-beneficiaries. For this purpose, I submit that cooperatives should be involved to ensure a foolproof system of distribution of the buffer stock and the productivity desired.

Mme. Speaker, considering that seeds have limited shelf life, I wonder if the seeds should be purchased immediately because there is a great possibility that the seeds would only go to waste if the DA has no proper storage facilities. The DA says it will sell the seeds if these will not be used after a calamity. But why sell when this is supposed to be a subsidy? Moreover, should there be an unutilized fund allotted for seed buffer stock—I noticed that it is not stated in the Special Provisions—what do we do with it or where will the fund go?

REP. SAMBAR. Mme. Speaker, I would like to apologize on behalf of the Department of Agriculture. I think the documents that they did submit to the Lady's office were not the complete set of documents in terms of programs and projections for the seeds program. So, I have an assurance from the Department of Agriculture that they will submit the complete program, and although it is an ongoing program, they

do realize and understand the scope of this program. It is quite comprehensive. They would like to present to the Representative a more comprehensive program at her leisure, Mme. Speaker.

REP. CHAVEZ. Mme. Speaker, this Representation understands that there is a dire need for seed subsidy. What I do not understand is, why limit the subsidy to calamity-stricken areas when we can make use of the fund in finding long-term solutions? Mme. Speaker, the DA must give assurance that they have a concrete plan that is feasible. Otherwise, we will just be putting the money to waste and again, putting the blame on the poor farmers.

Mme. Speaker, seed security is vital to food security. In this respect, Mme. Speaker, the DA should ensure proper and timely distribution of seed buffer stock and, more strategically, the DA should make available credit programs and subsidies for rice seed growers as incentives for their contribution to national food security. I submit, Mme. Speaker, that a congressional oversight on the seed program of the DA is also in order.

I would like to move on to another item. Mme. Speaker, in Section 9 of the Special Provisions, it is stated thereat that the amount of P4.2 billion for agricultural machineries, equipment and facilities shall be used for the construction of facilities and procurement of machineries. Again, Mme. Speaker, just like in my preceding question, I asked the Department for a more detailed explanation on the use of the fund, but to no avail. I was never furnished with the documents. Mme. Speaker, I would like to stress the need for Congress to review the program plan, objective and management of the fund. It is important for us to know basic questions such as, “How much will go to the procurement?” and “How much will go to the construction?” Therefore, I am asking once again, through our honorable Sponsor, if the Department is ready with the data.

REP. SAMBAR. Mme. Speaker, again, I would like to apologize for the Department of Agriculture. I am sure that they have all these data, and I am quite surprised that they did not submit them to the honorable office of the Lady, but the data is here and we can pull them out for her.

REP. CHAVEZ. Mme. Speaker, while they are looking for the data, can I move on to my other question?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). Yes. Please proceed.

REP. CHAVEZ. Mme. Speaker, this Representation is eager to know the basis for procurement—specifically,

Mme. Speaker, how does the DA decide on what type of machinery to procure and what standards do they follow in terms of specifications? May we know through our honorable Sponsor the answer to these questions?

REP. SAMBAR. Mme. Speaker, there is a Philippine Agricultural Engineering Standard or the PAE Standard that the Department of Agriculture follows, and they do require AMTEC—which stands for Agri-Machine Testing and Evaluation Center—testing as well at UP Los Baños. Also, it is supposed to be—the equipment procured are supposed to be site or location-specific. So, they have consultations with stakeholders like the agricultural and fisheries councils which have, as members, the farmers, the fishermen, also the various sectors on the ground. They consult them in terms of the actual equipment that is needed by those groups, Mme. Speaker.

REP. CHAVEZ. Mme. Speaker, I asked about specifications because the DOST has that technology for most of these farm machineries and if this is so, I am wondering why the DA is not making use of the technology and looking into the possibility of procuring the machinery from local fabricators so that the money does not go elsewhere. Why are we appropriating considerably huge amounts for research if the government itself will not utilize the knowledge for the development of farm machineries?

Transparency should be of utmost concern and thus, I am asking through our honorable Sponsor for a copy of the DA’s master plan for this particular program. May I also ask for an account of the farm machineries currently located at the warehouse in Tarlac because this Representation had received reports that there are machineries there that are decaying as we speak. Again, it is worthwhile to know the inventory before allotting such a huge amount for the same purpose.

REP. SAMBAR. The Department of Agriculture coordinates with the DOST, with the PCAARRD which is the agricultural research arm of the DOST; and they also coordinate with the PhilMech in terms of the research and development on mechanization. So, there is coordination among the department in terms of heavy equipment. Also, to answer the Representative’s previous questions, I do have a list of the equipments procured or to be procured by the Department of Agriculture for 2018. I can enumerate them all, but I would like to just submit it to the Lady so that she can take a look at it at her own pleasure, Mme. Speaker.

REP. CHAVEZ. Mme. Speaker, coordination is one thing, and utilizing and implementing is another. Anyway, I would like to move on to my other questions.

Mme. Speaker, in Section 8 of the Special Provisions, the amount of P2.6 billion is allocated for the implementation of small-scale irrigation projects. Irrigation is very complex and it warrants expertise of multi-disciplines in engineering. Therefore, may we know from the Sponsor the technical capability of the Department to handle this kind of projects?

REP. SAMBAR. Mme. Speaker, the DA coordinates with the Bureau of Soil and Water Management as well as with the regional agricultural engineering groups and divisions. Then there is a new bureau that was created, the BAFE, the Bureau of Agricultural and Fisheries Engineering, that lends technical support and sets standards for these irrigation projects.

REP. CHAVEZ. Mme. Speaker, I would like to mention the study conducted by the DAP which was commissioned by the DA, the analysis and recommendations of the DAP in the rapid assessment of the AFMA. The study says that "Another weakness of AFMA in its irrigation provisions is the lack of technical capabilities of LGUs to handle irrigation system planning, design and management." It further states that "The irrigation provision of AFMA never materialized due to this lack of technical capability by LGUs." It is in their recommendations that more budget for irrigation development should be accompanied by increased technical manpower to absorb the associated increase in magnitude of irrigation-related work.

It is very surprising, Mr. Speaker, that the Department would ignore the recommendations of the study which they themselves commissioned because it is very clear in the provision that once constructed, they will again turn it over to the LGUs. Again, I am not against the objective of the program; I would just like to be clarified on how this will work. My question now is, what steps did the Department take? The DA is confident with their technical capability, but how about the LGUs?

REP. SAMBAR. Mme. Speaker, may we just ask the Honorable Chavez, what year is the study based on? I think there was a 1997 study and a 2000...

REP. CHAVEZ. ...2013 study.

REP. SAMBAR. 2013? So, in response to the AFMA, Mme. Speaker, the Department of Agriculture did create a Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Engineering to strengthen its technical capabilities for this kind of projects. So, that was one of the outcomes, that was a product of a study made by the DA.

REP. CHAVEZ. Mme. Speaker, can we ask from the Department the status of the implementation of the small-scale irrigation projects for 2017 worth P3.2.

billion? May we be apprised on how many projects, to date, were completed, where these projects are located, and does the Department monitor and evaluate these projects? Does the Gentleman have an impact assessment of the program since it is being appropriated another P2.6 billion for this year?

REP. SAMBAR. Mme. Speaker, in terms of impact assessment, I think it is too early for the DA to give a presentation in that sense, but once they have all the data ready, they will be willing to submit that to the Lady. In terms of summary of all the irrigation projects, we are still waiting for the data, but I will give it to the Lady once they present it to me, Mme. Speaker.

REP. CHAVEZ. Okay, I am gonna move on to another topic.

Mme. Speaker, the Department allocated P11.7 billion for their National Rice Program. May we know from the Department what is their master plan for the use of the fund. May we know what kind of programs are included? Are these for credit? Are these for subsidy? Are these for machinery? What is the target and what is the timeline?

REP. SAMBAR. Mme. Speaker, the thrusts and objectives of the National Rice Program are, thus: to improve productivity; to increase irrigated areas and harvests; to reduce production costs and increase farm income; to reduce marketing costs and margins of post-harvest losses, to enhance resiliency to climate change and improve disaster risk management, to improve demand management, and to manage displacement of farmers and laborers. Aligned with this Rice Program, the Department of Agriculture is taking several strategies to reach their objectives and part of this is promoting rice-based farming system, continuing investment on research and development, constructing quick-gestating, small-scale irrigation systems, and promoting mechanized services through the establishment of rural post-harvest facilities, to name a few.

So, they have quite a number of strategies to reach their objectives, Mme. Speaker.

REP. CHAVEZ. Mme. Speaker, the National Rice Program is very crucial in view of the expiration of the QR and the impending ASEAN integration, so the rice farmers need all the help that they can get. I would not like to belabor the issue at this point, Mme. Speaker, but I do look forward to a thorough review of the Rice Program with the cooperation of the DA. Let me just state, Mme. Speaker, that with or without the quantitative restriction or QR on rice, the bottom line is, the provision of essential and vital services and programs for the development of the rice industry towards self-sufficiency and food security is very important.

Let me now proceed to my last question, Mme. Speaker, distinguished colleagues. Mme. Speaker, the PCIC will be given P3.5 billion for the government premium subsidy and will use the Registry for Basic Sectors in Agriculture or RSBSA as their basis for identification of beneficiaries. May I ask, Mme. Speaker, how many is the target beneficiaries based on the RSBSA, and how many have actually benefitted from it?

REP. SAMBAR. Mme. Speaker, for 2018, the target is 1.8 million farmers for RSBSA.

REP. CHAVEZ. Mme. Speaker, this Representation is appalled by the fact that the PCIC is using the Registry for Basic Sectors in Agriculture when there are data showing that 20,000 farmers from the PCIC were unmatched from the list of the RSBSA. In fact, Mme. Speaker, I have here a resolution from the farmers of Bulacan asking the assistance of this Representation in urging the PCIC to explain their reason for nonpayment of claims. It took this Representation several follow-ups to get a reply, only to be disappointed with their response because they were not able to explain why and only suggested that the farmers go to their MAO so that they can be included in the list.

Mme. Speaker, I also have with me the DBM report stating the significant number of unmatched farmers on the list. My question, Mme. Speaker, is it not possible for the RSBSA to be stricken off the provision since its reliability is questionable? I even have data here of studies done that there are legitimate agricultural producers that were excluded from the list. There are persons in the list who should not be on the list. Also, there are recommendations that the list should be updated at least every three years, and the study was done in 2012. In 2012, for example, around 1.7 million supposedly RSBSA beneficiaries in the list of the DAR, NIA, PCIC and BFAR are unmatched. I am now wondering, Mme. Speaker, why the Department of Agriculture would insist on this when a great number of farmers that they should be serving are not on the list. I believe that to ignore this would be a great injustice to the farmers, especially to those who are religiously paying their premium payments because they are forced to do so dahil kapag nangutang sila sa LANDBANK, compulsory ang pa-seguro sa PCIC. Mme. Speaker, distinguished colleague, why are we appropriating funds for the RSBSA when, in fact, it has not served its purpose over the years?

Why squander our budget on a program that has not been reliable for the longest time?

REP. SAMBAR. Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, what the Honorable Chavez is saying is true that there had been lapses with the RSBSA. I think it has

been neglected by previous administrations. Now, the assurance of this administration, of this current administration, is that they will review—they are purging and they are updating and now, they are getting new members for this RSBSA so that it will be more receptive to the farmers and the constituents of the Honorable Chavez.

The RSBA was first undertaken and led by the DBM and now, the DA is the lead and is now rectifying the situation through proper representation and it is updating and purging the list. So, right now, the DA welcomes all the comments made by the Honorable Chavez. The DA is also willing to work with the Honorable Chavez to improve the efficiency and the productivity objective of the RSBSA.

REP. CHAVEZ. Mme. Speaker, I apologize to the honorable Sponsor, but their assurance does not have any bearing to me now. I have been in the two committee deliberations; I was promised by the DA that we are going to talk this over, but there was never any meeting. I cannot hold your assurance on that. I do not even know if the head of the Department is listening as we speak because, you know, I have seen him over there and he is talking with I do not know who.

So, in summary, I would just like to be clear that I am not against the approval of the budget of the DA because as a Representative of the farmers, there is nothing more that I would want but for their budget to be approved so they can serve the farmers better. Improving the lives of farmers will ultimately redound to agricultural and national development and progress.

Mme. Speaker, the issues and concerns I had raised on several items of the DA's budget are serious enough to merit a more thorough review, lest we appropriate funds and public money to programs that may not really serve their purpose. I would rather support a budgetary program that is more sustainable and strategically beneficial. As I had mentioned earlier, a congressional oversight is in order on the multi-faceted issues and programs of the DA that I delved into.

Mme. Speaker, distinguished colleague, I will be doing injustice to the farmers' sector if I will be silent on the issues I have propounded. Thus, it is incumbent upon me, Mme. Speaker, to move for the deferment of the budget of the Department of Agriculture.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Alvarez, M.). The session is suspended.

It was 2:03 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 2:06 p.m., Deputy Speaker Mercedes K. Alvarez relinquished the Chair to Deputy Speaker Fredenil "Fred" H. Castro.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The session is resumed.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Representative of ANAKPAWIS Party-List, Cong. Ariel "Ka Ayik" B. Casilao, for his interpellation on the budget of the Department of Agriculture.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The Honorable Casilao is hereby recognized.

REP. CASILAO. Mr. Speaker, I believe there is still a pending motion. May we know the status?

REP. CHAVEZ. Mr. Speaker, parliamentary inquiry.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the session.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The session is suspended.

It was 2:06 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 2:21 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The session is resumed.

The distinguished Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, may we again hear from the Hon. Cecilia Leonila V. Chavez.

REP. CHAVEZ. Mr. Speaker, after conferring with my colleagues, I will take their word for it and their assurance that they are going to be on this with me so, I am going to withdraw my pending motion.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, we are thankful for the indulgence of the distinguished Lady.

May we now recognize the next Member to interpellate. I move that we recognize the Hon. Ariel

"Ka Ayik" B. Casilao of the ANAKPAWIS Party-List.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The distinguished Gentleman from the Party-List ANAKPAWIS is hereby recognized.

REP. CASILAO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Before proceeding with my interpellation, with my series of questions, distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to follow up and follow through the questions raised by the distinguished Minority Leader pertaining to the bird flu problem in Pampanga. May I know how much the DA spent in responding to the crisis.

REP. SAMBAR. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, so far, the DA has spent P48 million as compensation for the livestock that was eliminated during the cleanup operations.

REP. CASILAO. Is it P48 billion or million?

REP. SAMBAR. Million, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASILAO. May I know what item in the 2017 Budget did it source this out.

REP. SAMBAR. There is P31 million from the QRF that is still ongoing, and the P20 million from the livestock program, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASILAO. Now, having said that, the Secretary himself confirmed that it was already 100-percent contained. Now, is there any possibility of resurgence?

REP. SAMBAR. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, the resurgence as far as this particular virus is concerned, no, but, of course, future outbreaks may occur from other different sources and we cannot project or foresee that. The DA will maintain vigilance in monitoring and maintaining surveillance so that other possible outbreaks can be prevented.

REP. CASILAO. With that statement, distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, in the P43-billion budget for 2018, am I correct to understand that it is still incorporated in the QRF, any eventual impact, may it be man-made or naturally-created disasters, that affects the entire agriculture or items in the agriculture.

REP. SAMBAR. Yes, that is correct, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker. The P1-billion QRF is given to the DA through the NDRRMC. They are putting away a bit of

that with respect to responding, if ever there are future bird flu outbreaks but also, other calamities.

REP. CASILAO. Thank you for that answer, distinguished Sponsor.

Again, to this Representation, my crusade in deliberating on the budget of the Department of Agriculture, one, will focus on food security. In the Committee budget briefing, it was repeatedly mentioned by our good Secretary that food security is tantamount to food productivity. Now, allow me, distinguished Sponsor, to cite certain international standards. The UN World Food Programme defines the pillars of food security as availability, accessibility and utilization.

Now, let us focus on the National Rice Program. Is the National Rice Program, a component of which identifies the Masagana 200, a reengineered Masagana 99 in the previous administration of Ferdinand Marcos?

REP. SAMBAR. In terms of similarity in the naming, yes there is, but the Rice Program is totally different, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASILAO. Mr. Speaker, I will have a separate series of questions on that, but may I go back to the pillars of food security. Now, may we ask the good Secretary, as it defines, is food productivity and rice sufficiency similar?

REP. SAMBAR. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, yes, it is. The new paradigm is rice sufficiency and rice productivity. Greater rice productivity is tantamount to rice sufficiency, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASILAO. Well, that is one of the problems now that I am contemplating, distinguished Sponsor, because production and the productivity are independent spheres in terms of circulation. Now, it is a different term for availability, productivity. It is a correlating process in the entire commitment of food security. However, it is clear now that on the policy in the rice self-sufficiency, in terms of productivity, I can see a problem of circulation.

Now, distinguished Sponsor, may I go back to the term “Masagana 200.” May I know the areas this is being currently implemented.

REP. SAMBAR. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, the start of the program will be in Guimaras for the hybrid rice program.

REP. CASILAO. Guimaras alone or do we have a listing?

REP. SAMBAR. It will be a national program. It will be implemented all over the country but the start

of the program will be in Guimaras and that will target 500,000 hectares during the dry season.

REP. CASILAO. Come again?

REP. SAMBAR. The target for this program is 500,000 hectares during the dry season. So, that is the target of the DA for this new rice program.

REP. CASILAO. What is the time frame?

REP. SAMBAR. The DA is already implementing this program in time for the dry season planting this September, and it will be continuous every season, Your Honor.

REP. CASILAO. Thank you for that, distinguished Sponsor.

Now, let me refresh our distinguished Secretary. He mentioned in the budget briefing that—I do not know if he was the one who mentioned or it is one of his undersecretaries—ang binabalak at pinaplano ngayon ng Department of Agriculture, instead of importing rice ay mag-i-import na lang ang palay. The Department of Agriculture is determining a storage facility that will be equipped or with an environment wherein it can be deposited for a long period of time, these imported variants of palay and not rice. Does the Secretary confirm this?

REP. SAMBAR. Your Honor, the Secretary is denying that because he is actually instructing the NFA to buy palay from the farmers. So, there is no such thing as importing palay from other sources, Your Honor.

REP. CASILAO. Yes, I stand corrected. I am refreshed now, Mr. Sponsor, that it is not the Department of Agriculture, but it is the National Food Authority. Again, there is a contradictory position. However, the NFA, in the plenary deliberations on their budget, I will ask that same question, distinguished Sponsor, because I clearly heard, although wala na po akong panahon noon para mag-interpellate ulit, dahil narinig ko nga coming from the mouth of the NFA Administrator, na ang binabalak nila for the succeeding year is to import not rice, not a variety of rice, but palay na. Again, I am saddened by that plan, especially since the NFA was allocated with a bigger budget.

Now, my second question is related to my first question. This Representation believes fully that in order to achieve a food security platform or program and the impact that we targeted to achieve, it will rely mainly on the assets available. One of the required assets or requirements for food security, even if it is termed “food productivity,” is the land. May I know from the distinguished Sponsor, in conferring with the good

Secretary, if he supports the campaign and the policy direction of the Department of Agrarian Reform with regard to the free distribution of agricultural lands?

REP. SAMBAR. Your Honor, the Secretary supports it as long as it is enacted into law.

REP. CASILAO. Thank you for that categorical commitment, distinguished Sponsor. I will personally congratulate the good Secretary if that statement is coming from him.

Just a statistical question, because my succeeding interpellation will be based on this record. May I know if there are current statistics now on documented farmers per sub-category, and fisherfolk. How many millions do we have now for the rice farmers on ...

REP. SAMBAR. Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, the data is still being updated and it is still ongoing and this is the basis of the RSBSA. Unfortunately, the RSBSA data is not complete at the moment, but if you would like to be furnished a copy of the data that they have so far, they can give it to you.

REP. CASILAO. Yes, please, distinguished Sponsor. Gladly, I will ask for it even if it is partial because in our advocacy and in fact, even the advocacy of my colleague who moved for the deferment, this is particular to the sectors that we would like to address.

Now, on the BFAR, regarding the fisherfolk sector which is one of the sub-sectors I represent, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, may I know if in 2017, there was a call from the BFAR, and addressed to registered fisherfolk organizations at that time, that they are ready to distribute pump boats in a package, *naka-pakete na po iyon, kasama iyong mga gamit pangisda o gamit sa pangisdaan. Maitanong ko po kung ilan ang naipamahagi na at kung mayroon po tayong listahan—at humihingi po ang Kinatawang ito—ng mga farmer-beneficiaries, especially sa areas or provinces na malaki po ang populasyon ng ating mga mangingisda?*

REP. SAMBAR. Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, the target of the BFAR for the distribution of these boats and complete equipment package is 9,000 this year, which caters to 18,000 families. As of now, it is still ongoing, but they have already distributed about 5,000 units nationally—these are distributed all over the country, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. CASILAO. Is it safe to assume that these are the amended Fisheries Code-compliant or required pump boats?

REP. SAMBAR. Yes, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. CASILAO. Mme. Speaker, I asked that particular question because, although this might sound parochial, there are several chapters of PAMALAKAYA, a militant fisherfolk organization under ANAKPAWIS, which requested to be beneficiaries of the supposed call of the BFAR. However, for whatever reasons the BFAR holds, they denied those requests. Precisely, I asked that question because one of the criticisms to the amendments to the Fisheries Code, distinguished Sponsor, is the required registration not only of the motor boats, but all the equipment related to fishing. They are being required to register these and an amount will be paid by the fisherfolk; that is being required of them. So again, that criticism or that critique of ours on the amendments, pushed us to file a resolution to investigate.

Now, as I understand, I would like to recall, from my office, that we forwarded a letter requesting the BFAR with regard to these issues that I raised, to clarify the same precisely because, while BFAR is distributing already equipped and modernized pump boats to target fisherfolk beneficiaries, it is also sad to note that there are a lot of fisherfolk organizations which failed to comply with the mandatory requirements as provided in the amendments to the Philippine Fisheries Code. Now, for the P5.9 billion in 2018 for the BFAR budget, distinguished Sponsor, may I know what item or program or will the BFAR do—will it continue to do the same program on the distribution of pump boats and fishing equipment?

REP. SAMBAR. Your Honor, for 2018, the BFAR will continue to distribute boats and their target is 7,000 units, amounting to, more or less, P500 million, Your Honor.

REP. CASILAO. May I know which item is this because I can see only three: Fisheries Regulatory and Law Enforcement Program, Fisheries Extension Program, and Fisheries Policy Program?

REP. SAMBAR. Your Honor, it is under the FB Pagbabago Program, if I am not mistaken.

REP. CASILAO. How much is the cost again, distinguished Sponsor?

REP. SAMBAR. The total cost would be P526 million, but it includes the equipment as well, Your Honor.

REP. CASILAO. Is it under the P1.7 billion or the P2.1 billion, or the Fisheries Development Program?

REP. SAMBAR. Yes, Your Honor. It is under the P1.7 billion of BFAR.

REP. CASILAO. Malaking bahagi po kasi diyan, distinguished Sponsor, is the P687.7 million allotted for the Aquaculture Program.

Now, I cannot fully understand the wisdom because in aquaculture, malaki pong bahagi na player dito ay mga private po. Bakit po may budget ang BFAR sa ganitong programa na malaki po ang pinopondo na P687 million sa usapin ng aquaculture? Are we in the correct assumption that we are growing a species or specific fishes for production, for market consumption? May I know the highlights of this P687.7 million, distinguished Sponsor.

REP. SAMBAR. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, the highlights of the Aquaculture Program of the BFAR, for the P680 million that you mentioned, are as follows: The BASIL, or the Balik-Sigla sa Ilog at Lawa, the National Broodstock Development Program, the cages for Livelihood Development Program, the Fingerlings Production and Distribution, the Philippine National Aquasilviculture Program, Sewage Development Program, National Shellfish Development Program and Techno-Demo Projects. I think most of these programs, Your Honor, are pilot projects in order to introduce more potential livelihood for our poorer fisherfolk in the future, so that they can grow their own industries, Your Honor.

REP. CASILAO. But these are fully subsidized, right? We did not or the DA did not identify private partners. This is solely subsidized by the budget allotted.

REP. SAMBAR. Your Honor, under this program, there is a partnership with the LGUs, there is partnership with the fisherfolk, there is a partnership with hatchery operators, coops— all stakeholders are part of this program and they are tapped to help, improve and implement this program as well.

REP. CASILAO. So it will depend on sectoral partnerships between the DA and those you have mentioned, if the species or the kind of project that they will be implementing in their respective areas will suit them...

REP. SAMBAR. Yes.

REP. CASILAO. ... in the nature of the...

REP. SAMBAR. Yes, that is correct, Your Honor.

REP. CASILAO. Thank you.

Now, in the monitoring, control and surveillance, distinguished Sponsor, I already raised this but there seems to be an increase, of a bigger amount, in terms

of—the purchase of equipment sa mga bantay-dagat. Ang amount po na nakalagay dito is 174. I do not know if this is correct pero gusto ko pong malaman kung ang P697 million sa monitoring, control et cetera includes the purchase of firearms.

REP. SAMBAR. None, Your Honor.

REP. CASILAO. None. Radio equipment?

REP. SAMBAR. Very minimal, Your Honor. The bulk of this is for the operation of our patrol boats, Your Honor. So, we have two new 50-meter vessels that are patrolling our waterways in the Philippines against illegal fishing, especially by other countries, Your Honor.

REP. CASILAO. Yes. I believe that, with two patrol boats, this is limited to a specific operation. They cannot operate in the entire coastal area of the Philippines, right?

REP. SAMBAR. If needed, Your Honor, they could. They can patrol as far as EEZ if needed.

REP. CASILAO. Yes, this might be a parochial concern because there is an ongoing camp out outside of Malacañang in Mendiola, and out of the 400 farmers and fisherfolk camping out now in Mendiola, many of them hail from the coastal areas of the CARAGA Region and one of their concerns that they raised last Sunday when I visited them and had a dialogue with them, was the prevalent illegal fishing—ang paggamit daw po ng dinamita, cyanide spray, superlight, paulbo, ring net or likum at sudsod, na pagmamay-ari at kontrolado ng mga lokal na pulitiko doon sa CARAGA Region.

Now, nais ko pong maipaabot na at hindi ko naman hinihingi ngayon ang kasagutan because I already prepared a written communication on this and I was supposed to forward this today, but I might as well raise this since this is a deliberation on the Department of Agriculture and the BFAR officials are here already—I would like to inform, in advance, our BFAR officials in terms of this complaint on the encroachment of commercial fishing vessels in the municipal waters—and I would like to submit a list of areas and so, it is not necessary that I mention them here.

Again, my point is, distinguished Sponsor, there had been complaints that the implementation of the amendments to the Philippine Fisheries Code really impacted a lot on our fisherfolks. Although it is a legislative action to review, to amend, to repeal the existing law, that it is the role of Congress, may I just categorically ask the BFAR officials if they are ready or if they are willing to provide this Representation their comments with regard to the impact of the amendments

to the Philippine Fisheries Code as the basis for this Representation to file a resolution to review these same amendments to the said Code.

REP. SAMBAR. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, the BFAR more than welcomes or is welcoming the honorable Representative to consult or to sit down with them because they are very, very open in reviewing the policies of the Philippine Fisheries Code. They admitted that there are some flaws that they are willing to work on and maybe, with your help, Your Honor, these flaws can be corrected and the fishermen can be given the proper support that they need.

REP. CASILAO. Lastly, on the BFAR, distinguished Sponsor, I do not know if the allocation per region is based—the P2.8 billion in the Central Office and the remainder, out of the P5.9 billion, that is distributed, of course, in almost all regions, but does it incorporate already, taking into consideration the regions or provinces in terms of productivity, or in terms of production of fisheries and aquatic resources products—did the BFAR take that into consideration in allotting—hindi naman po ito magkakaparehas na allotment, I understand that, na hindi ibig sabihin na kung malaking rehiyon ay malaki ang allotment pero base doon sa karakter ng Bureau, ng ahensiya ng BFAR, ang alam ko po at sana ay ito din ang understanding ng mga taga-BFAR, na malaki ang allotment dahil malaki ang fishing communities, ang fisherfolk population, and the economic activity being sourced from aquatic resources ay nandoon. Am I correct to understand that, distinguished Sponsor?

REP. SAMBAR. Yes, Your Honor, that is correct. The allocation is proportional to different factors such as the population of the fisherfolk in that area, aquatic resources, potential, and others that you did enumerate, Your Honor.

REP. CASILAO. Thank you for that, distinguished Sponsor. In another item, distinguished Sponsor, may I know their commitment because this Representation is advocating for a strict implementation of our organic products and the good Secretary knows that fully well, and I have already filed a resolution or a bill amending the current Organic Agriculture Act. Now, I cannot particularly see the allocation for the organic agriculture development of the Department of Agriculture. May I know the specific amount or allotment for organic agriculture and the support therefor?

REP. SAMBAR. Your Honor, the National Organic Agriculture Program of the Department of Agriculture haa a total of P802.9 million.

REP. CASILAO. So, P802.9 million. Thank you for that, distinguished Sponsor.

Lastly, I requested for a document with regard to the status of the application of the Golden Rice. Unfortunately, I only received a one-page general reply and there had already been, I think, testing, and their application is for public propagation. Public propagation means it will be readily available in the market for public consumption, but I understand also that the agency tasked, the Food and Drugs Administration or the FDA has yet to accomplish an extensive study on the nature of the Golden Rice, whether it is medicinal or for consumption—gamot ba ito o pagkain? Iyon po ang tanong.

Itinatanong ko nga po ito noong budget deliberation sa Komite para magbigay ng malinaw na sagot iyong FDA. Unfortunately, I was not given that scientific and comprehensive manner of reply or response. Now, tama po ba na i-assume natin, in the absence of these requirements—of course, the FDA is here—hindi naman po ito bibigyan ng certification na maaari na itong ibenta for public consumption kung certain requirements, whether or not this item, this kind of rice will be used as food or for medicinal purposes. Ang biro ko nga doon, distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, walang malinaw na sagot kung ito ba ay pagkain o ito ba ay medisina, at baka nga food supplement or both. Tulad ng binebenta ngayon sa merkado na food supplement lang, may malinaw na warning that this is only a food supplement and not a medicine or to be used for medicinal purposes.

Kaya iyan na lang po ang huling tanong, distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker. My other questions are addressed to the NFA and the NIA, which agencies are not covered in this current interpellation. So, please, as reminder, that the DA and the FDA to furnish this Representation a comprehensive—hindi lang po isang page na may dalawang paragraph po lang—ang hinihingi ko po ay malinaw na study, iyong impact na mayroong scientific quotes dahil mga expert naman po ang nandiyan, iyong mga may expertise sa field na iyan.

So, that will be all, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor. Thank you very much.

REP. SAMBAR. Yes, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, thank you.

In response to that, very quickly, the Department of Agriculture will defer to the FDA in terms of the medicinal or nutritional value or content of the Golden Rice. However, the DA is only concerned with the agronomics of that certain rice product, but rest assured, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, that the DA will submit whatever study they have on the Golden Rice, and we will also ask the FDA to give to your office the documents in relation to this.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I now move that we recognize Rep. Gary C. Alejano.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The distinguished Rep. Gary C. Alejano is hereby recognized

REP. ALEJANO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Magandang hapon po sa inyong lahat. To the DA family, magandang hapon po.

Before I will ask my questions, I would like to read something based on the paper of a Coast Guard Officer, Commander Gavan, on the issue of Organized National Engagement (ONE) at Sea:

The Philippines is a maritime and archipelagic nation. Its people are closely linked to the sea for food, commerce and travel. In fact, 55 of its 75 provinces are located along or in close proximity to its 1,850-kilometer coastline, the fourth longest in the world. It is dotted with 2,456 government, private and fishing ports serving as nodes for domestic and international socio-economic and cultural integration. This does not include the coastal areas on which small boats leave and arrive, hardly regulated, to and from the 7,107 islands dispersed over 2.2 million square kilometers of maritime jurisdiction.

With a good English-speaking workforce, Filipino sea-based workers now comprise 20 percent of the global pool, providing annually a fresh cash of about \$2.3 billion to the domestic economy.

The country's dependence on the sea for commerce accounts to more than half of its gross domestic product and for all its imported energy needs.

Globally, the Philippine waters has significant attributes with broad implications. Among others, they host major sea lanes across the Asia-Pacific in western economies through which over 50 percent by weight of cross trade pass every day. For instance, the bulk of Australian exports to the economic giants of Asia pass solely along these trade routes, so as most of the market hungry for goods from a rising East-Asia. With economic and consequently, political center of gravity seen shifting towards this part of the world, ensuring freedom of navigation or the control thereof has increasingly been adding flavor to geopolitics in the area.

Compounding the issue is the need to conserve and protect the Coral Triangle that contains the world's richest marine biodiversity. More so, in the aftermath of cheaper technologies and dwindling land-based resources, littoral states had become more aggressive in laying their respective claims on the maritime space. A case at point is the West Philippine Sea, which is believed to contain vast natural gas and possibly, oil reserves which can potentially offset the foreseeable decline of energy supply from the Middle East.

In relation to this, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, I would just like to ask the Department of Agriculture on the estimated wealth or the potential wealth we have in our maritime areas.

REP. SAMBAR. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, the Department of Agriculture has a breakdown amounting to about P75 trillion. The breakdown is as follows: P45.79 trillion in coral reefs; P2.4 trillion in mangroves; P0.14 trillion in seagrass; and P26.69 trillion in our continental shelf. So that totals to P75 trillion, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ALEJANO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, napakalaki po ng P75 trillion. Maitanong ko lang po, kung banda sa marine resources, sa isda at ano pang ibang marine resources, maliban sa oil and gas na potential na puwedeng makuha doon, mga magkano po ito lahat, doon lamang sa isda, sa mga shellfish?

REP. SAMBAR. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, actually, that is just for aquatic resources and we did not include the...

REP. ALEJANO. Okay.

REP. SAMBAR. The P75 trillion is just for aquatic resources. It does not include the potential for minerals, gas and other resources for exploration that we might have in those areas.

REP. ALEJANO. Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor. Napakalaki po niyan. In relation to that, bilang potential na makukuha natin doon sa aquatic resources, sa ating maritime areas, magkano ba ang na-allocate ng ating gobyerno, especially the Department of Agriculture, sa BFAR, na pondo upang ma-enhance, ma-exploit natin itong resources natin?

REP. SAMBAR. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, the total budget of BFAR is approximately P6 billion, P5.9 billion if I am not mistaken.

REP. ALEJANO. It is P6 billion?

REP. SAMBAR. Yes, P6 billion but for 2018, P1.747 billion is allocated for regulatory functions, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ALEJANO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor.

Binanggit po kanina na ang potential wealth sa ating maritime domain ay estimated at P75 trillion pero iyong budget po na na-allocate natin ay P6 billion lamang sa BFAR. Napakalayo na, sobrang liit itong pondong binigay para sa BFAR. Maitanong ko lang po, baka naman hindi nag-recommend ang ating Department of Agriculture or ang BFAR para lalong ma-enhance at ma-exploit natin ang ating maritime resources. Did you recommend for a bigger budget?

REP. SAMBAR. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, the Department of Agriculture proposed an P18-billion budget for the BFAR but unfortunately, what was approved by the DBM was approximately P6 billion or one third of it.

REP. ALEJANO. So, P80 billion.

REP. SAMBAR. It is P18 billion, 1-8, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ALEJANO. Out of the P18 billion, P6 billion po ang na-approve?

REP. SAMBAR. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, almost P6 billion or P5.99 billion.

REP. ALEJANO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor. In relation again to this, magkano po ang na-allocate natin sa pagpapatibay ng ating interes at karapatan sa West Philippine Sea at sa Benham Rise, especially bilang suporta sa ating mga mangingisda? So, out of P6 billion that we have for the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, magkano po dito ang na-allocate para mapatibay ang ating claim sa West Philippine Sea, especially sa pag-suporta sa ating mga mangingisda?

REP. SAMBAR. For the regulatory functions, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, P1.747 billion is allocated but that is for the whole Philippines, the regulatory functions to cover the entire country.

REP. ALEJANO. So, P1.74 million.

REP. SAMBAR. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ALEJANO. But that is only for the function of regulation?

REP. SAMBAR. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ALEJANO. I think, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, hindi ho natin na-address specifically iyong pondo na tulong natin para mapagtibay ng ating claim doon West Philippine Sea. I understand the Department of Agriculture, through the Bureau of Fisheries, ay mayroong mga bangkang binigay sa ating mga mangingisda pero ang mga bangkang maliliit ay para lamang sa mga municipal and coastal fishermen. Sa mga mangingisda naman na pumapalaot malapit sa Spratly Group of Islands at Scarborough Shoal, mayroon po ba tayong suporta sa grupo ng mga mangingisda na ito?

REP. SAMBAR. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, there is a proposal from the BFAR for the procurement of 30-footer vehicles amounting to P500 million. Unfortunately, it was not approved by the DBM.

REP. ALEJANO. Ito ay P500 million po?

REP. SAMBAR. Yes, P500 million.

REP. ALEJANO. That is for 2018?

REP. SAMBAR. That was the proposal but it was not approved. That is for the procurement of 30-footer vessels to patrol international waters.

REP. ALEJANO. It is for the procurement of 30-footer vessels. How many vessels, mga ilang piraso po ito?

REP. SAMBAR. That is for 20 units, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ALEJANO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor. Sa tingin ko po, kailangan natin bigyan ng atensiyon ang ating yamang-dagat dahil ito ay mas malaki ang area at mas malaki ang potential as compared to the land-based resources ng ating bansa. Napaka-liit po ng pondo na ibinibigay natin sa Bureau of Fisheries. In effect, doon sa mga nangingisda sa Panatag, sa Scarborough doon sa West Philippine Sea, halos wala po tayong suporta sa ating mga mangingisda diyan. I hope na mabigyan ng atensiyon ito dahil sila po, hindi nila alam kung paano at ano ang gagawin, especially sa conflict natin sa West Philippine Sea.

Ang susunod na tanong, mayroon bang proposal ang Bureau of Fisheries, through the Department of Agriculture, na magtayo ng research facilities sa Benham Rise o Philippine Rise na gayon?

REP. SAMBAR. Yes, there is a proposal but unfortunately as of now, it is not within the priorities of the current administration to put up research facilities

in the area. There was a proposal of P4.1 billion for the BFAR offshore station, but it was disapproved and they prioritized other programs of the administration, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ALEJANO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor.

REP. SAMBAR. For clarification, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, they prioritized patrol vessels, UAVs and helicopters, as opposed to offshore stations. Maybe in the next budget, we will see this proposal bear fruit.

REP. ALEJANO. Puwede po bang malaman ano ang pinaka-objective ng paglalagay ng isang pasilidad sa Philippine Rise. Bakit tayo nagpo-propose na maglagay nito doon?

REP. SAMBAR. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, the basis of ownership is possession, and the reason the Philippines would want an offshore station in those areas would be to claim or solidify our ownership of those areas. That is one of the major reasons we want to put an offshore station in those disputed areas.

REP. ALEJANO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor.

Narinig naman po natin na mayroong kontrobersyal na isyu diyan, na nagkaroon ng survey ang mga Chinese vessel sa area ng Benham Rise o Philippine Rise na ngayon. Ito ay parang wake-up call na sa atin, na ang ating maritime resources ay ini-exploit ng mga ibang bansa, na tayo mismo hindi natin nagagamit because napabayaan na natin.

I understand doon sa proposal, kasama dito sa proposal ng Department of Agriculture at BFAR, is to establish land-based coastal surveillance centers. Ito po ay kasama sa proposal ng Department of Agriculture kasi nga ang ating mangingisda ay hindi alam ang gagawin kung mayroong emergency or mayroong pangha-harass sa kanila na galing sa China. Nakalagay dito, “to support the operation in the national waters and to enable BFAR to provide additional support to LGUs in their municipal waters at the eastern and western seaboard.” Dito sa West Philippine Sea at sa Philippine Rise, a land-based coastal surveillance center in two strategic areas will be established. Nakalagay din dito na magse-set up po tayo ng surface surveillance radar, communications system, automatic identification system base station, radio direction finder at other surveillance equipment. Napakaimportante ang proposal na ito dahil, sa totoo lang, noong nakausap natin ang mga mangingisda noong na-harass sila sa West Philippine Sea, ay wala silang communication sa Philippine Coast Guard, sa ating government agencies. Hindi nila alam kung ano ang gagawin.

So, sa aking mga kasamahan, ini-encourage natin, and I will support the proposal of the Department of Agriculture and the BFAR, na sana madagdagan pa natin ang pondo nila. I will personally write to the appropriate committee para madagdagan ang pondo nila dahil ang makukuha nating resources diyan ay ‘di hamak na mas malaki kung ating aalagaan ito at bibigyang-pansin.

With the limited time, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, I will wrap up and I will continue my questions in the next opportunity. I would like to thank our distinguished Sponsor for giving me the opportunity to ask some questions.

Maraming salamat po at magandang hapon.

REP. SAMBAR. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The distinguished Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. BONDOC. We thank the Honorable Alejano, Mr. Speaker, and we note his reservation to interpellate further the budget of the Department of Agriculture.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the consideration of the budget of the Department of Agriculture, including its attached agencies and corporations.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we take up the budget of the National Youth Commission.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Sponsor for this budget, the Hon. Mark Aeron H. Sambar.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The Hon. Mark Sambar is hereby recognized.

REP. SAMBAR. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This Representation is ready to defend the budget of the National Youth Commission.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, there being no interpellations on the budget of the National Youth Commission, I move that we close the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the National Youth Commission.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Is there any objection?

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker, parliamentary inquiry.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The distinguished Sr. Dep. Minority Leader is hereby recognized.

REP. ATIENZA. What happened to the Department of Agriculture budget, are we holding it in abeyance? Have we closed the period of interpellation and debate? There was no motion on the floor.

REP. BONDOC. I made a motion, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. You did? Congratulations.

On the National Youth Commission, Mr. Speaker, we would like to recommend an increase in their budget, but we cannot do that. So we would now move to close the period of interpellation and debate and also move for the approval of its budget.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, on the part of the Majority, we join the Gentleman from the Minority in his motion to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the National Youth Commission.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DEFENSOR. With that, Mr. Speaker, may we greet the Chairperson and the CEO of the National Youth Commission, Ms. Cariza Seguerra.

Mr. Speaker, I move that we now take up the budget of the Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DEFENSOR. Still to sponsor this budget, Mr. Speaker, I move that we again recognize the Hon. Mark Sambar.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The Hon. Mark Sambar is hereby recognized.

REP. SAMBAR. Mr. Speaker, this Representation is now ready to defend the budget of the Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The Sr. Dep. Minority Leader is recognized.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker, on the part of the Minority, we do not intend to interpellate the Sponsor on this budget. Therefore, we move to terminate the period of interpellation.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, on the part of the Majority, we join the Minority in its motion to terminate the period of interpellation on the budget of the Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we take up the budget of the Games and Amusements Board.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move to again recognize the Hon. Mark Sambar to sponsor this budget.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The Hon. Mark Sambar is hereby recognized.

REP. SAMBAR. Mr. Speaker, this Representation is ready to sponsor the budget of the Games and Amusements Board.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of interpellation on the budget of the Games and Amusements Board.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. ATIENZA. On the part of the Minority, we do not intend to interpellate on the budget of the Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority. So, we agree that we now terminate the period of interpellation and vote on the approval of the same.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The manifestation of the distinguished Sr. Dep. Minority Leader is hereby noted.

REP. DEFENSOR. On the part of the Majority, Mr. Speaker, we join the distinguished Sr. Dep.

Minority Leader in the motion to terminate the period of interpellation on the budget of the Games and Amusements Board.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we take up the budget of the Philippine Racing Commission.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, again, may we recognize the Hon. Mark Aeron H. Sambar to sponsor this budget.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The Hon. Mark Aeron H. Sambar is hereby recognized.

REP. SAMBAR. Mr. Speaker, this Representative is ready to sponsor the budget of the Philippine Racing Commission.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker, wala po akong naririnig.

REP. SAMBAR. I am sorry, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. I think we should take a break. They are telling stories on the part of the Sponsor.

REP. SAMBAR. No, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker. The Sponsor is willing and able to continue. So, I would like to sponsor the budget of the Philippine Racing Commission, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. On the part of the Minority, Mr. Speaker, we have no questions on the Philippine Racing Commission, and we move to terminate the period of interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, on the part of the Majority, we join the distinguished Sr. Dep. Minority Leader on the motion to terminate the period of interpellation on the Philippine Racing Commission.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we take up the budget of the Philippine Sports Commission.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Sponsor of this budget, the Hon. Mark Aeron H. Sambar.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The Hon. Mark Aeron H. Sambar is hereby recognized.

REP. SAMBAR. Mr. Speaker, this Representative is ready to sponsor the budget of the Philippine Sports Commission.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker, may we take this opportunity to just ask one question from the Philippine Sports Commission.

REP. SAMBAR. It will be my pleasure.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The distinguished Sr. Dep. Minority Leader is hereby recognized.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker, kung nandito po ang Chairman ng Philippine Sports Commission ay nais po nating marining sa kanya o sa ating Sponsor ngayon, ano ang nangyari sa ating representation sa Southeast Asian Games. Naging malaking-malaking kahihayan po ang ating bansa, hindi natin puwedeng padaanin na wala tayong tinalong bansa na dapat talunin. Ang tinalo natin ay mga kulelat kaya maituturing po na ang ating bansa ngayon ay kulelat na sa sports. Ano po ba ang plano niya?

Is the budget that he is requesting sufficient? Will we make a better showing in the next Asian Games? If we cannot assure that, we will make the necessary move for the Philippines not to participate in any official international competition until we shape up our sports sector. Otherwise, kulelat na naman po tayo sa Asian Games. Kahiya-hiya. Kawawa naman ang ating mga manlalaro na napapahiya. Hindi po nila kasalanan iyan, alam po ni Chairman Ramirez ang tinutukoy ko. Kailangang ayusin natin ang ating sports sector.

Can we get this assurance, Mr. Speaker?

REP. SAMBAR. Yes, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker. The Chairman of the Philippine Sports Commission is committed to sit down with the NSAs to really work out a proper plan where we can achieve competitiveness not only in the SEA Games, but in the Asian Games and

of course, the Olympic Games. That is a commitment from the Chairman of the Philippine Sports Commission and that is a commitment from all his Commissioners as well, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We know the integrity of the Chairman. I know that he believes what we believe in. Sports is the best unifier of any nation, the strength and the foundation of societies in that nation. Kung hindi po natin mababago ang ating kagalingan, kung hindi natin maibabalik iyong kagalingan ng ating sportsmen, huwag na tayong makipaglaban pa maski na kanino. Ayusin muna natin ang mga problema natin.

REP. SAMBAR. That is correct, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, and the Chairman subscribes to that idea. I think we should also all subscribe to that idea. We should improve at the level of our grassroots first if we ever want a chance to compete on an international level, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker, the Minority has no more questions on the Philippine Sports Commission. We believe that the Chairman will do his best and he will take the necessary steps to correct the wrong direction now of the Philippine Sports Commission. Kahiya-hiya po ang bansa natin ngayon.

REP. SAMBAR. Thank you, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. We have no more questions, Mr. Speaker. We move for the approval of the budget of the Philippine Sports Commission.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The distinguished Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. On the part of the Majority, we join the distinguished Sr. Dep. Minority Leader in the motion to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Philippine Sports Commission.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we take up the budget of the National Anti-Poverty Commission.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, again, may we recognize the Hon. Mark Aeron H. Sambar to sponsor the budget of the National Anti-Poverty Commission.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The Hon. Mark Sambar is hereby recognized.

REP. SAMBAR. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, this Representative is ready to sponsor the budget of the National Anti-Poverty Commission.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The distinguished Sr. Dep. Minority Leader is hereby recognized.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker, on the part of the Minority, we have no question on the budget of the National Anti-Poverty Commission and so, we move for its approval.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The distinguished Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, on the part of the Majority, we join the distinguished Sr. Dep. Minority Leader in the motion to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the National Anti-Poverty Commission.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we take up the budget of the Cooperative Development Authority.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Mark Aeron H. Sambar to sponsor this budget.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The Hon. Mark Aeron Sambar is hereby recognized.

REP. SAMBAR. Mr. Speaker, this honorable Representative is ready to defend the budget of the Cooperative Development Authority.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The distinguished Sr. Dep. Minority Leader is hereby recognized.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker, the Minority does not have any question on the budget of the Cooperative Development Authority and we, therefore, move for its approval.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The distinguished Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, on the part of the Majority, we join the distinguished Sr. Dep. Minority Leader in the motion to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Cooperative Development Authority.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we take up the budget of the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Mark Aeron H. Sambar to sponsor this budget.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The Hon. Mark Aeron Sambar is hereby recognized.

REP. SAMBAR. Mr. Speaker, this Representative is ready to defend the budget of the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The distinguished Sr. Dep. Minority Leader is hereby recognized.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker, on the part of the Minority, we have no more questions on the budget of the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos and, therefore, we move for its approval.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The distinguished Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, we join the distinguished Sr. Dep. Minority Leader in the motion to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider the budget of the Philippine Commission on Women.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Mark Aeron H. Sambar to sponsor this budget.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The Hon. Mark Aeron Sambar is hereby recognized.

REP. SAMBAR. Mr. Speaker, this Representation is ready to defend the budget of the Philippine Commission on Women.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The distinguished Sr. Dep. Minority Leader is recognized.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker, on the part of the Minority, we have no question ...

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. ... on the budget of the Philippine—National Commission on Muslim...

REP. DEFENSOR. Women.

REP. ATIENZA. No, no.

REP. DEFENSOR. We are considering the Philippine Commission on Women.

REP. ATIENZA. Philippine Commission on Women, okay.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The distinguished Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, on the part of the Majority, we join the distinguished Sr. Dep. Minority Leader in the motion to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Philippine Commission on Women.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move for the suspension of the session.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The session is suspended.

It was 3:30 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 3:32 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The session is resumed.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we take up the budget of the Philippine Competition Commission.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Mark Aeron H. Sambar to sponsor this budget.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F. H.). The Hon. Mark Aeron Sambar is hereby recognized.

REP. SAMBAR. Mr. Speaker, this Representative is ready to defend the budget of the Philippine Competition Commission.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The Sr. Deputy Minority Leader is hereby recognized.

REP. ATIENZA. On the part of the Minority, we have no further question on the budget of the Philippine Competition Commission.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F. H.). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, on the part of the Majority, we join the distinguished Sr. Dep. Minority Leader in the motion to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Philippine Competition Commission.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we take up the budget of the Energy Regulatory Commission.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Celso L. Lobregat to sponsor the budget of the ERC.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The Hon. Celso L. Lobregat is hereby recognized.

REP. LOBREGAT. Mr. Speaker, I am here to sponsor the budget of the ERC and we are sponsoring a budget of P1,000 for the ERC for year 2018.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The distinguished Sr. Deputy Minority Leader is recognized.

REP. ATIENZA. Is the Gentleman moving for the scrapping of the whole budget of the Energy Regulatory Commission?

REP. LOBREGAT. No, Mr. Speaker, I am moving for a P1,000 budget.

REP. ATIENZA. Only P1,000?

REP. LOBREGAT. Yes, only P1,000.

REP. ATIENZA. The Minority is very proud to be part of that motion. We support it. We second the motion.

REP. LOBREGAT. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The distinguished Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, there being no other interpellation, I move that we close the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Energy Regulatory Commission.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The distinguished Sr. Deputy Minority Leader is recognized.

REP. ATIENZA. We agree, on the part of the Minority, that they will get P1,000. So, we move for the termination of the interpellation and debate and for the approval of a P1,000 budget.

REP. DEFENSOR. On the part of the Majority, Mr. Speaker, we join the distinguished Sr. Dep. Minority Leader in the motion to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Energy Regulatory Commission.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hear none; the motion is approved.

REP. LOBREGAT. Thank you very much for approving the P1,000 budget for the ERC for the year 2018.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we take up the budget of the Presidential Commission for the Urban Poor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, to sponsor this budget of the PCUP, I move that we recognize the Hon. Oscar "Richard" S. Garin Jr.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro). The Hon. Oscar Garin is hereby recognized.

REP. GARIN (O.). Mr. Speaker, we are now ready to defend the budget of PCUP.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The distinguished Sr. Deputy Minority Leader is recognized.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker, on the part of the Minority, I see nobody is interested to interpellate on the budget of the Presidential Commission for the Urban Poor. So, we move for the termination of the period of interpellation and debate and move for its approval.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The distinguished Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, on the part of the Majority, we join the distinguished Sr. Dep.

Minority Leader in his motion to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Presidential Commission for the Urban Poor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

PASIG RIVER REHABILITATION COMMISSION

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we take up the budget of the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, to sponsor this budget, I move that we recognize the Hon. Alfred D. Vargas.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro). The Hon. Alfred Vargas is hereby recognized.

REP. VARGAS. Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. This Representation is ready to defend the budget of PRRC.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The distinguished Sr. Deputy Minority Leader is recognized.

REP. ATIENZA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We thank the Majority Floor Leader for scheduling the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission handling the budget for our ferry. Our Minority Leader signified his intention to interpellate and yours truly would like to follow-up on the interpellation.

Now, we would like to request the Sponsor to answer the questions that we will be asking.

REP. VARGAS. Gladly. Mr. Speaker.

REP. DEFENSOR. With that, Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the distinguished Minority Leader, the Hon. Danilo E. Suarez, for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro). The distinguished Minority Leader is hereby recognized for his interpellation.

REP. SUAREZ. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Will the distinguished Gentleman from Manila willing to yield the Floor for some questions?

REP. VARGAS. Gladly, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. This is a very important river network, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. This is our way out from Laguna Lake to the Manila Bay. What is the average depth now of the Pasig River?

REP. VARGAS. The average depth of the Pasig River now is more than three meters.

REP. SUAREZ. More than ...

REP. VARGAS. Three meters, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. That is about nine feet?

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. When was that? Was that after the dredging made by the Belgians?

REP. VARGAS. After the dredging, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. By the Belgians?

REP. VARGAS. It is seven years after the dredging.

REP. SUAREZ. Well, when it was dredged, it was heavily silted. There were occasions of blockade of water coming from Laguna Lake going to the Manila Bay, and the dredging contributed a lot to stop the flooding.

So, my question is, before the dredging, what was the depth of Pasig River?

REP. VARGAS. Before the dredging Mr. Speaker, the depth was two to three meters.

REP. SUAREZ. So, walang improvement, it is still three meters?

REP. VARGAS. After the dredging, it became six meters, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. So, it is now 18 feet on average.

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Mr. Speaker, what is the working arrangement between the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission in Laguna Lake and the Laguna Lake Development Authority?

REP. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, right now, they have

a very, very good relationship and their coordination is good.

REP. SUAREZ. I know, but what is their working relation? What are they doing, Mr. Speaker?

REP. VARGAS. The LLDA deputized the PRRC to have a regulatory function, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Mr. Speaker, the Pasig River has a good number of tributaries, several rivers. As a matter of fact, part and parcel of that water from Laguna Lake comes from Marikina and Quezon City for that matter. So, the pollution of Pasig River is highly contributed to the massive contaminated, polluted water coming from the several tributaries of Manila. May we know what is the program of PRRC and its working relationship with the local governments of the National Capital Region in connection with this problem?

REP. VARGAS. For this budget, Mr. Speaker, there are six projects intended for 2018, and these are the rehabilitation and development of San Juan River; Estero dela Reina Phase 1, which is from the City of Manila; rehabilitation and development of Estero de Kabulusan, Estero de Magdalena, Estero de Valencia, and Estero de Pandacan, all of which are in Manila. The PRRC is always in close coordination with the LGUs mentioned.

REP. SUAREZ. Which one among these tributaries is the most polluted, Mr. Speaker?

REP. VARGAS. San Juan River, Mr. Speaker, is the most polluted.

REP. SUAREZ. So, then I will go back to the question that there is a working relationship with the local government unit. So, what are they going to do about it?

REP. VARGAS. There are massive clean-up operations, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Well, it is a good thing that the Metro Manila Governor is around and I think they should be well aware of the answers that are being given by the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission, considering that this major artery is part and parcel of the Metro Manila Development Authority.

REP. VARGAS. I agree, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. When Pasig River was being dredged during the time of then President Macapagal-

Arroyo, there were some observations of incursions of the private sector on the river now. Now, what is the PRRC doing? If you will look at the original photo, photographic or aerial survey of the Pasig River, it used to be wide pero ngayon ho, medyo nako-constrict. May we know the present situation, if there are still illegal activities being done on those areas and what the PRRC is doing about it.

REP. VARGAS. Just to be clear, Mr. Speaker, is the Gentleman talking about the encroachment of the properties or the...

REP. SUAREZ. I think it is happening, Mr. Speaker.

REP. VARGAS. ... the private properties that encroach on the easement? Is the Gentleman, Mr. Speaker, talking about the encroachment? There is the Easement Recovery Program of the PRRC and so far, from 2013 to 2017, the PRRC has dismantled 309 properties at no cost to the government. This year, 2017, is the most effective year.

REP. SUAREZ. Well, were they voluntarily dismantled because you cannot dismantle without cost to the government, Mr. Speaker. So, how were they dismantled? Was it voluntary on the part of those who made the incursion on the river or was it the government who did it?

REP. VARGAS. The Gentleman is correct, Mr. Speaker, voluntary po ang pagka-dismantle at pag-alis po sa kanila.

REP. SUAREZ. So, iyong mga nag-encroach, sila na rin ang nagsira noong kanilang mga...

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Is there marine life now surviving in the river?

REP. VARGAS. I was there and I have tried the ferry system myself less than a year ago, and we can say there is a marine life over there, including nine species of fish.

REP. SUAREZ. Are they fit for human consumption?

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Will the Gentleman eat a fish coming from Pasig River, considering he is from Manila?

REP. VARGAS. Why not? Maybe we can both try it out, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. If they do that for chickens, maybe we can do the same. Maybe there can be a grand show of Pasig River officers catching fish from the river, cooking it and eating it, just to show that the Pasig River is habitable already to marine life.

REP. VARGAS. That is actually a good idea, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. So, the dredging was done seven years ago? Is that what the Gentleman's statement is?

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. But it has silted again back to almost three meters?

REP. VARGAS. Yes.

REP. SUAREZ. Alam ninyo, Mr. Speaker, kapag bumaba at bumabaw ang Pasig River, babaha po ang surrounding areas ng Laguna Lake kasi hindi makakalabas ang tubig going to Manila Bay. That is precisely the major reason that during the former administration of GMA, there was—well, let us go a little bit back in history. There were cases wherein the PSG cannot cross the Pasig River during low tide kasi sumasayad po iyong bottom ng mga boat nila sa Pasig River. They cannot cross the river, and in case of an emergency or a national security concern, they have to go around using a land route via the bridge of Nagtahan. So, there was a move to dredge only the areas across Malacañang and the area where the Presidential Security Group is stationed.

Ngayon, na-suggest na ho na lalaliman na lang ninyo, lalaliman na po natin iyong buong Pasig River. For the information of the distinguished Sponsor, this was a grant at libre po iyan. Iyon pong unang dredging kung saan pinalalim po natin ang portion na iyon was done using a grant from the Belgian government, but the expansion all the way to Manila Bay and the removal of silted materials using UPOC was done—UPOC was what we called “sweetheart loan” coming from the European Union. So, over the years, there must be a program again dredging Pasig. May I know what is the long-range plan of the PRRC right now?

REP. VARGAS. For now, Mr. Speaker, the immediate dredging plan will start in San Juan River, then eventually go to the Pasig River itself and the rest of its tributaries.

REP. SUAREZ. Is the Gentleman saying that there is a continuing dredging operation by the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission?

REP. VARGAS. There is, or it will be starting soon enough, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Now, here is the sensitive question. The materials underneath are contaminated. Where do you dispose the contaminated materials?

REP. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, at the UPOC side and it is consistently being monitored day to day.

REP. SUAREZ. The UPOC is still operational, Mr. Speaker?

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Well, I am happy to know that the UPOC is still operational after seven years.

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. So, how much is the Gentleman asking for it in next year's budget? How much is the distinguished Sponsor asking?

REP. VARGAS. For 2018, the proposed budget is P230,772,000 compared to the 2017 budget of P207,000,000.

REP. SUAREZ. There was an increase, Mr. Speaker?

REP. VARGAS. An increase of 11 percent.

REP. SUAREZ. Increase?

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. By how many percent?

REP. VARGAS. By 11 percent.

REP. SUAREZ. Is the principal office that the Gentleman is endorsing comfortable that they can do their job with that amount of money?

REP. VARGAS. The Executive Director is present today and the PRRC is content with this budget although, of course, an addition will always be welcomed by the PRRC.

REP. SUAREZ. For my final question, what is the wish list of the PRRC?

REP. VARGAS. The wish budget of the PRRC, Mr. Speaker, the proposed budget is P605 million and the approved budget is P230 million.

REP. SUAREZ. They proposed P600 million and they were only given a cash ceiling of P230 million?

REP. VARGAS. Yes, P230 million, Mr. Speaker. That is correct.

REP. SUAREZ. So, can the PRRC submit to this Representation what is included in the P660 million that they are proposing? I suppose that they are planning to buy some things under the Capital Outlays?

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Mr. Speaker. That is correct.

REP. SUAREZ. Then submit to this Representation those items in the Capital Outlays that they proposed but which had been deleted.

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Mr. Speaker. The Executive Director just confirmed that they will be submitting the request to the Gentleman as soon as possible.

REP. SUAREZ. Mr. Speaker, this Representation has no more questions to raise on the proposed budget, but I have my other members who would like to raise some questions.

Thank you very much.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Before I start my interpellation, I have a point of order.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The distinguished Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. May we know the point of order.

REP. ATIENZA. I noticed there are about 10 people behind the Sponsor. Who are they and are they allowed to participate in the discussion? Are they officials of the agency? Are we allowing this? This is not in accordance with our Rules. It should only be the Sponsor and the interpellator standing on the floor. So, we would like to request everyone to take their seats, and if you want to ask more information, then you can ask for a suspension, but do not clutter your side because parang paramihan yata ito.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The distinguished Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. The point of order of the Gentleman is well-taken, Mr. Speaker. So, we would like to graciously request the Chair to advise the members—the officials from the Executive Branch and other parties who are at the rear end of the floor to settle down.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). In view of the observation of the distinguished Sr. Dep. Minority Leader, the crowd at the back of the sponsoring Member of the House is hereby directed to clear the area.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, may we request the assistance of our Pages.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The Sergeant-at-Arms is hereby directed to clear the area. The crowd at the back of the sponsoring Member of the House is also directed to leave the area to maintain order.

The distinguished Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. DEFENSOR. I move for a suspension of the session, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The session is suspended.

It was 3:57 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 3:58 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The session is resumed.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Lito Atienza for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The distinguished Sr. Dep. Minority Leader is hereby recognized.

REP. ATIENZA. Salamat po. Sa pagkakataong ito, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, naghahalo sa akin ang tuwa, kaligayahan at kalungkutan sapagkat sabi ninyo, lilinis ninyo ang Estero de Magdalena, de

Pandacan, dela Reina, Kabulusan, at puro sa Maynila po iyan. Salamat po. Subalit ang pondo ninyong hinihingi ay P600 million lang, at ang ibinibigay sa inyo ngayon ay P200 million lang. Ang kanal lamang, hindi ninyo malilinis with P200 million ngayon—maliit na estero. Pagkatapos ay lilinis ninyo iyong mga higanteng poso negro sa Maynila? I would like a direct answer. Will they be able to do it with the P200 million and deliver what they are committing now, or will we continue to be frustrated that Manila gets flooded because our esteros are flooded with silt, garbage and everything, including household wastes which poison the Manila Bay also?

I would like to ask the Sponsor if the Chairman of the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission is present?

REP. VARGAS. The Executive Director, Mr. Speaker, is present. He is right here right now.

REP. ATIENZA. He is present?

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. So, I would like to request that he listens to all that this humble Representation will be telling him.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 6215

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, with the indulgence of the Gentleman, we are constrained to move for the suspension of the consideration of House Bill No. 6215 to give way to our timely roll call which is at 4:00 p.m.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 6215.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

ROLL CALL

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we call the roll.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Secretary General will please call the roll.

The Secretary General called the roll, and the result is as follows, per Journal No. 18, dated September 05, 2017:

PRESENT

Abaya	Calixto-Rubiano	Fortuno	Noel
Abayon	Caminero	Fuentebella	Nogralles (J.J.)
Abellanos	Campos	Garbin	Nogralles (K.A.)
Abu	Canama	Garcia (G.)	Nolasco
Abueg	Cari	Garcia (J.E.)	Núñez-Malanyaon
Acharon	Casilao	Garcia-Albano	Oaminal
Acop	Castelo	Garin (R.)	Ocampo
Acosta	Castro (F.L.)	Garin (S.)	Olivarez
Acosta-Alba	Castro (F.H.)	Gasataya	Ong (E.)
Adiong	Cerafica	Gatchalian	Ong (H.)
Advincula	Cerilles	Geron	Ortega (P.)
Agarao	Chavez	Go (A.C.)	Ortega (V.N.)
Aggabao	Chipeco	Go (M.)	Pacquiao
Albano	Co	Gonzaga	Paduano
Alejano	Cojuangco	Gonzales (A.P.)	Palma
Almario	Collantes	Gonzales (A.D.)	Pancho
Almonte	Cortes	Gonzalez	Panganiban
Alonte	Cortuna	Hernandez	Panotes
Alvarez (F.)	Cosalan	Herrera-Dy	Papandayan
Alvarez (M.)	Crisologo	Hofer	Pichay
Alvarez (P.)	Cua	Jalosjos	Pimentel
Amatong	Cuaresma	Kho	Pineda
Angara-Castillo	Cueva	Khonghun	Primicias-Agabas
Antonio	Dalipe	Labadlabad	Quimbo
Aquino-Magsaysay	Datol	Lacson	Ramirez-Sato
Aragones	Daza	Lagman	Ramos
Arcillas	De Jesus	Lanete	Relampagos
Arenas	de Venecia	Laogan	Revilla
Atienza	De Vera	Lazatin	Roa-Puno
Aumentado	Defensor	Leachon	Rocamora
Bagatsing	Del Mar	Limkaichong	Rodriguez (I.)
Baguilat	Del Rosario	Lobregat	Rodriguez (M.)
Banal	Deloso-Montalla	Lopez (B.)	Roman
Barbers	Dimaporo (A.)	Lopez (C.)	Romualdez
Barzaga	Dimaporo (M.K.)	Lopez (M.L.)	Romualdo
Bataoil	Duavit	Loyola	Roque (H.)
Batocabe	Durano	Macapagal-Arroyo	Roque (R.)
Bautista-Bandigan	Dy	Maceda	Sacdalán
Belaro	Elago	Madrona	Sahali
Belmonte (F.)	Enverga	Malapitan	Salceda
Belmonte (J.C.)	Erice	Manalo	Salimbangon
Belmonte (R.)	Eriguel	Mangaoang	Salo
Bertiz	Ermita-Buhain	Mangudadatu (Z.)	Salon
Biazon	Escudero	Marcoleta	Sambar
Billones	Espina	Marcos	Sandoval
Bolilia	Espino	Mariño	Santos-Recto
Bondoc	Estrella	Marquez	Sarmiento (C.)
Bordado	Evardone	Martinez	Sarmiento (E.M.)
Bravo (A.)	Fariñas	Matugas	Savellano
Bravo (M.V.)	Ferrer (J.)	Mellana	Sema
Brosas	Ferrer (L.)	Mending	Silverio
Bulut-Begtang	Ferriol-Pascual	Mercado	Singson
Cagas	Flores	Mirasol	Suansing (E.)
Calderon	Fortun	Montoro	Suansing (H.)
		Nava	Suarez
		Nieto	Sy-Alvarado

Tambunting	Vargas-Alfonso
Tan (A.)	Velarde
Tan (M.)	Velasco
Tan (S.)	Velasco-Catera
Tejada	Veloso
Teves	Vergara
Ting	Villafuerte
Tinio	Villanueva
Tolentino	Villaraza-Suarez
Treñas	Villarica
Tugna	Villarin
Tupas	Violago
Ty	Yap (A.)
Umali	Yap (M.)
Unabia	Yap (V.)
Ungab	Yu
Unico	Zamora (M.C.)
Uy (J.)	Zamora (R.)
Uy (R.)	Zarate
Uybarreta	Zubiri
Vargas	

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. The roll call shows that 261 Members responded to the call.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). With 261 Members present, the Chair declares the presence of a quorum.

The distinguished Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we proceed to the Additional Reference of Business.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Secretary General will please read the Additional Reference of Business.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

The Secretary General read the following House Resolutions on First Reading, and the Deputy Speaker made the corresponding references:

RESOLUTIONS

House Resolution No. 1262, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND HONORING THE GOLD MEDALISTS OF THE 29TH SOUTHEAST ASIAN GAMES”

By Representative Vargas
TO THE COMMITTEE ON YOUTH AND SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

House Resolution No. 1263, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING JAYSON RAMIL ORDONEZ MACAALAY FOR WINNING A SILVER MEDAL IN THE 29TH SOUTHEAST ASIAN (SEA) GAMES”

By Representative De Venecia
TO THE COMMITTEE ON YOUTH AND SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

House Resolution No. 1264, entitled:

“RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IN CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING THE PHILIPPINE TEAM FOR BRINGING PRIDE, PRESTIGE AND HONOR TO THE COUNTRY IN THEIR PERFORMANCE IN THE 29TH SOUTHEAST ASIAN GAMES HELD AT KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA FROM AUGUST 19-31, 2017”

By Representative Suansing (E.)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON YOUTH AND SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

House Resolution No. 1265, entitled:

“RESOLUTION URGING THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS TO CONDEMN AND CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE VIOLENT DISPERSAL BY THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE (PNP) OF THE RESIDENTS OF BARANGAY MANGGAHAN, PASIG CITY, AND THE PLIGHT OF THE RESIDENTS IN THE AREA”

By Representatives Zarate, De Jesus, Tinio, Brosas, Castro (F.L.) and Casilao
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1266, entitled:

“RESOLUTION URGING THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS TO CONDEMN AND CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE EXTRA-JUDICIAL KILLING OF BAYAN MUNA ORGANIZER OSCAR ASILDO IN GUIHULNGAN CITY, NEGROS ORIENTAL”

By Representatives Zarate, De Jesus, Tinio, Brosas, Castro (F.L.) and Casilao
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1267, entitled:

“RESOLUTION TO RETAIN THE POLICY AND PROGRAM COORDINATION AND

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPERVISION OF NATIONAL MARITIME POLYTECHNIC (NMP) UNDER THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT (DOLE)”

By Representatives Romualdez, Veloso, Ong (H.), Gomez, Cari, Mercado, Espina, Evardone, Sarmiento (E.M.), Tan (M.), Daza, Ong (E.) and Noel

TO THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

House Resolution No. 1268, entitled:

“RESOLUTION URGING THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE PHP20.5 BILLION ALLEGEDLY OVERPRICED NINOY AQUINO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT EXPRESSWAY (NAIAx)”

By Representative Zarate
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1269, entitled:

“RESOLUTION EXPRESSING PROFOUND COMMENDATION TO MARION KIM MANGROBANG FOR WINNING THE GOLD MEDAL IN THE WOMEN’S TRIATHLON EVENT IN THE RECENT 2017 SEA GAMES IN MALAYSIA”

By Representative Abu
TO THE COMMITTEE ON YOUTH AND SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

House Resolution No. 1270, entitled:

“RESOLUTION STRONGLY URGING HIS EXCELLENCY PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE TO RENEW THE TRAVEL TAX EXEMPTION POLICY THAT COVERS ALL PASSENGERS DEPARTING FROM ALL SEAPORTS AND AIRPORTS IN MINDANAO AND PALAWAN TO ANY DESTINATION IN THE BRUNEI DARUSSALAM – INDONESIA – MALAYSIA – PHILIPPINES – EAST ASEAN GROWTH AREA (BIMP-EAGA)”

By Representatives Cagas, Acosta, Siao, Labadlabad, Nava and Mending
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM

House Resolution No. 1271, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (DOH) TO CONDUCT AN AGGRESSIVE AND MASSIVE INFORMATION DRIVE ON THE ILLEFFECTS OF HIGH-FRUCTOSE CORN SYRUP (HFCS) ON HEALTH IN ORDER TO KEEP IN CHECK INCIDENTS OF METABOLIC SYNDROME

THAT RENDERS PEOPLE PRONE TO HEART DISEASES, STROKE, DIABETES, OBESITY, HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE, HIGH BLOOD TRIGLYCERIDES, LOW LEVELS OF HDL CHOLESTEROL, AND INSULIN RESISTANCE”

By Representative Castelo
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Resolution No. 1272, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE EXTRA-JUDICIAL KILLINGS ON FEBRUARY 3, 2017 OF MATANEM LORENZO POCUAN AND ON JULY 6, 2017 OF ANDE LATUAN, BOTH OF UYAYMAYAN-LUMAD TRIBE, PERPETRATED BY THE PARA-MILITARY GROUP ALAMARA IN CABANGSALAN TOWN, BUKIDNON”

By Representatives Casilao, Zarate, De Jesus, Tinio, Brosas, Castro (F.L.) and Elago
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1273, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE JUNE 27, 2017 - ILLEGAL ARREST AND DETENTION OF FOUR (4) FARMER-MEMBERS OF PEDERASYON SA MGA ASOSASYONG MAG-UUMA UG LUMAD SA AGUSAN UG DAVAO (PAMULAD) IN LAAK TOWN, COMPOSTELA VALLEY BY ELEMENTS OF 60TH INFANTRY BATTALION PHILIPPINE ARMY (IBPA) AND CAFGU ACTIVE AUXILIARY (CAA)”

By Representatives Casilao, Zarate, De Jesus, Tinio, Brosas, , Castro (F.L.) and Elago
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1274, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE JULY 25, 2017 - ILLEGAL ARREST AND DETENTION OF FARMER-MEMBERS OF TIMPUYOG TI UMILI TI KARAYAN BUAYA (TUKB) PERPETRATED BY THE ELEMENTS OF THE 81ST INFANTRY BATTALION, PHILIPPINE ARMY IN BRGY. BAYBAYADING, SALCEDO, ILOCOS SUR”

By Representatives Casilao, Zarate, De Jesus, Tinio, Brosas, Castro (F.L.) and Elago
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1275, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE ILLEGAL DISMISSAL OF WORKERS UNDER THE SAMAHAN NG MANGGAGAWA NG SOROSORO IBABA DEVELOPMENT, FEEDMILL (SMSIDC-LIGA BATANGAS) AND THE CONTINUING PRACTICE OF CONTRACTUALIZATION OF LABOR OF THE SOROSORO IBABA DEVELOPMENT COOPERATIVE - FEEDMILL PLANT (SIDC-FEEDMILL) IN BRGY. SOROSOROKARSADA, BATANGAS CITY”

By Representatives Casilao, Zarate, De Jesus, Tinio, Brosas, Castro (F.L.) and Elago
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1276, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS HERE AND THROUGH OUR DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION IN CYPRUS, OUR SOCIAL SECURITY SERVICES, AND THE SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT WHO SITS IN THE SSS BOARD, TO RESPECTIVELY SUBMIT A REPORT ON THE REASON FOR THEIR INACTION ON THE 7-YEAR OLD PETITION OF OFWS IN CYPRUS TO INITIATE THE FORGING OF A BILATERAL SOCIAL SECURITY AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE PHILIPPINES AND CYPRUS, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF FINALLY GETTING THE DESIRED AGREEMENT SOONEST, AND IN AID OF LEGISLATION”

By Representative Bertiz
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1277, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM AND OTHER APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE REPORTED IRRESPONSIBLE DUMPING OF WASTEWATER BY SOME ESTABLISHMENTS IN BORACAY ISLAND, MALAY, AKLAN TO THE DETRIMENT OF THE CLEAN AND CLEAR WATERS OF THE WORLD CLASS TOURISM DESTINATION WITH THE END IN VIEW OF ENACTING REGULATIONS THAT WILL ENSURE THE SUSTAINABILITY OF TOURISM ACTIVITIES IN THE ISLAND AND THE PRESERVATION OF ITS CHARM AND BEAUTY”

By Representatives Pineda, Belmonte (R.), Canama, Salo, Lopez (B.), Villarín, Bertiz, Montoro, Belaro, Lacson, Mending, Uybarreta, Salon and Lopez (M.L.)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1278, entitled:

“RESOLUTION URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO GIVE DUE RECOGNITION TO THE MANY YEARS OF VALUABLE SERVICE UNDER DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES OF 30 PROVISIONAL TEACHERS IN THE DIVISION OF ISABELA CITY, BASILAN WHO HAVE TAUGHT FOR 11 TO 25 YEARS UNDER TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS BUT WHOSE APPOINTMENTS WERE TERMINATED IN 2012”

By Representatives Tinio and Castro (F.L.)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Resolution No. 1279, entitled:

“RESOLUTION STRONGLY CONDEMNING THE EXTRAJUDICIAL KILLING OF CARL ANGELO ARNAIZ AND CALLING FOR AN IMMEDIATE INVESTIGATION IN AID OF LEGISLATION INTO THE SAME”

By Representatives Tinio, Castro (F.L.), Zarate, De Jesus, Brosas, Casilao and Elago
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1280, entitled:

“RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING TAEKWONDO JIN SAMUEL THOMAS HARPER MORRISON AND THE TAEKWONDO MALE POOMSAE TEAM FOR WINNING GOLD MEDALS IN THE 29TH SOUTHEAST ASIAN GAMES HELD AT KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA ON AUGUST 19 TO 31, 2017”

By Representative Estrella
TO THE COMMITTEE ON YOUTH AND SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

House Resolution No. 1281, entitled:

“RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING PENCAK SILAT ATHLETE DINES DUMAAN FOR WINNING THE GOLD MEDAL FOR THE PHILIPPINES IN THE 29TH SOUTHEAST ASIAN GAMES HELD IN KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA FROM AUGUST 19 TO 31, 2017”

By Representative Estrella
TO THE COMMITTEE ON YOUTH AND SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

House Resolution No. 1282, entitled:

“RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING THE PHILIPPINE ICE HOCKEY TEAM FOR WINNING THE VERY FIRST GOLD MEDAL FOR THE PHILIPPINES IN THE 29TH SOUTHEAST ASIANGAMES HELD IN KUALALUMPUR, MALAYSIA FROM AUGUST 19 TO 31, 2017”

By Representative Estrella
TO THE COMMITTEE ON YOUTH AND SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

House Resolution No. 1283, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING THE METROBANK FOUNDATION OUTSTANDING FILIPINOS OF 2017”

By Representatives Alvarez (P.), Fariñas, Hofer and Durano
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn the session until tomorrow, September 6, at ten o'clock in the morning.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Castro, F.H.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The session is adjourned until tomorrow, September 6, 2017, at 10:00 a.m.

It was 4:13 p.m.

