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ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Flagship Programs and Projects (Special Committee)	Organizational meeting and adoption of the Committee's Internal Rules	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Carlos Cojuangco (1st District, Tarlac), held its organizational meeting during which the Committee's Internal Rules for the 18th Congress was adopted.</p> <p>Under the Rules of the House, the Committee has jurisdiction "over all matters directly and principally relating to the monitoring, evaluation and review of highly-strategic infrastructure or programs and projects identified and approved by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Board Committee on Infrastructure and/or the Investment Coordination Committee and included in the General Appropriations Act, including to propose possible game-changing and high-impact flagship programs and projects, and the necessity of recommending requisite courses of action in relation thereto."</p> <p>The Special Committee on Flagship Programs and Projects was created in December 2019.</p>

COMMITTEE MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Energy	HBs 1193 & 1266	Rep. Velasco and Deputy Speaker Villafuerte	Establishing the Philippine Energy Research and Policy Institute, defining its objectives, powers and functions, and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee, presided by its Vice Chair, Rep. Jericho Jonas Nograles (Party-List, PBA), deferred further deliberation on the bills pending submission of additional comments from the stakeholders. The Secretariat was instructed to consolidate the bills taking into consideration all the comments and proposed amendments of the Members and the stakeholders.</p> <p>Rep. Nograles said that the Committee hopes to craft a relevant and responsive legislative framework that would establish an energy research and policy institute that will act as the government research arm on energy policy, harnessing the latest relevant researches and adaptable technologies.</p> <p>Department of Energy (DOE) Assistant Secretary Gerardo Erguiza Jr. said that the creation of the Philippine Energy Research and Policy Institute will mean adding another layer in the bureaucracy, considering that the DOE already has a functioning research center which may only need to be strengthened.</p> <p>University of the Philippines (UP) Vice President for Legal Affairs Hector Danny Uy said that although he supports the bills, he objects to a provision placing the Institute under the Office of the UP President as this will be an additional task for the office. He also commented that the private sector should not be part of the Institute's advisory council to ensure that policy decisions will not be biased towards this sector.</p>

Continuation... Energy				<p>UP School of Economics Professor and Fellow, Dr. Karl Jandoc, suggested that the proposed law should clarify whether the research outputs of the Institute will be made public or will remain confidential.</p> <p>Rep. Sergio Dagooc (Party-List, APEC) said that part of the mandate of the proposed Institute is to review and revise present policies of the government which are deemed disadvantageous to power consumers. Rep. Dagooc also stressed that the Institute should be able to act independently in formulating policies concerning the energy sector.</p> <p>Rep. Stella Luz Quimbo (2nd District, Marikina City) presented her proposed amendments to the bill. She stated, among others, that the composition of the advisory council should not be limited to scholars or fellows from UP, but should also include qualified individuals or experts from other universities and colleges in the Philippines, whether public or privately owned.</p>
Higher and Technical Education	HBs 5856, 5942, 5950, 5979, 5980, 5981, 5994 & 6062	Reps. Chungalao, Ong (J.), Barba, Sy-Alvarado, Amatong, and Mercado	Establishing Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) training centers in certain parts of the country	<p>The Committee, chaired by Baguio City Rep. Mark Go, approved the eight bills subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>Rep. Angelo Marcos Barba (2nd District, Ilocos Norte) and Rep. Isagani Amatong (3rd District, Zamboanga del Norte), authors of HBs 5950 and 5994, respectively, said that the establishment of TESDA training and assessment centers will provide the residents where the centers will be established the skills that will help them become productive, self-reliant and competitive workers.</p>
	HB 5571	Rep. Suansing (E.)	Establishing the Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology (NEUST) academic extension campus in the Municipality of Sto. Domingo, Province of Nueva Ecija and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved HB 5571 subject to style and amendment.
	HB 5885	Rep. Abueg-Zaldivar	Integrating the Palawan State University - College of Community Resources Development (PSU-CCRD) external campuses in the Province of Palawan and in the City of Puerto Princesa as regular campuses of the Palawan State University (PSU), amending for the purpose RA 7818, and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee approved HB 5885 subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>A bill with similar subject matter was approved on Third Reading during the 16th and 17th Congresses.</p>
	HBs 5957, 5958 & 5959	Rep. Dujali	Establishing the Davao del Norte State College academic extension campuses in the Island Garden City of Samal and in the Municipalities of Carmen and Sto. Tomas, Province of Davao del Norte	<p>The Committee approved the three bills subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>Rep. Alan "Aldu" Dujali (2nd District, Davao del Norte), author of the bills, said that establishing additional regular campuses in the Province of Davao del Norte will provide the students access to quality education.</p>
	HB 319	Rep. Elago	Upholding and promoting campus journalism and campus press freedom, repealing for the purpose RA 7079 or the law providing for the development and promotion of campus journalism, penalizing violations against campus press freedom	<p>The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to thresh out issues and come up with a substitute bill.</p> <p>Rep. Sarah Jane Elago (Party-List, KABATAAN), author of HB 310 and HR 110, said that RA 7079 or the Campus Journalism Act of 1991 lacks the</p>

Continuation... Higher and Technical Education	HR 110	Rep. Elago	Upholding the institutional autonomy of student governments/councils and student publications	<p>provisions to fully maintain the existence of campus press and protect the rights and welfare of student journalists. Hence, the need to repeal RA 7079 and replace it with a law that genuinely upholds campus press freedom.</p> <p>Rep. Elago enumerated the flaws of RA 7079 which include the following: it does not require the collection of student publication fees; it does not give enough freedom for student journalists to write articles critical of the school administration without fear of any threat of suspension or expulsion; and it does not provide the mandatory establishment of student publications in colleges and universities; among others.</p> <p>Recognizing the cost of printing student publications, Rep. Go suggested the use of social media to distribute student publications and reach out to a wider audience.</p>
	HB 5094	Rep. Bordado	Promoting graduate studies and life-long learning in the Philippines	The Committee agreed to consolidate HB 5094 with HB 208, which was approved in the previous joint meeting of the Committee on Higher and Technical Education and the Committee on Basic Education and Culture.
Ways and Means	HB 4742	Deputy Speaker Romero	Amending RA 7103, otherwise known as the Iron and Steel Industry Act, providing for stiffer penalties and sanctions	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda (2nd District, Albay), will deliberate further on HB 4742 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Representatives from the Bureau of Customs (BOC) and the Philippine Iron and Steel Institute (PISI) expressed their support for the bill.</p> <p>PISI President Roberto Cola suggested that the proposed penalties in the bill should be updated to correspond to today's inflation where the price of steel has significantly gone up. He said that increasing the fines on smuggling steel will help protect the local iron and steel industry.</p> <p>Rep. Salceda instructed the Bureau of Customs (BOC) to draft the appropriate penalties and sanctions for deliberation in the next meeting.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their respective position papers on the bill.</p>
	HB 3695	Rep. Castelo	Mandating the adoption of online payment scheme at the Bureau of Customs (BOC) and prescribing penalties for violation thereof	The Committee archived HB 3695 noting that the objectives of the bill are already covered under RA 10863 or the Customs Modernization and Tariff Act (CMTA).

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING ON HOUSE MEASURES				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Ways and Means (Technical Working Group)	HR 556	Deputy Speaker Pichay	Inquiry into the unabated smuggling of goods into the country by unscrupulous operators of customs bonded warehouses to the detriment of local manufacturers and producers and the Philippine	The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Estrellita Suansing (1 st District, Nueva Ecija), will continue its inquiry relative to HR 556 in its next meeting.

Continuation... Ways and Means (Technical Working Group)			economy, with the end in view of recommending measures to stop smuggling using the warehousing system by revisiting the provisions of the Customs Modernization Tariff Act (CMTA) on bonded warehouses and limiting the type, nature, and number of bonded warehouses	<p>Rep. Suansing said that the TWG aims to identify operators who are utilizing customs bonded warehouses (CBWs) but do not export the finished products within the prescribed period of time, thereby incurring revenue losses for the government.</p> <p>A CBW is a warehouse licensed by the Bureau of Customs (BOC) where duty-free imported articles (raw materials, semi-finished materials, components and packaging materials) are stored for the purpose of manufacturing them into finished products and re-exported within the prescribed period of time. If these imported materials are diverted to the local market, payment of duties, taxes and other charges shall be required. (<i>Source: BOC website</i>)</p> <p>Replying to the query of Rep. Suansing, BOC Deputy Commissioner Edward James Dy Buco said that most operators who utilize CBWs are manufacturers of resin, steel, sugar, tobacco and oil.</p> <p>The Committee requested the BOC to submit the following documents, among others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of CBWs including date of accreditation and name of owners, approving officer, and process of accreditation in accordance with Customs Memorandum Order No. 30-2015 on the review and re-accreditation of CBWs; Summary report on CBW operators' volume of imported materials, manufactured products, exports, and local sales and taxes paid, as well as copies of documents related to the shipment of imported materials; and Reports on the four major airlines' consumption and warehouse entries of Jet A1 fuel and the record of importation of airplane replacement parts for the past five years. <p>Resource persons from the Department of Trade and Industry's Garments and Textile Industry Development Office (DTI-GTIDO) and the Philippine Exporters Confederation, Inc. (PHILEXPORT) will be invited to attend the TWG's next meeting.</p>
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AGENCY BRIEFING		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Flagship Programs and Projects (Special Committee)	<p>Briefing by the following agencies on the status and process of identification of the country's flagship programs and projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presidential Adviser for Flagship Programs and Projects 	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Carlos Cojuangco (1st District, Tarlac), listened to the briefing by the Presidential Adviser for Flagship Programs and Projects and the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) on the process of identifying the country's flagship programs and projects and on the status of these projects.</p> <p>Presidential Adviser for Flagship Programs and Projects Vivencio Dizon reported that there are 100 flagship projects in the country with a total project</p>

<p>Continuation... Flagship Programs and Projects (Special Committee)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) 	<p>cost of P4.25 trillion. These projects are geographically distributed as follows: National Capital Region (NCR), 22; Luzon (outside NCR), 26; Visayas, 17; Mindanao, 25; and projects with nationwide impact/benefits, 10. These flagship projects include those for transport and mobility, power, water, information and communications technology, and urban development and renewal.</p> <p>Dizon said the criteria for inclusion in the flagship program are urgency of the project which addresses a current problem or concern, national or regional significance which relates to the impact or benefits of the project that can be felt by more people in a wider area; and game-changing nature of the project which relates to the significant impacts on people's lives and on the conduct of business in the country.</p> <p>NEDA's OIC-Undersecretary Jonathan Uy presented the agency's process of identifying flagship programs and how these are being prepared and approved. He said that the current administration looks at the project's investment study and the funding for the right of way (ROW) as helpful guides in identifying what projects to prioritize,</p> <p>He added that the NEDA-Investment Coordinating Committee (NEDA-ICC) is preparing its own feasibility study on the projects for better costing and technical design, which would normally take two to four months to complete.</p> <p>The Committee will invite the Department of Transportation (DOTr) and the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) in its next meeting to answer the queries of the Committee Members about the implementation of ongoing flagship infrastructure projects.</p>
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DISCUSSION WITH AGENCIES/ENTITIES		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Ways and Means	Update on the status of the recommendation to suspend the implementation of the National Valuation Verification System (NVVS)	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda (2nd District, Albay), agreed to create a joint technical working group (TWG) with the Bureau of Customs (BOC) to further evaluate and improve the NVVS.</p> <p>Rep. Estrellita Suansing (1st District, Nueva Ecija) was designated as TWG Chair.</p> <p>BOC Commissioner Rey Leonardo Guerrero explained that the Bureau cannot just suspend the implementation of the NVVS as it is the BOC's current primary risk management tool in determining undervaluation and addressing trade mis-invoicing or smuggling. The BOC also does not have an existing viable system to replace the NVVS, Guerrero said.</p> <p>Guerrero assured the body that the continued implementation of the NVVS does not violate domestic laws and international commitments relating to customs valuation.</p> <p>Replying to the query of Baguio City Rep. Mark Go, BOC's Import Assessment Service Director Yasser Abbas said that the NVVS was designed by the BOC's own ICT-savvy officers. Its database contains the volume weighted averages of more than 31,000 commodities and branded products from which BOC district appraisers and examiners can verify and ascertain the accuracy of the declared customs value.</p> <p>Rep. Suansing noted that based on the report submitted by the BOC on the previous year's revenue collection, the implementation of the NVVS did not enhance the Bureau's collection performance and has even registered a deficit in 2019. Abbas explained that the deficit was due to other factors and may not be attributed to the implementation of the NVVS.</p>