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COMMITTEE MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Foreign Affairs	HBs 808 & 4195	Reps. Cabochan and Hofer	Declaring and defining the maritime zones under the jurisdiction of the Republic of the Philippines	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Ann Hofer (2 nd District, Zamboanga Sibugay), agreed to refer the bills to its Subcommittee on National Territory, Regional and International Peace and Security for further study.
	HBs 809, 816, 4194 & 4877	Reps. Cabochan, Biazon, Hofer, and Rodriguez	Providing for the establishment of the archipelagic sea lanes in the Philippine archipelagic waters, prescribing the rights and obligations of foreign ships and aircraft exercising the right of archipelagic sea lanes passage	The Subcommittee is chaired by Rep. Cyrille "Beng" Abueg-Zaldivar (2 nd District, Palawan). Reps. Manuel Cabochan III (Party-List, MAGDALO), Rozzano Rufino Biazon (Muntinlupa City), Ann Hofer (2 nd District, Zamboanga Sibugay), and Rufus Rodriguez (2 nd District, Cagayan de Oro City), authors of the six bills under consideration, presented the merits of their respective legislative proposals. DFA Undersecretary J. Eduardo Malaya expressed his support for the bills declaring and designating the Philippine maritime zones and archipelagic sea lanes.
Housing and Urban Development	HB 159	Rep. Belmonte	Strengthening the right of government to expropriate lands for socialized housing, amending for the purpose Sections 9, 10, and 11 of RA 7279, otherwise known as the Urban Development and Housing Act of 1992	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Strike Revilla (2 nd District, Cavite), approved the Committee Report on HB 159.
	HB 798	Rep. Biazon	Creating a Local Housing Board in all cities and first to third class municipalities, providing for its powers and functions	The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to study further the two bills and harmonize their disagreeing provisions. Rep. Micaela Violago (2 nd District, Nueva Ecija) sat as the presiding officer during the deliberation on the two bills to give the Chair the opportunity to sponsor his bill.
	HB 5432	Rep. Revilla	Strengthening the National Shelter Program, mandating the creation of the position of a human settlements officer in all provinces, cities, and first to third class municipalities, providing for its qualifications and functions	Rep. Naealla Rose Bainto-Aguinaldo (Party-List, BAHAY) was designated as TWG Chair.
People's Participation	Substitute Bill to HBs 3134 & HB 3475	Reps. Acosta-Alba and Bustos	Institutionalizing volunteerism as strategy for national development, amending for the purpose RA 9418 otherwise known as the "Volunteer Act of 2007"	The Committee, chaired by San Jose del Monte City Rep. Florida "Rida" Robes, approved the Substitute Bill subject to style. The Secretariat was directed to prepare the corresponding Committee Report. Rep. Ma. Lourdes Acosta-Alba (1 st District, Bukidnon), author of HB 3134, said that a similar bill was approved on Third Reading by the House of Representatives during the 17 th Congress.
	HBs 1677 & 3238	Deputy Speaker Villafuerte and	Establishing a framework for citizens participation in legislation and rule-	The Committee approved subject to style HB 3238 in consolidation with HB 1677. The

Continuation... People's Participation		Rep. Robes	making through the use of information and communications technology (ICT) platforms	Secretariat was directed to prepare the corresponding Committee Report.
Transportation	<i>Motu proprio</i> inquiry		Inquiry on the government's response to international health threats such as the 2019 novel coronavirus	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Edgar Mary Sarmiento (1st District, Western Samar), listened to the briefing by the Department of Health (DOH) on the government's response relative to the 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) outbreak that started in the City of Wuhan, China.</p> <p>The Committee also wants to know the protocol governing passengers' entry and exit at airport terminals in view of the 2019-nCoV outbreak in China and reported cases in other countries.</p> <p>Dr. Ferchito Avelino of the Epidemiology Bureau of the DOH explained that coronaviruses are a large family of viruses causing respiratory illness ranging from common colds to more serious infections, such as the Middle East respiratory syndrome-CoV (MERS-CoV) and the severe acute respiratory syndrome-CoV (SARS-CoV). Avelino said that nCoV is a new strain that has not been previously identified in humans.</p> <p>According to Avelino, there is no available vaccine or treatment yet for this virus, but symptomatic treatment and supportive care are given to patients just like any other viral infection. As of January 28, 2020, Avelino said there are already 4,593 cases of nCoV reported worldwide with 106 registered fatalities and with China registering as the most hit by the virus.</p> <p>Avelino informed the Committee that the DOH has already convened an inter-agency task force that will disseminate official information about nCoV to the general public. The task force is composed of representatives from the Departments of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Justice (DOJ), the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Labor and Employment (DOLE), Tourism (DOT), and Transportation (DOTr).</p> <p>Representatives from the DOTr and its attached agencies informed the Committee of the preventive measures that are in place as far as entry of passengers in airports and seaports is concerned. Among these are the activation of thermal scanners and health declaration of passengers coming from abroad.</p> <p>The airline operators told the Committee that they adhere to the guidelines and directives of the airport authorities and they are also implementing measures such as cancellation of flights in affected areas in a collaborative effort to prevent the spread of the virus.</p> <p>In response to the query of Deputy Speaker Johnny Ty Pimentel (2nd District, Surigao del Sur) and Romblon Rep. Eleandro Jesus Madrona, Avelino said that there are DOH hospitals nationwide that are equipped with the</p>

Continuation... Transportation				<p>necessary logistics, laboratories, and isolation rooms to respond accordingly in case of an nCoV outbreak in the country.</p> <p>Rep. Janette Garin (1st District, Iloilo) recommended that the DOH should provide adequate information and regular updates to the public about nCoV to guide them properly and in order not to cause panic.</p> <p>Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Director Roderico Atienza recommends that the task force should provide transportation to the Filipinos in China, particularly those in Hubei Province where Wuhan is located, who want to go home to the Philippines, and implement an appropriate quarantine procedure at the airports and other ports of entry. The DFA also proposed temporary restrictions on the issuance of visa to Chinese travelers and to discourage non-essential travel to China at this time.</p>
	<i>Motu proprio</i> inquiry		Inquiry on port congestion and long queues at local ports especially during the holiday season	<p>The Committee will continue its inquiry relative to the port congestion and long queues at the local ports especially during the holiday season.</p> <p>Both the regulatory agencies and the stakeholders present in the meeting identified the lack of infrastructure and poor coordination as the major causes of congestion in ports.</p> <p>Rep. Sarmiento suggested the implementation of an automated ticketing system to address the long queues in ports. Department of Transportation (DOTr) Assistant Secretary Lino Dabi said that the Department is still in the process of studying this undertaking which will involve the DILG as well.</p> <p>On the alleged P10 per passenger being collected by the local government unit (LGU) where the port is located as pass-through fees, Philippine National Police-Highway Patrol Group (PNP-HPG) Operations Management Division Chief Oliver Tanseco and Rex Tupas of the Philippine Archipelago Ports and Terminal Services Inc. confirmed this allegation.</p> <p>Philippine Inter-Island Shipping Association (PISA) Executive Director Pedro Aguilar also criticized the collection of pass-through fees by the LGUs.</p> <p>Navotas City Rep. John Reynald Tiangco recalled that the DILG has already issued a memorandum circular disallowing the LGUs from collecting pass-through charges from passengers at the port.</p> <p>The Committee acceded to the motion of Rep. Tiangco to create an inter-agency task force, co-chaired by the DOTr and DILG, to find ways to decongest the affected ports.</p>
	HR 305	Rep. Nava	Inquiry into the August 3, 2019 sea tragedy at the Guimaras-Iloilo Strait which resulted in the loss of 31 lives	The Committee will deliberate further on the issues raised in HR 305.

Continuation... Transportation			and a maritime transport crisis in the entire Province of Guimaras, with the end in view of legislating measures to prevent the recurrence of maritime tragedies in the future	<p>Capt. Raul Belesario of the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) presented to the Committee the Joint Report of the PCG and the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) on their findings regarding the sinking of three motorbancas along the Iloilo-Guimaras Strait last August 3, 2019 and the recommendations of the joint body.</p> <p>In response to the query of Guimaras Rep. Ma. Lucille Nava, Belesario said that the PCG was able to respond to the accident a few minutes after it happened, explaining that the distress signals were sent a bit late.</p> <p>Rep. Nava stressed that it was the volunteers and not the PCG personnel themselves who were the first ones to arrive at the scene of the accident. Belesario explained that these volunteers were organized by the PCG to assist in search and rescue operations during maritime accidents.</p> <p>The Committee acceded to the request of Rep. Joseph Stephen Paduano (Party-List, ABANG LINGKOD) to conduct its next meeting in the Province of Guimaras.</p>
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TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETINGS				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Disaster Management (Technical Working Group)	HB 5259	Rep. Zarate	Establishing in every two to three contiguous barangays a permanent evacuation center (PEC) that is big enough to accommodate the target population, strong enough to withstand natural calamities and situated away from waters and landslide-prone areas, which shall likewise serve as the central disaster risk reduction management institution per respective communities	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Romeo Momo Sr. (Party-List, CWS), will deliberate further on the eight bills in its next meeting.</p> <p>The members of the TWG agreed to use HB 3046 as the working draft in coming up with a substitute bill.</p> <p>Among the contentious issues discussed during the meeting were: how to determine the ideal number of evacuees per evacuation center; what to do with the centers if there are no calamities; and where to source the funds for the proposed establishment of evacuation centers.</p>
	HB 3046	Rep. Tan (A.)	Establishing evacuation centers in every city and municipality and appropriating funds therefor	<p>At the outset, Rep. Momo said that there is a recognized and urgent need to establish permanent evacuation centers considering the vulnerability and susceptibility of the country to both man-made and natural disasters. He said that the recurrent use of schools as evacuation centers affects the regular operations of the schools to the detriment of the students.</p>
	HBs 3450, 4658 & 5595	Deputy Speakers Santos-Recto and Villafuerte, and Rep. Nieto	Providing for the construction of multipurpose gyms in all municipalities and cities to serve as evacuation centers during times of calamity or disaster and appropriating funds therefor	Rep. Momo disclosed that Department of Budget and Management (DBM) Secretary Wendel Avisado informed him of President Rodrigo Duterte's instruction to urgently construct additional evacuation centers giving priority to the municipalities along the country's eastern seaboard. The P7-billion calamity fund of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and
	HB 3691	Rep. Castelo	Mandating the construction of a permanent evacuation center in every natural disaster-prone locality	
	HBs 4941 & 4942	Rep. Torres-Gomez	Establishing a life center that will serve as a disaster and emergency center in each of the City of Ormoc and in the Municipalities of Palompon, Albura, Merida, Kananga, and Matag-ob in the Province of Leyte and appropriating funds therefor	

Continuation... Disaster Management (Technical Working Group)				<p>Management Council (NDRRMC) will be utilized for the construction of additional evacuation centers.</p> <p>Department of Public Works and Highways' (DPWH) Bureau of Maintenance Assistant Director Maria Visna Manio reported that since 2016, the Department has constructed 114 evacuation centers around the country and is in the process of constructing 57 additional centers. Manio added that for the year 2020, the government allocated P3.45 billion for the construction of six evacuation centers per region.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their respective position papers on the proposed law.</p>
Natural Resources (Technical Working Group)	HB 140	Rep. Roman	Reclassifying a parcel of land of the public domain located in the municipalities of Dinalupihan and Hermosa, Province of Bataan as agricultural land open to disposition for commercial, residential and other purposes	<p>The technical working group (TWG), presided by Committee Secretary Raul Terso, terminated its discussion on HB 140.</p> <p>The Committee Secretariat will prepare a substitute bill.</p>
	HBs 267 & 4408	Reps. Ramirez-Sato and Dalog	Establishing the forestland boundaries of the Province of Occidental Mindoro and Mountain Province, respectively	<p>The TWG terminated its discussion on HBs 267 and 4408.</p> <p>The Committee Secretariat will prepare a substitute bill.</p>
	HB 589	Rep. Mangaoang	Reclassifying a certain parcel of land in Barangay Talalang in the Municipality of Balbalan, Province of Kalinga as a mineral land open for declaration as a people's small-scale mining area	The TWG agreed to wait for the submission of the final technical description of the covered land before submitting the bill to the mother Committee for its consideration and approval.
	HB 3138	Rep. Amatong	Declaring certain portions of the public domain, specifically lots number 247, 248 and 948, PLS 6, N-299, located in Barangay Kipit, Municipality of Labason, Province of Zamboanga del Norte, as agricultural land reserved for school site of Kipit Agro-Fishery High School	<p>The TWG terminated its discussion on HB 3138.</p> <p>The Committee Secretariat will prepare the substitute bill incorporating the agreement of the TWG to delete Lot 948 from the coverage of the bill because it is a private property.</p>
	HB 4164	Rep. Rodriguez	Reclassifying as agricultural a parcel of land of the public domain situated at Lourdes, Alubijid, Misamis Oriental, Island of Mindanao, and embraced in Presidential Proclamation No. 739, dated November 26, 2004, for the science and technology park site purposes of the University of Science and Technology of Southern Philippines (USTP)	<p>The TWG terminated its discussion on HB 4164.</p> <p>The Committee Secretariat will prepare a substitute bill.</p>
	HB 4784	Rep. Gato	Converting Barangay Itbud in the Municipality of Uyugan, Province of Batanes, from its present classification as timberland to an alienable and disposable residential area/site, and other appurtenance thereto	<p>The TWG will present the bill to the mother Committee for its consideration.</p> <p>The resource persons informed the author about the requirements for the conversion of the subject land.</p>

Continuation... Natural Resources (Technical Working Group)	HB 4785	Rep. Frasco	Declaring certain drylands of the public domain, located in the Islands of Ponson, Poro, and Pacijan, known as Camotes Group of Islands, Province of Cebu, as alienable and disposable land open to disposition for agricultural, commercial, residential, industrial, and other purposes, amending for the purpose Proclamation No. 2152	The TWG agreed to wait for the submission of the final technical description of the covered land before preparing the substitute bill.
	HB 5276	Rep. Amatong	Separating a portion of land located in Brgy. Lopoc, Municipality of Labason, Zamboanga del Norte, covered under Special Patent No. 51431 in the name of Labason Central School, as site of an office of the Philippine National Police and the Municipal Circuit Trial Court	The TWG agreed to forward the bill to the Land Management Bureau (LMB) for comments.
Revision of Laws (Technical Working Group)	HBs 478, 507, 1622, 1939, 2538, 2661, 3088, 3513, 3533, 3703, 3902, 3911, 4040, 4242, 4782, 4971, 5059, 5497, 5708 & 5819	Reps. Brosas, Barbers, Fortun, Pineda, Deputy Speaker Gonzales (A.), Reps. Sy-Alvarado, Villaraza-Suarez, Aragones, Castelo, Deputy Speakers Fernandez, Legarda, and Hernandez, Reps. Abaya, Guico, Nieto, Agabas, Delos Santos, Pacquiao, and Vargas	Amending RA 8972, otherwise known as the Solo Parents' Welfare Act of 2000, by providing additional benefits to solo parents	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Lawrence "Law" Fortun (1st District, Agusan del Norte), terminated its deliberation on the 20 bills. The Secretariat will come up with a substitute bill incorporating therein the comments and suggestions of the resource persons.</p> <p>The substitute bill will be presented to the mother Committee for its consideration and approval in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Fortun emphasized the importance of passing this bill in order to extend full support to the solo parents in the country. Solo parents and their children are among the most vulnerable sectors of society. He also said that the proposed law is a priority measure of the current administration as declared by the President during his State of the Nation Address (SONA) last July.</p> <p>Department of Finance (DOF) Director for Information and Liaison Office Juvy Danofrata commented that the government might be providing double benefits to some solo parents such as those who are earning a monthly compensation of P20,000 and below, who are exempted from the payment of income taxes and are also enjoying other benefits and privileges as solo parents.</p> <p>Philippine Retailers Association (PRA) Chairperson Paul Santos also expressed his reservation on the proposed law particularly its impact on the business sector. He explained that once this bill is passed into law, all retailers will be forced to grant discounts without consideration of their financial capacity to do so.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Angeles City Councilor Amos Rivera and Bulacan Federation of Solo Parents President Lucila Alcantara cited the effectiveness of issuing local ordinances to provide support and assistance to solo parents, as what has been done in the Provinces of Pampanga and Bulacan.</p>

AGENCY BRIEFINGS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Foreign Affairs	<p>Briefing by the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DFA's policy direction and legislative agenda Updates on the repatriation efforts of the government in the Middle East due to the US-Iran conflict Contingency plan of the national government for the Filipinos in China in relation to the 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) outbreak 	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Ann Hofer (2nd District, Zamboanga Sibugay), listened to the briefing by the DFA on its policy direction and legislative agenda, the government's efforts in ensuring the welfare of overseas Filipinos amidst the US-Iran tension and the coronavirus outbreak, and the implications of the possible termination of the Philippines-US Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA).</p> <p>DFA Undersecretary J. Eduardo Malaya presented the following policy directions of the Department in the next three years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to the protection of national sovereignty, territorial integrity and maritime security; Promote a stable security environment; Strengthen economic diplomacy; Promote and protect the rights and interests of overseas Filipinos; Institute policies and programs to ensure fast, accessible, citizen-oriented, and efficient delivery of consular services; and Strengthen cultural diplomacy. <p>For the 18th Congress, the DFA supports the passage of bills proposing amendments to the Foreign Service Act and the Philippine Passport Act.</p> <p>On the US-Iran conflict, Malaya noted that tensions in the Middle East have subsided. Nevertheless, the Department is closely monitoring the situation in the Middle East and is prepared to undertake appropriate actions to protect affected overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) should there be renewed aggressions in the region.</p> <p>DFA Undersecretary Sarah Lou Arriola also reported that there are about 1,600 Filipinos in Iraq, more than 400 of whom are undocumented. Arriola said that the DFA has already repatriated 20 Filipinos from Iraq. However, despite the tensions in the region, some OFWs prefer to stay in Iraq where they are assured of work rather than go home and be unemployed.</p> <p>The conflict between US and Iran steeply escalated when US killed Iranian General Qasem Soleimani in an air strike on Iraqi soil early this month. Iran responded with missile strikes at Iraqi bases housing US troops.</p> <p>On the coronavirus outbreak, the DFA informed the Committee that close coordination with the Philippine Embassy in Beijing and the Philippine Consulate in Shanghai is being undertaken to know the conditions of Filipinos in China and to ensure their safety and well-being. Malaya said that the government is ready to provide transportation to Filipinos who are willing to return to the country, but that they shall be placed on a 14-day quarantine upon arrival. Arriola added that although there are two airlines willing to help in the repatriation of Filipinos in China, it is difficult to get them out of the Province of Hubei due to the lockdown imposed by the Chinese government. Not even provincial buses can get in to evacuate affected Filipinos. (The City of Wuhan where the 2019-nCoV originated is the capital of Hubei Province.)</p> <p>To help in the management of this infectious disease, Malaya reported that the DFA has issued a travel advisory temporarily discouraging Filipinos to travel to China. He also said that the DFA has temporarily restricted the issuance of visa to foreign travelers coming from Hubei Province.</p> <p>A novel coronavirus is a new strain that has not been previously identified in humans. Common signs of this infection include respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. In more severe cases, the infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute</p>

Continuation... Foreign Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible implications should the Philippines terminate its Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) with the US 	<p>respiratory syndrome, kidney failure, and even death. (Source: World Health Organization website)</p> <p>On the VFA, the DFA said that the Presidential Commission on the VFA, upon the instruction of the President, is preparing an impact assessment on the possible VFA termination. Malaya said the government needs to review and determine the cost and benefits of the VFA to both the US and the Philippines.</p> <p>Several Members raised their concern on the possible severe repercussions on the Philippines and its people if the VFA is terminated.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Johnny Ty Pimentel (2nd District, Surigao del Sur) suggested that the DFA, as the lead government agency in the formulation of foreign policies, should provide a sound advice on the matter.</p>
Sustainable Development Goals (Special Committee)	<p>Briefing by the following agencies on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and how these are intended to be achieved by the Philippines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Philippines National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) 	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Anna Marie Villaraza-Suarez (Party-List, ALONA), listened to the briefing by the UNDP Philippines and NEDA on the UN-initiated SDGs and the efforts being undertaken by the Philippines to achieve these goals.</p> <p>Rep. Suarez cited the importance of the briefing which will provide the Members a better perspective of the plans and strategies laid down to achieve the 17 SDGs.</p> <p>The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by all UN member-states as an offshoot of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which ended in 2015. The SDGs intend to address the global challenges by year 2030.</p> <p>UNDP Institutions and SDG Partnerships Outcome Manager Maria Luisa Isabel Jolongbayan presented to the body the 17 SDGs. She said these goals can be summarized under the 5Ps as described below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> People - ending poverty and hunger in all forms and ensure dignity and equality; Planet - protecting the planet's natural resources and climate for future generations; Prosperity - ensuring prosperous and fulfilling lives in harmony with nature; Partnership - implementing the 2030 Agenda through a solid global partnership; and Peace - fostering peaceful, just, and inclusive societies. <p>Jolongbayan acknowledged the essential role of national parliaments in the achievement of the SDGs. She said that parliaments or legislatures, in particular, can do the following actions: open parliamentary committees to the public; release more parliamentary information; encourage better outreach and implement specific strategies to improve the position of women and members of the vulnerable and marginalized groups; and mainstream rights-based approach to legislation processes and practices.</p> <p>Jolongbayan also presented various aspects of the SDGs including the critical issues that surround the implementation of these goals and how governments are responding to the 2030 agenda.</p> <p>NEDA Undersecretary for Policy and Planning Group Rosemarie Edillon discussed the country's significant accomplishments related to the MDGs and the ongoing SDG initiatives.</p> <p>At the national level, Edillon said, the NEDA is in charge of coordinating the implementation of SDG initiatives, assisted by the Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC) and various departments and agencies.</p> <p>She also mentioned that promoting multi-stakeholder engagement is essential to implementing and fulfilling the SDGs in the country. As such,</p>

Continuation... Sustainable Development Goals (Special Committee)		<p>the Subcommittee on the SDGs composed of Undersecretaries of key government agencies, was created to act as the special secretariat for SDG coordination, monitoring, research and reporting. The Subcommittee also recommends policies, programs, activities and projects related to the SDGs, and provides oversight and guidance in integrating the SDGs in national development plans.</p> <p>According to Edillon, the SDG website was also established which serves as the repository of major relevant Philippine reports on SDGs and provides updates on SDG-related activities.</p> <p>The NEDA was requested to submit a report on the best practices of local government units (LGUs) in implementing SDGs in their respective localities, and a copy of NEDA's monitoring evaluation report on SDGs' implementation in the country.</p>
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DISCUSSION WITH AGENCIES/ENTITIES		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Metro Manila Development	Status of the pilot program of the Department of Transportation (DOTr) on the operations of motorcycles-for-hire in Metro Manila, Metro Cebu, and Cagayan de Oro	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Manuel Luis Lopez (1st District, Manila), discussed the progress of the DOTr's Pilot Program which involves the monitoring and assessment of the operations of motorcycles-for-hire, also called motorcycle taxis, as a safe alternative to the traditional public utility vehicles (PUVs).</p> <p>Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) Board Member Antonio Gardiola Jr., who also heads the inter-agency technical working group (TWG) that is implementing the pilot program, asked the Committee for an extension of three months to finish the study on the viability and safety of using motorcycles-for-hire as public transportation. The result of this study will be used as basis for coming up with appropriate legislation on the matter. Under existing laws, motorcycles are prohibited from operating as public transport.</p> <p>Gardiola reported that aside from Angkas, two other motorcycle ridesharing companies, Joyride and Move It, are included in the pilot program. He added that the number of motorcycles to be included in the program was increased from the initial 27,000 to 63,000 which will be distributed among the three companies operating in Metro Manila, Metro Cebu and Cagayan de Oro.</p> <p>Replying to queries on the process of monitoring and data gathering relative to the operations of motorcycle taxis, Gardiola said that these are contained in the revised guidelines issued by the TWG. The guidelines also include safety standards, motorcycle specifications, and requirements for registration.</p> <p>With regard to insurance coverage, the motorcycle taxis are required to provide accident insurance to their passengers with an amount ranging from P400,000 to P500,000, and hospital benefit or medical reimbursement amounting to P100,000.</p> <p>Rep. Anthony Peter "Onyx" Crisologo (1st District, Quezon City) suggested requiring the DOTr, the inter-agency TWG, and the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) to submit a weekly report to the Committee on the number of traffic apprehensions, accidents, violations of regulations, and other relevant data pertaining to the pilot program.</p> <p>The Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), Philippine Competition Commission (PCC), Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), and other agencies present during the meeting were requested to extend assistance or provide inputs to the DOTr to come up with a reliable assessment on whether or not to legalize the operations of motorcycles-for-hire.</p>

FORUM		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Cooperatives Development	Forum on tax policies affecting cooperatives	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Sabiniano Canama (Party-List, COOP-NATCCO), in partnership with the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA), Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), and Department of Finance (DOF), conducted a forum on the tax policies affecting cooperatives on January 29 at the House of Representatives (HRep).</p> <p>BIR lawyer Briana Kay delos Santos said that under Revenue Memorandum Order (RMO) No. 102-2016, cooperatives granted a certificate of tax exemption (CTE) are required to submit the Tax Identification Number (TIN) of each of their members within six months from the issuance of the CTE. The non-submission of the members' TIN within the prescribed period will be a ground for the revocation of CTE. This policy has been reiterated in Joint Administrative Order (JAO) No. 1-2019 of the DOF, BIR and CDA.</p> <p>Under Section 1, Rule IV, of JAO No. 1-2019, the CTE of cooperatives that failed to comply with the submission of reportorial requirements, on first offense, shall be revoked, and registered cooperatives shall be prohibited from availing themselves of tax exemption for a period of one year from the date of revocation. Upon revocation of the CTE, the affected cooperative shall be liable for the payment of taxes including applicable surcharge, interest, and penalty.</p> <p>Rep. Canama said that the automatic revocation of the CTE because of the registered cooperative's failure to comply with the reportorial requirements must be reviewed. This, he said, is a harsh penalty and is not helpful to the development of the cooperatives in the country whose members are generally from the poor and marginalized sector of society.</p> <p>Likewise, the representatives of the cooperatives requested the BIR to relax its policy on the matter explaining that most of their members are having a hard time getting their individual TINs and some of their members are already "inactive."</p> <p>CDA Chair Orlando Ravanera said that the CDA will define "inactive cooperative member" to serve as guide in the issuance and validity of the CTE. He also reiterated the official stand of the CDA that the cooperative members' TINs should not be made a requirement for the issuance of CTE.</p>