



# Committee Daily Bulletin

## COMMITTEE MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Agrarian Reform	HB 5507	Rep. Roman	Instituting the second phase of agrarian reform in the country, thereby completing the coverage of agricultural lands under the Agrarian Reform Program, providing state subsidy in the acquisition and distribution of agricultural lands to agrarian reform beneficiaries and creating the mechanisms for its implementation	<p>The Committee, chaired by Ifugao Rep. Solomon Chungalao, agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to fine-tune HB 5507.</p> <p>Rep. Geraldine Roman (1<sup>st</sup> District, Bataan), author of HB 5507, said that the proposed law offers solutions to the long standing issues involving negation of actual land distribution to agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs); lack of definitive standard or formula for the determination of just compensation for property acquisitions; increased land disputes and case adjudications based on flawed certificates of land ownership award (CLOAs) issuances and illegal land transfers and conveyances; and inadequate provision of government support services to ARBs.</p> <p>Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) Secretary John Castriciones apprised the Committee of the Duterte administration's efforts in implementing the agrarian reform program. Castriciones reported that out of the total 4.8 million hectares (has.) of agricultural land that should still be distributed under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law of 1988, 2.8 million has. have already been distributed to ARBs. Currently, 540,000 has. of land are under notices of coverage (NOCs) issued since 2014 and are subject for distribution to ARBs. On the other hand, due to the issuance of Executive Order (EO) 75 in February 2019, there are now about 140,000 has. of additional agricultural land up for distribution to qualified farmer beneficiaries, Castriciones added.</p> <p>EO 75 mandates that idle agricultural lands of the government shall be acquired by the DAR for purposes of land distribution to qualified farmer beneficiaries.</p> <p>Castriciones further disclosed that there were thousands of cases filed with the DAR Adjudication Board (DARAB) and most have not yet been acted upon for decades. However, under his term, he said that these cases have already been resolved in line with the DAR's "Zero-Backlog Program."</p> <p>Other resource persons present were requested to submit their respective position papers and recommendations on the proposed law for consideration by the TWG.</p>

Appropriations	Substitute Bill to HBs 163, 169, 197, 218, 251, 391, 436, 532, 862, 1190, 1339, 1392, 1563, 2120, 2200, 2682, 3818 & 3972	Reps. Belmonte, Tan (A.), Suansing (E.), Deputy Speaker Puno, Reps. Gaito, Arroyo (M.L.), Revilla, Paduano, Deputy Speaker Hernandez, Reps. Espina, Go (M.), Vargas, Angara, Deputy Speaker Romero, Reps. Sy-Alvarado, Silverio, Agabas, and Deputy Speaker Villafuerte	Mandating the provision of comprehensive renal replacement therapy (RRT) to patients with end stage renal disease in national, regional, and provincial government hospitals, increasing for the purpose the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) package rate for members and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Isidro Ungab (3 <sup>rd</sup> District, Davao City), approved the Substitute Bill with amendment.
	Substitute Bill to HB 167	Rep. Tan (A.)	Strengthening the national program for the elimination of tuberculosis, amending for the purpose RA 10767 or the Comprehensive Tuberculosis Elimination Plan Act	The Committee approved the Substitute Bill with amendment.
	Substitute Bill to HBs 170, 296, 4011, 4264 & 5021	Reps. Tan (A.), Yap (V.), Villarica, Roman, and Deputy Speaker Romero	Modernizing the regulation of health facilities and services and appropriating funds therefor, repealing for the purpose RA 4226, otherwise known as the Hospital Licensure Act	The Committee approved the Substitute Bill with amendment.
	Substitute Bill to HBs 303, 545, 2545, 2867, 2875, 3277, 4013, 4084, 4128, 4248, 4249, 4344 & 4492	Reps. Yap (V.), Enverga, Deputy Speakers Villafuerte, Romero, and Puno, Reps. Romualdez (Y.M.), Villarica, Torres-Gomez, Tan (A.S.), Garcia (J.E.), Tambunting, and Velasco	Establishing the National Academy of Sports System and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the Substitute Bill with amendment.
	Substitute Bills to HBs 2423, 2510, 2523, 2655, 2668, 2698, 2884 & 2954	Reps. Labadlabad, Benitez, Bolilia, Bernos, Alvarez (G.), Panotes, Malapitan, and Calderon	Creating additional court salas in certain parts of the country, amending for the purpose Batas Pambansa Blg. 129, otherwise known as the Judiciary Reorganization Act of 1980, as amended	The Committee approved the eight Substitute Bills with amendment.
	Substitute Bill to HB 5583	Deputy Speaker Villafuerte	Authorizing the use of the rice subsidy as provided for under the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) in the General Appropriations Act of 2019 for the purchase of palay from farmers, mandating for the purpose the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in coordination with the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the National Food Authority (NFA) to buy	The Committee approved the Substitute Bill with amendment.

Continuation... Appropriations			palay from local farmers, and distribute rice subsidy in the form of actual rice instead of cash assistance to qualified beneficiaries	
Energy	HB 161	Rep. Dagooc	Inquiry into the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (EPIRA) and its implementing rules and regulations (IRR) in relation to the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM) rules and other relevant issuances of the Department of Energy (DOE) and the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC)	<p>The Committee, chaired by Marinduque Rep. Lord Allan Jay Velasco, will deliberate further on the issues raised relative to HR 161.</p> <p>Rep. Velasco said that the Committee intends to probe deeper into the legality and propriety of the transfer of the WESM market operation to the Independent Electricity Market Operator of the Philippines (IEMOP) and to ascertain the true intent of the EPIRA when it mandated an independent market operator to implement WESM.</p> <p>WESM is a centralized venue for large-scale buyers and sellers to come together virtually to trade electricity as a commodity.</p> <p>Rep. Sergio Dagooc (Party-List, APEC), author of HR 161, explained that among the objectives of the EPIRA are to ensure the quality, reliability, security and affordability of the supply of electricity; and to guarantee transparent and reasonable prices in a regime of free and fair competition. He, however, lamented that two decades after the passage of EPIRA, these objectives have not yet been attained because of some loopholes in the WESM rules issued by the DOE. Hence, there is a need to review the rules to fully liberalize the electric power industry and promote competition and efficiency to bring down electricity rates.</p> <p>DOE Undersecretary Felix William Fuentebella explained that the assumption of the market operator functions for the WESM from the Philippine Electricity Market Corporation (PEMC) to the IEMOP, strictly adhered to the EPIRA.</p> <p>PEMC Chief Governance Officer Rauf Tan and IEMOP's Chief Legal Officer Rachel Anosan presented the historical background of and the legal basis for the establishment of the PEMC and IEMOP, respectively.</p> <p>Tan said that the PEMC was incorporated in 2003 as a non-stock, non-profit corporation to serve as the "autonomous group" market operator and governing body of the WESM. Constituted by the DOE with equitable representation from electric power industry participants, the PEMC operated the WESM for over 10 years, Tan added.</p> <p>Anosan said that the IEMOP formally took over the operations of the WESM from the PEMC in 2018. He added that the EPIRA requires this transition -- from the autonomous group (PEMC) to an independent entity, the IEMOP.</p>

Continuation... Energy				<p>According to Anosan, IEMOP facilitates the registration and participation of generating companies, distribution utilities, bulk users, suppliers, and contestable customers in the WESM. It also determines the hourly schedules of generating units that will supply electricity to the grid, as well as the corresponding spot-market prices of electricity. Moreover, she said that IEMOP manages the metering, billing, settlement and collection of spot trading amounts for the benefit of the market participants.</p> <p>Rep. Jericho Jonas Nograles (Party-List, PBA) asked why the incorporators of the IEMOP were also the officials of the PEMC.</p> <p>Tan explained that at the time of the incorporation of IEMOP and the election of its board members, PEMC officials who transferred to IEMOP were already resigned from PEMC.</p> <p>Rep. Rosanna "Ria" Vergara (3<sup>rd</sup> District, Nueva Ecija) questioned the qualifications of Atty. Richard Nethercott as president of the IEMOP.</p> <p>Nethercott explained that officials of IEMOP have extensive experience in the power industry. As an engineer and a lawyer at the same time, Nethercott said that he is qualified to head the IEMOP.</p> <p>Rep. Presley de Jesus (Party-List, PHILRECA) asked how the IEMOP utilizes the funds sourced from the P0.0086 for every kilowatt hour that it collects from the consumers which he said has amounted to hundreds of millions by 2019.</p> <p>Nethercott said that the fund which reached P700 million as of 2019 is being used for the payment of salaries of IEMOP employees and its maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE).</p> <p>Rep. Nograles requested the IEMOP to submit its audited financial statement for 2019 as well as the breakdown of disbursements of the P700 million fund. The PEMC was also asked to submit its audited financial statement for 2017.</p>
Government Enterprises and Privatization	HB 501	Rep. Barbers	Creating the Lake Mainit Development Authority, prescribing its powers, functions and duties, and providing funds therefor	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Eric Olivarez (1 <sup>st</sup> District, Parañaque City), approved HB 501 subject to style.
	HB 584	Rep. Mangaoang	Creating the Chico River Basin Development Authority, defining its powers, functions and responsibilities, appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee approved HB 584 subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>Kalinga Rep. Allen Jesse Mangaoang, author of HB 584, said that the proposed measure will provide a much-focused management and intervention in the development, preservation, and sustainability of the Chico River Line.</p>

Continuation... Government Enterprises and Privatization	HB 740	Rep. Biazon	Strengthening the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA), thereby repealing RA 4850, as amended, otherwise known as the Laguna Lake Development Authority Act of 1966	The Committee approved HB 740.
	HB 1250	Deputy Speaker Villafuerte	Creating the Sustainable Bicol River Development Authority, prescribing its powers, functions and duties, providing funds therefor	The Committee approved HB 1250.
	HB 1337	Rep. Go (M.)	Creating the Baguio City, La Trinidad, Itogon, Sablan, Tuba, and Tublay Development Authority (BLISTTDA), defining its powers and functions, and providing funds therefor	The Committee approved HB 1337 subject to style and amendment.  Baguio City Rep. Mark Go, author of HB 1337, said that a similar bill was approved on Third Reading by the House of Representatives during the 17 <sup>th</sup> Congress.
	HB 2653	Rep. Bernos	Creating the Abra River Basin Development Authority, prescribing its powers and functions and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved HB 2653 subject to style and amendment.
	HB 2793	Rep. Rodriguez	Creating the Cagayan de Oro River Basin Development Authority, defining its powers and functions and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved HB 2793.
	HBs 3665 & 3877	Reps. Adiong and Balindong	Creating the Lake Lanao Development Authority, defining its powers, functions and duties and providing funds therefor	The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to consolidate and study further the two bills.  Rep. Yasser Alonto Balindong (2 <sup>nd</sup> District, Lanao del Sur) was designated as TWG Chair.
	HB 5372	Rep. Lara	Creating the Cagayan River Basin Development Authority, prescribing its powers, functions and duties, providing funds therefor	The Committee agreed to create a TWG to study the bill further.  Rep. Joseph "Jojo" Lara (3 <sup>rd</sup> District, Cagayan) was designated as TWG Chair.  The National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), Department of Tourism (DOT), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Agriculture (DA), and the Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA), expressed their support for the bill.  On the other hand, Michael Alpasan, officer-in-charge of the Flood Control and Sabo Engineering Center of the Department of Public Works and Highways (FCSEC-DPWH), expressed his reservation on the proposed function of the Cagayan River Basin Development Authority to "undertake infrastructure projects such as river, flood, water and sewerage works, water supply, roads, irrigation, housing and related works." Building these infrastructures is basically under the jurisdiction of the DPWH.  The DPWH and other agencies that attended the meeting were requested to submit their respective position papers for the TWG's reference in its deliberations on the bill.

Health	HBs 279 & 2486	Reps. Albano (A.) and Pineda	Providing right of access to medical cannabis as a compassionate alternative means of medical treatment, expanding research into its medicinal properties	The Committee, presided by Batanes Rep. Ciriaco Gato Jr., agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to thresh out the issues pertaining to the four bills.
	HB 3167	Rep. Albano (A.)	Excluding cannabis and any form or derivative thereof cultivated, cultured, used, sold, distributed or dispensed exclusively for medicinal and medical research purposes from the list of dangerous drugs and substances under existing laws, amending for the purpose RA 9165, otherwise known as the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 1972 as amended	Committee Chairperson, Rep. Angelina "Helen" Tan, M.D. (4 <sup>th</sup> District, Quezon), will chair the TWG.  At the outset, Deputy Speaker Luis Raymund "Lray" Villafuerte Jr. (2 <sup>nd</sup> District, Camarines Sur), author of HB 3961, junked the misconception that cannabis in general is dangerous and harmful to one's health. The Deputy Speaker clarified that it is not cannabis sativa, popularly known as marijuana, that his bill intends to legalize but medical cannabis, also called hemp, the use of which has already been approved in 60 countries.
	HB 3961	Deputy Speaker Villafuerte	Establishing the Philippine Cannabis Development Authority (PHILCADA), defining its powers and functions, appropriating funds therefor	Both the Members and resource persons present during the meeting were divided in their opinion on the proposed law.  Minority Leader Bienvenido Abante Jr. (6 <sup>th</sup> District, Manila) is not in favor of the bills, saying that most of the countries that legalized medical cannabis are now trying to expand its use for recreational purposes, which certainly will result to dependence or addiction.  Resource persons from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Department of Health (DOH), and the University of the Philippines-Philippine General Hospital (UP-PGH) object to the passage of the proposed law. They argued that the claimed therapeutic and health benefits of cannabis are still largely unsubstantiated, and thus cannot be recommended for treatment of illnesses. Instead, they encourage the use of FDA-approved drugs which are available in the market and have proven efficacy.  Representatives from the Philippine Cannabis Compassionate Society (PCCS) and the Philippine Cannabis Legal Resource Center (CannaLegal PH), among others, manifested their support for the bills.
	HBs 495, 777, 778, 1154, 1530, 1786, 4292, 4499 & 4646	Reps. Del Mar, Collantes, Romualdez (Y.M.), Salceda, Espino, Tan (A.S.), Remulla, and Sinsuat	Increasing the bed capacity of hospitals in certain parts of the country and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the nine bills subject to style and amendment.
	HB 5536	Rep. Daza	Establishing a 50-bed satellite hospital of the Eastern Visayas Regional Medical Center in the Municipality of Catarman, Northern Samar, to be known as the Eastern Visayas Regional Medical Center Catarman Satellite Hospital, appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved HB 5536 subject to style and amendment.

Continuation... Health	HB 6069	Rep. Mercado	Integrating the Southern Leyte Provincial Hospital into the Eastern Visayas Regional Hospital	The Committee approved HB 6069 subject to style.
Legislative Franchises	HB 4162	Rep. Abueg-Zaldivar	Renewing for another 25 years the franchise granted to Romeo Cabrestante Servando, presently known as Rolin Broadcasting Enterprises Inc., under RA 8202	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Franz "Chicoy" Alvarez (1 <sup>st</sup> District, Palawan), approved with amendments HB 4162 subject to compliance with the requirements set by the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) for the renewal of franchise. Thereafter, the Committee Report was also approved.
	HB 5154	Rep. Vargas	Renewing the franchise granted to Century Communications Marketing Center, Inc. under RA 8133	<p>The Committee approved HB 5154 subject to compliance with the requirements. Thereafter, the Committee Report was also approved.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Johnny Ty Pimentel (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Surigao del Sur) asked about the company's expansion plan.</p> <p>Atty. Romy Fernandez, legal and finance officer of Century Communications Marketing Center, Inc., said that the company plans to add five more stations in Visayas and Mindanao. He added that the company's expansion plan has already been submitted to the Committee.</p> <p>The NTC and the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) expressed their support for the bill.</p>
	HB 5361	Rep. Benitez	Renewing the franchise granted to FBS Radio Network Inc. to construct, install, establish, operate and maintain radio and/or television broadcasting stations in the Philippines	The Committee approved HB 5361 and the corresponding Committee Report.
	HB 1737	Deputy Speaker Villafuerte	Renewing the franchise granted to Caceres Broadcasting Corporation under RA 8106	The Committee deferred consideration of HB 1737 to give the author the opportunity to discuss the merits of the bill in the next meeting.
	HB 4258	Rep. Silverio	Granting Philand Communications Network Corporation a franchise to construct, install, establish, operate and maintain telecommunications systems throughout the Philippines	The Committee deferred consideration of HB 4258 pending the submission of complete documentary requirements by the corporation.
Population and Family Relations	HBs 100, 838 & 2263	Reps. Lagman, Brosas, and Alvarez (P.)	Instituting absolute divorce and dissolution of marriage in the Philippines	<p>The Committee, chaired by Guimaras Rep. Ma. Lucille Nava M.D., agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to draft a substitute bill, taking into consideration the proposals of the resource persons.</p> <p>Rep. Edcel Lagman (1<sup>st</sup> District, Albay) was designated as TWG chair.</p> <p>Reps. Lagman and Arlene Brosas (Party-List, GABRIELA), respective authors of HBs 100 and 838, said that the approval of the proposed law should be given priority since a similar measure was already approved on Third Reading during the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress.</p>

Continuation... Population and Family Relations				<p>According to Rep. Lagman, the proposed law on absolute divorce and dissolution of marriage is not contradictory to the Constitutional tenets on marriage as a social institution and as the foundation of the family.</p> <p>He added that the State shall continue to protect the family and the sanctity of marriage and that clear and categorical safeguards are provided under the proposed bills. He also cited the guiding principles of the three bills which states that “divorce shall be judicially decreed after the fact of an irremediably broken marital union or a marriage vitiated from the start,” and that “the State has the role of strengthening marriage and family life by undertaking relevant pre-nuptial and post-matrimonial programs and activities.”</p> <p>The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Commission on Human Rights (CHR), Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO), Philippine Association of Civil Registrars (PACR), Democratic Socialist Women of the Philippines (DSWP), EnGenderRights Inc., and Divorce Pilipinas Coalition expressed their support for the bills.</p> <p>On the other hand, the Department of Justice (DOJ), Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), Alliance for the Family Foundation Philippines, Inc. (ALFI), and the Advocates for Family and Life, expressed their objection to the bills.</p> <p>Lawyer Ronaldo Reyes of the Advocates for Family and Life emphasized that the enactment of a divorce law in the country would trivialize marriage and allow unsubstantiated grounds for separation by mere acknowledgment of joint petitions from both parties. He added that family associations were not consulted with regard to the measures’ probable effects on the family as a whole.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Jochebed dela Cruz, spokesperson of the Coalition of Christians for Change, and lawyer Lyndon Cana of the Coalition of Concerned Families in the Philippines proposed the use of the term “nullity of marriage” instead of “divorce” to avoid the stigma attached to the latter. Moreover, “moral incapacity” was proposed to be added as among the grounds of nullity of marriage as it eliminates the need for an expert witness, as in the case of “psychological incapacity,” but shall still institute measures to safeguard the sanctity and inviolability of marriage.</p> <p>Rep. Brosas assured the body that further deliberations will be conducted and that the authors are open to any queries or discourse on the bills.</p>
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Transportation	HB 766	Rep. Biazon	Further making Philippine roads safer, amending for this purpose RA 10913, otherwise known as the Anti-Distracted Driving Act	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Edgar Mary Sarmiento (1 <sup>st</sup> District, Western Samar), approved in principle HB 766.
	HB 892	Rep. Mariño	Reinstituting the mandatory drug testing for application/renewal of driver's license, thereby repealing a portion of Section 19 of RA 10586, otherwise known as the Anti-Drunk and Drugged Driving Act of 2013	The Committee approved in principle HB 892.
	HB 1165	Deputy Speaker Romero	Accelerating the imposition of anti-drunk and drugged driving policies, providing stiffer penalties and sanctions, to promote an effective awareness program and improve existing security and safety functions	The Committee approved in principle HB 1165.
	HB 1573	Deputy Speaker Abu	Providing for stiffer penalties for persons driving under the influence of alcohol, dangerous drugs, and similar substances, amending for the purpose RA 10586	The Committee approved in principle HB 1573.
	HB 4163	Rep. Bautista	Ensuring the safety of passengers by mandating all public transportation drivers who have been apprehended to bring them to a safe place with easy access to public transportation before the vehicle is impounded and providing penalty for violation thereof	The Committee approved in principle HB 4163.
	HB 5136	Rep. Olivarez	Requiring motorcycle owners/drivers to register at least one helmet per motorcycle as a prerequisite for obtaining license to drive the same	The Committee approved in principle HB 5136.
	HB 5374	Rep. Zubiri	Establishing elevated walkways and bike-lanes along EDSA	The Committee approved HB 5374.  Rep. Manuel Zubiri (3 <sup>rd</sup> District, Bukidnon), author of HB 5374, said that he filed his bill to address the road congestion in EDSA which has already become unsafe for pedestrians. Elevated walkways and bike-lanes were proven to be safe and secure passageways to commuters especially in densely populated and highly modernized cities, Rep. Zubiri added.
	HB 153	Rep. Teves (A.)	Proposing amendments to Section 3 of RA 10054, or the law mandating all motorcycle riders to wear standard protective motorcycle helmets while driving and providing penalties therefor	The Committee requested the stakeholders to submit their written comments on the bill.  Rep. Arnolfo "Arnie" Teves Jr. (3 <sup>rd</sup> District, Negros Oriental), author of HB 153, explained that he recognizes the importance of wearing helmets to ensure the safety of motorcycle riders. However, he believes that in boulevards, city or municipal streets, or crowded streets, where the maximum allowable speed is 40 kph, wearing of helmets be made optional. He also mentioned that criminals, particularly those riding in tandem, are able to hide their identity through the helmets they wear. In this case, Rep. Teves said that the optional use of helmets is to ensure the safety and security of the people.

Continuation... Transportation				<p>Riders of the Philippines Chairperson Jobert Bolaños said that the safety of the riders and that of the public are equally important. He promised to submit his organization's position paper to the Committee as soon as it is completed.</p> <p>Department of Transportation (DOTr) Undersecretary Mark de Leon likewise asked for ample time to study the bill and come up with the Department's official stand on the matter.</p>
	HB 505	Rep. Barbers	Requiring both new applicants for driver's license as well as existing licensed drivers to undergo mandatory roadworthy driving seminar and actual driving test before the issuance or renewal of their driver's licenses	<p>The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to consolidate the five bills.</p> <p>Rep. Zubiri was designated as head of the TWG.</p>
	HBs 1191 & 1956	Reps. Dy (F.M.C.) and Cabochan	Instituting a driver education program, providing the implementing mechanisms therefor	Representatives from the DOTr, Department of Education (DepEd), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Land Transportation Office (LTO), Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB), Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA), and the Philippine National Police-Highway Patrol Group (PNP-HPG) all expressed their support for the bills.
	HB 3196	Rep. Defensor	Providing for mandatory re-education program for all motor vehicle drivers once every five years	LTO chief Edgar Galvante, LTFRB Chair Martin Delgra, and DOTr Undersecretary Mark de Leon informed the Committee that they are implementing similar training courses for drivers and pedestrians at present. Delgra specifically mentioned that the LTFRB has opened the Driver's Academy in 2017, training 72.3% of the 400,000 targeted PUV drivers nationwide.
	HB 4122	Rep. Villarica	Requiring driver's education for all professional truck drivers and appropriating funds therefor	<p>Representatives from the transport sector manifested their support for the bills. Alliance of Concerned Transport Organizations (ACTO) President Efren de Luna requested that government's driver education programs should be conducted by only one government agency to make compliance easier for the drivers.</p> <p>Rep. Teves commented that efforts towards educating drivers would go to waste if government agencies fail to strictly enforce traffic laws at all times.</p>
	HB 827	Deputy Speaker Gonzales (A.)	Prohibiting the construction of mall, sports center, convention center, and exhibition center within a three-kilometer radius from the exit and entrance of an expressway to prevent traffic congestion therein and providing penalties therefor	<p>The Committee agreed to create a TWG to study further HB 827.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Aurelio "Dong" Gonzales Jr. (3<sup>rd</sup> District, Pampanga), author of HB 827, complained about the worsening traffic in the expressways caused by the construction of commercial establishments, sports centers, and convention centers near the entrance or exits of the expressway.</p>

Continuation... Transportation				<p>Representatives of the Toll Regulatory Board (TRB), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), San Miguel Corporation (SMC), and SM Prime Holdings expressed support for the bill.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Prospero Pichay Jr. (1<sup>st</sup> District, Surigao del Sur) said that there might be legal impediments to the bill as it curtails the right of private individuals to use their property as they deem fit.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Rodante Marcoleta (Party-List, SAGIP) expressed concern that the proposed law will limit the power of the local government units (LGUs) to create their own sources of revenue. He opined that the intent of HB 827 may be addressed by properly implementing the land use plan of LGUs, including areas along expressways.</p>
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TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETINGS				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Public Works and Highways (Technical Working Group)	HBs 175, 238, 825, 923, 4008 & 5605	Reps. Tan (A.), Vargas, Deputy Speaker Gonzales (A.), Rep. Fernando, Deputy Speaker Romero, and Rep. Momo	Regulating the planning, design, construction, occupancy, and maintenance of buildings, enacting a New Building Act, repealing PD 1096 or the law adopting a National Building Code of the Philippines (NBCP) thereby revising RA 6541	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Romeo Momo Sr. (Party-List, CWS), will deliberate further on the 12 measures in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Momo said that the legislative measures seek to repeal or amend the 48-year old National Building Code to update the safety and technology standards for all buildings and structures to keep up with the times.</p>
	HB 364	Rep. Yap (V.)	Providing for the telecommunications technology readiness of buildings and structures, amending certain sections of PD 1096, otherwise known as the National Building Code	University of the Philippines (UP) Diliman Professor Benito Pacheco said that the project team from the UP National Engineering Center conducted a study on the NBCP and consulted different stakeholders for almost three years.
	HB 723	Rep. Torres-Gomez	Promoting the safety of residents, tenants and guests, especially children, in buildings, whether public or private, with two or more floors, through the installation of protective devices or structures to prevent accidental falling or suicide	Out of this study, the project team came up with the following recommendations: streamline the building permit process; ensure that the design of buildings be more resilient to multiple hazards; create inter-agency and multi-sectoral Building Regulations and Standard Councils (BRSC) which will update building standards every five years; assess old buildings for safety and structural stability; incentivize retrofitting of old buildings; and strengthen the enforcement of the NBC law, and related regulations and standards.
	HB 1650	Rep. Cabochan	Expediting and streamlining the application process for securing building permits and certificates of occupancy, amending for the purpose certain provisions of RA 6541, otherwise known as the National Building Code of the Philippines	Quezon City government's Department of Building Official head Mark Dale Diamond Perral suggested that the requirements for acquiring building permits be simplified and the enforcement of the law be strengthened.
	HB 1891	Rep. Vargas	Strengthening PD 1096, as amended, by mandating a comprehensive nationwide inspection of buildings and imposing stiff penalties against building officials who violate the pertinent provisions of the said Code	Bureau of Fire Protection's (BFP) Director for Operations, Chief Superintendent Samuel

Continuation... Public Works and Highways (Technical Working Group)	HR 32	Rep. Pineda	Inquiry into the compliance with the guidelines and implementing rules on earthquake recording instrumentation for buildings as provided for by PD 1096	Tadeo, expressed support for the measures. He suggested that a fire safety clearance must be secured first before permits are issued to new and existing building structures.
	HR 132	Rep. Vargas	Conducting an accessibility audit of all public buildings and infrastructures to address the needs and requirements of persons with disability (PWDs) pursuant to Batas Pambansa Bilang 344	<p>Also expressing support for the bills were the representatives from the Department of Trade and Industry-Construction Industry Authority of the Philippines (DTI-CIAP), DTI Bureau of Philippine Standards, and Philippine Contractors Association (PCA) Inc.</p> <p>The National President of the United Architects of the Philippines (UAP), Architect Joselito Francisco, recommended that only the provisions in the NBCP that need updating should be amended, adding that the existing NBCP standards should generally be retained. He also suggested to utilize the expertise of engineers and architects in reviewing the NBCP as they can provide better perspectives and professional advice on building design and construction.</p> <p>Resource persons from the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD), Office of the Civil Defense (OCD), Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Engineering (BAFE), and Philippine Society of Unified Master Plumbers Inc. were requested to submit their official position paper on or before February 19.</p>
Trade and Industry jt. w/ Health (Technical Working Group)	Substitute Bill to HBs 40, 500, 1508, 1510, 1703, 2277, 2862, 2929, 3049, 3083, 4816, 5072, 5099, 5310, 5510, 5561, 5630, 5702 & 5752	Reps. Biazon, Barbers, Garbin, Deputy Speaker Villafuerte, Reps. Garcia (J.E.), Salo, Castelo, Tan (A.), Olivarez, Singson-Meehan, Roman, Garin (S.), Herrera-Dy, Alonte, Minority Leader Abante, Reps. Rodriguez and Deloso-Montalla	Regulating the manufacture, use, sale, packaging, distribution, and communication of electronic nicotine and non-nicotine delivery systems (ENDS/ENNDS) and heated tobacco products (HTPs)	<p>The technical working group (TWG), co-chaired by Rep. Wes Gatchalian (1<sup>st</sup> District, Valenzuela City), Chair of the Committee on Trade and Industry, and Rep. Jose Enrique "Joet" Garcia III (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Bataan), Vice Chair of the Committee on Health, will deliberate further on the substitute bill in its next meeting.</p> <p>The TWG focused its discussion on Section 3 (Definition of Terms) of the substitute bill and agreed to amend the definition of the following terms, among others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distributor - change the definition based on the one used in RA 9711 or the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Act of 2009;</li> <li>• Electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) and electronic non-nicotine delivery systems (ENDDS) - the two terms should be defined separately, but shall include the following: "the combination of devices and substances often resembling cigarettes, cigars or pipes, that may or may not contain nicotine-derived substances, and designed to deliver nicotine or related substances to users in the form of vapor or aerosol;"</li> <li>• Health Products - delete this from Section 3; and</li> </ul>

Continuation... Trade and Industry jt. w/ Health (Technical Working Group)				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Heated tobacco products (HTPs) - adopt the definition in Section 147 (e) of RA 11346, increasing the excise tax on tobacco products, heated tobacco products, and vapor products.</li> </ul>
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AGENCY BRIEFING		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Transportation	Briefing by the Land Transportation Office (LTO) on the status of implementation of the Motor Vehicle Inspection System project (MVIS)	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Edgar Mary Sarmiento (1<sup>st</sup> District, Western Samar), will continue with its discussion on the status of implementation of the MVIS project in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Sarmiento said that he received a report about the long queue in the registration of vehicles due to the closure of private emission testing centers (PETCs). Thus, he asked the LTO regional directors and representatives from the PETC group to attend the meeting so that they could discuss the difficulties they are encountering as a result of the closure. Land Transportation Office (LTO) chief Edgar Galvante confirmed the report.</p> <p>Department of Transportation (DOTr) Undersecretary Artemio Tuazon Jr. said that out of the 1,800 PETCs nationwide, only 325 centers were closed. He emphasized that the centers were found to be blatantly violating the Clean Air Act by issuing faked emission test certificates or issuing certificates without actual inspection of vehicles. These are major violations which merit the outright cancellation of PETC license under the manual of procedure.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Rodante Marcoleta (Party-List, SAGIP) opined that MVIS is a better alternative to PETCs which seemed to be problematic and ineffective in conducting proper inspection and testing of vehicles.</p> <p>MVIS centers conduct tests to ensure the roadworthiness of private and public vehicles and issue the corresponding certification which is a requirement for the registration of vehicles.</p> <p>On the suggestion of Deputy Speaker Marcoleta, the Committee agreed to visit the MVIS facility in Angeles, Pampanga possibly on February 13.</p>

DISCUSSION WITH AGENCIES/ENTITIES		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Banks and Financial Intermediaries	Discussion with the Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC) on the proposed amendments to the Anti-Money Laundering Act (AMLA) and the proposed Implementation Plan in response to the Philippine mutual evaluation report (MER) issued by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF)	<p>The Committee, chaired by Quirino Rep. Junie Cua, discussed with the AMLC its proposed amendments to the Anti-Money Laundering Act (AMLA) and its proposed Implementation Plan in response to the Philippine MER issued by the FATF.</p> <p>Rep. Cua said that the purpose of the meeting is to link up the AMLC with the business sector to facilitate the drafting of the implementation plan to address the country's shortcomings in combatting money laundering and terrorist financing, as contained in FATF's report.</p> <p>The FATF is an inter-governmental body established in 1989, on the initiative of the G7 countries, to set standards and promote effective implementation of legal, regulatory, and operational measures for combating money laundering, terrorist financing, and other related</p>

<p>Continuation...</p> <p>Banks and Financial Intermediaries</p>		<p>threats to the integrity of the international financial system. It issues MERs which serve as an assessment of a country's measures to combat money laundering and the financing of terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Countries found to have a significant number of key deficiencies are referred to FATF's International Co-operation Review Group (ICRG), which is responsible for analyzing high-risk jurisdictions and recommending specific actions. The country subsequently reports back to the FATF on a regular basis on the progress it has made. (Source: FATF website)</p> <p>Based on the MER, the Philippines attained a "low to moderate" level of effectiveness for which the ICRG recommended that the country be subjected to a 12-month observation period to remedy the identified shortcomings. The 12-month period started in October 2019 and will end in October 2020. Failure to pass the 12-month observation period would cause the country to be "grey-listed".</p> <p>According to AMLC Secretariat Executive Director Mel Georgie Racela, significant implications of being "grey-listed" include: delay in transmission of remittances since overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) will be treated as high-risk individuals abroad; and refusal of foreign investors to engage in business in the country.</p> <p>The resource persons from the business sector gave their comments and suggestions to the AMLC's Implementation Plan as well as their proposed amendments to the AMLA. Likewise, the resource persons were requested to submit their respective position papers on the matter.</p>
<p>Metro Manila Development</p>	<p>Discussion on the efforts of the Department of Health (DOH) and other government agencies regarding the 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV)</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Manuel Luis Lopez (1<sup>st</sup> District, Manila), discussed with the DOH and other government agencies on their efforts to control the spread of the 2019-nCoV.</p> <p>At the outset, Muntinlupa City Rep. Rozzano Rufino Biazon noticed the absence of Health Secretary Francisco Duque III in the meeting. Rep. Lopez explained that the Secretary could not attend the meeting because he had to inspect the proposed containment facility in Nueva Ecija, where Filipinos who will be evacuated from Wuhan City (where the virus was first detected), will be quarantined for 14 days.</p> <p>DOH-Disease Prevention and Control Bureau Director Ruby Constantino said that according to the World Health Organization's (WHO) report dated February 4, 2020, a total of 23 countries have already been affected by the 2019-nCoV with 20,620 confirmed cases and 426 confirmed deaths. In the Philippines, there are a total of 105 patients under investigation (PUI), Constantino said. Although the case fatality rate is only 2.1%, which is lower than the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), nCoV's potential outbreak could be higher if protective measures will not be followed.</p> <p>Constantino also said that the DOH has already convened the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (EID) last January 28 and had conducted three meetings relative to the 2019-nCoV global outbreak since then. The Task Force was created by virtue of Executive Order 168, s. 2014.</p> <p>Rep. Biazon criticized the Task Force for not being proactive in preventing the entry of the virus into the country. According to Biazon, direct flights from Wuhan, China to Kalibo, Cebu, and Clark were not suspended despite the declaration of the worldwide spread of the virus last January 22.</p> <p>DOH Undersecretary for Public Health Services Myrna Cabotaje admitted that the DOH, as head of the Task Force, has not yet declared a 2019-nCoV outbreak alert in the country since patients that</p>

<p>Continuation... Metro Manila Development</p>		<p>have been confirmed to be infected by the virus are not Filipino nationals.</p> <p>Upon the motion of Rep. Biazon, the Committee agreed to issue a Resolution calling the Secretary of Health, as Chair of the EID Task Force, to use all its powers and authority to the fullest to contain and control the spread of the 2019-nCoV.</p> <p>Rep. Lopez said that President Rodrigo Duterte approved this February the allocation of P2.25 billion for the purpose of protecting health workers who will take care of the patients infected by the virus.</p> <p>Rep. Francisco Datol Jr. (Party-List, SENIOR CITIZENS) recommended that the EID Task Force should conduct information dissemination as well as training and seminars in the barangays to promote awareness and prevention on the 2019-nCoV.</p> <p>Undersecretary Cabotaje replied that the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) through Memorandum Circular No. 2020-18, has already instructed the local government units (LGUs) to form Barangay Health Emergency Response Teams (BHERTs) which will monitor and conduct house visits for airline passengers that recently came from a coronavirus-infected country.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Undersecretary for Civilian Security and Consular Concerns Brigido Dulay said that 42 overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) from China's Hubei province will be repatriated and will be subjected to a 14-day mandatory quarantine in Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija.</p> <p>Department of Education (DepEd) National Capital Region (NCR) Director Malcolm Garma said that the DepEd has already ordered the suspension of all DepEd activities in February as a safety precaution from being exposed to the virus.</p> <p>Michael Salalima, concurrent chief of staff of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) Office of the General Manager and focal person for Disaster Risk Reduction and Management, said that a clear protocol on the handling of uncooperative PUIs must be provided.</p> <p>Representatives of the different LGUs in Metro Manila informed the Committee of their respective preventive measures against the virus.</p>
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