



Committee Daily Bulletin

18th Congress
First Regular Session

A publication of the Committee Affairs Department

Vol. I No. 42
November 20, 2019

COMMITTEE MEETINGS				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Civil Service and Professional Regulation	HB 575	Rep. Gasataya	Establishing a Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) office in the City of Bacolod and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee, chaired by Iligan City Rep. Frederick Siao, approved HB 575.
	HBs 52, 1081, 2692 & 2809	Reps. Cabochan, Sy-Alvarado, Gasataya, and Rodriguez	Providing for security of tenure for casual, temporary, contractual, and job order employees of the government who have rendered the prescribed years of service	The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to deliberate further on the bills and come up with a substitute bill. Rep. Raymond Democrito Mendoza (Party-List, TUCP) was designated as TWG Chair.
	HB 248	Rep. Gaité	Providing for security of tenure and granting substitute civil service eligibility for all non-regular and regular employees of the government who have rendered at least six months of continuous service	Rep. Ron Salo (Party-List, KABAYAN), author of HB 953, explained the importance of granting Civil Service eligibility to government employees whose appointment status is either contractual, casual or job order, and have rendered at least three years of continuous government service or at least five years of non-continuous government service. He said this eligibility will qualify employees for a regular appointment thus providing them with security of tenure and allowing them to enjoy the entitlements of a regular government employee as prescribed by law.
	HBs 820, 953, 2623, 3643 & 4320	Reps. Biazon, Salo, Mendoza, Cagas, and Herrera-Dy	Granting civil service eligibility to contractual, casual, temporary, job order, and coterminous government employees who have rendered the prescribed years of service	Civil Service Commission's (CSC) Director of the Human Resource Policies and Standards Office Rodolfo Encajonado opined that granting civil service eligibility to certain government employees based on the length of service may run counter to the merit and fitness principle in the selection and appointment of people in the bureaucracy as enshrined in the Constitution. He stressed that the CSC, as the government's central personnel agency, is mandated to promote and uphold this principle. Moreover, Encajonado explained that even if an employee has been granted civil service eligibility under this proposed law, there is no guarantee that the employee will immediately be given a permanent appointment status as it would still depend on the availability of vacant plantilla positions. Senior Budget and Management Specialist Agatha Beatrix Calces of the Organization, Position Classification and Compensation Bureau, Department of Budget and Management (OPCCB-DBM), agreed that the CSC has the authority to grant eligibility pursuant to Article 9B, Section 3 of the Constitution which states that: "the CSC, as

Continuation... Civil Service and Professional Regulation				<p>the central personnel agency of the Government, shall establish a career service and adopt measures to promote morale, efficiency, integrity, responsiveness, progressiveness, and courtesy in the civil service. It shall strengthen the merit and rewards system, integrate all human resources development programs for all levels and ranks, and institutionalize a management climate conducive to public accountability."</p> <p>Replying to the query of several Members, Calces disclosed that as of November 20, 2019, the total regular positions in various government agencies is 1,450,892 wherein 1,292,415 are filled and 158,477 are unfilled.</p> <p>The CSC was requested to submit the documents requested by the Members.</p>
	HBs 1860, 2337 & 4848	Rep. Rodriguez, Deputy Speaker Escudero, and Rep. Tambunting	Further amending RA 544, as amended, or the Civil Engineering Law (by strengthening the profession and continually upgrading the level of competence of the civil engineers)	<p>The Committee agreed to create a TWG to address the issues raised by the stakeholders and draft a consolidated bill to be presented to the Committee for approval.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Evelina Escudero (1st District, Sorsogon) was designated as TWG Chair.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Escudero, author of HB 2337, and Deputy Speaker Johnny Ty Pimentel (2nd District, Surigao del Sur), who sponsored HB 4797 in behalf of the author, Deputy Speaker Aurelio "Dong" Gonzales Jr. (3rd District, Pampanga), manifested that the explanatory notes attached to the bills be considered as the authors' sponsorship speeches.</p> <p>Professional Regulation Commission's (PRC) Boards of Civil Engineering and Architecture, and the United Architects of the Philippines (UAP) presented their positions and insights on the proposed bills. The PRC Boards and the professional organizations of civil engineering and architecture held opposing views specifically on which profession shall be considered "prime professional" responsible for the overall integration, coordination, and successful conduct of all processes in the project, from inception to completion, as proposed in Section 6 (c) of HB 4797.</p> <p>Rep. Siao asked the opposing parties to talk among themselves and harmonize their positions which should be presented to the TWG for consideration in the drafting of the consolidated bill.</p>
	HB 4797	Deputy Speaker Gonzales (A.)	Regulating the practice of civil engineering and repealing for the purpose RA 544, as amended by RA 1582	
Government Reorganization jt. w/ Disaster Management	Substitute Bill to HBs 4, 30, 164, 195, 338, 398, 563, 885,	Speaker Cayetano, Reps. Salceda, Belmonte, Suansing (E.),	Creating the Department of Disaster Resilience (DDR), defining its mandate, powers and functions, appropriating funds therefor	The Joint Committee, co-presided by Rep. Mario Vittorio "Marvey" Mariño (5 th District, Batangas), Chair of the Committee on Government Reorganization, and Rep. Lucy Torres-Gomez (4 th District, Leyte), Chair of

Continuation... Government Reorganization jt. w/ Disaster Management	1151, 2001, 2133, 2451, 3023, 3084, 3142, 3182, 3214, 3245, 3348, 3459, 3490, 3542, 3913, 3999, 4301, 4313, 4401, 4577, 4709, 4710, 4800, 4844 & 5335	Romualdo, Deputy Speaker Villafuerte, Reps. Abellanos, Cabochan, Romualdez, Vargas, Castelo, Fortun, Palma, Olivarez, Almario, Tolentino, Herrera-Dy, Deputy Speaker Gonzales (A.), Reps. Deloso- Montalla, Velasco, Nieto, Sy-Alvarado, Deputy Speaker Legarda, Reps. Agabas, Suarez (D.), Deputy Speaker Hernandez, Reps. Bolilia, Aragones, Tambunting, Dy (F.), Lim, and Yap (E.)		<p>the Committee on Disaster Management, approved the Substitute Bill and the corresponding Committee Report, with amendments.</p> <p>The bill will be referred to the Committees on Ways and Means and Appropriations for review of its tax and funding provisions, respectively.</p> <p>As stated in Section 4 of the proposed measure, the DDR "shall be the primary government agency responsible for leading, organizing, and managing the national effort to reduce disaster risk, prepare for and respond to disasters, recover and rehabilitate, and build forward after the occurrence of disasters."</p> <p>The Joint Committee agreed to add in the powers and functions of the proposed DDR the responsibility of setting the standard for the establishment of disaster-resilient evacuation centers in coordination with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). It was also agreed upon that the Local Disaster Risk Reduction Management Offices (LDRRMOs) in the local government units (LGUs) will be retained.</p> <p>Civil Service Commission's (CSC) Director for Human Resource Policies and Standards Office Jennifer Timbol assured the body that the continuity of years in the government service will be applied to the government employees who will be absorbed by the Department upon its creation.</p>
Public Works and Highways	HBs 290, 291, 405, 406, 732, 1061, 1778 & 4291	Rep. Suansing (E.), Deputy Speaker Villafuerte, Reps. Dalog, Yap (V.), Eriguel, and Ortega	Converting provincial roads into national roads in certain parts of the country and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee, chaired by Romblon Rep. Eleandro Jesus Madrona, approved the eight bills.
	HBs 497, 1079, 2154 & 3988	Reps. Del Mar, Sy-Alvarado, and Dimaporo (A.)	Providing for the construction of national/coastal roads/highway in certain parts of the country and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the four bills.
	HB 20	Rep. Del Mar	Providing for the construction of a bridge from Cebu City to the Municipality of Cordova, Province of Cebu and a coastal road/expressway to the Mactan-Cebu International Airport (MCIA), Lapu-Lapu City, as well as a bridge from the Municipality of Consolacion, Province of Cebu to MCIA, Lapu-Lapu City and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved HB 20.
	HB 1342	Rep. Go (M.)	Mandating the full rehabilitation and maintenance of Kennon Road under the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH)	The Committee approved HB 1342.

Continuation... Public Works and Highways	HB 624	Rep. Marquez	Renaming the Kalibo – Banga – Balete – Batan – Altavas National Road stretching/traversing various barangays in the Province of Aklan as Congressman Allen Salas Quimpo National Highway	The Committee approved HB 624.
	HBs 379, 1994, 2463, 2503, 2673, 3117, 4247 & 4439	Reps. Zamora (M.), Siao, Calderon, Roque, Tallado, Tejada, and Amatong	Establishing/creating district engineering offices in certain parts of the country and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the eight bills.
	HB 2287	Rep. Dimaporo (M.K.)	Reconstituting the Lanao del Norte engineering district offices in the Province of Lanao del Norte into two regular district engineering offices to be known as the Lanao del Norte First Engineering District and the Lanao Del Norte Second District Engineering Office to be based in the first and second congressional districts of Lanao del Norte, respectively, and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved HB 2287.
	HB 3589	Rep. Ramos	Amending RA 9689 which established the Sorsogon Second District Engineering Office in the Province of Sorsogon (by reflecting in the law the present location of the office which is in Gubat, Sorsogon)	The Committee approved HB 3589.

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETINGS				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Basic Education and Culture (Technical Working Group)	Consolidated Bill on HBs 54, 285, 614, 758, 1312, 1400, 1915, 2136, 3311, 4099, 4116, 4127, 4214, 4399 & 4667	Reps. Cabochan, Suansing (E.), Vargas, Biazon, Gatchalian, Olivarez, Castelo, Villar, Fortun, Villarica, Guico, Tambunting, and Dy (F.)	Instituting inclusive education, establishing inclusive education learning resource centers for children and youth with special needs (CYSNs) in all public schools divisions, providing for standards and guidelines, and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Christopher de Venecia (4th District, Pangasinan), will deliberate further on the consolidated bill in its next meeting.</p> <p>The TWG focused its discussions on the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On the appropriate definition of the term “children and youth with special needs” as defined in Section 4 of the bill; and On the establishment of Inclusive Education Learning Resource Centers (IELRC) in all public schools divisions of the Department of Education (DepEd), as provided for in Section 5. <p>The definition of the term “children and youth with special needs” includes reference to gifted or talented children and youth, aside from those with intellectual and learning disabilities, mental, emotional or behavioral disorders, speech and language sensory impairments, autism, and similar disabilities.</p> <p>Irma Coronel, president of the Philippine Foundation for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled (PFRD) and member of DepEd’s</p>

Continuation... Basic Education and Culture (Technical Working Group)				<p>Advisory Council for the Education of Children and Youth with Disabilities (ACECYD), suggested the use of the term “children and youth with learning disabilities” instead of “children and youth with special needs.” She also commented that gifted or talented children should not be part of the definition because the latter’s needs are entirely different from those with learning disabilities and in fact must be addressed by a separate bill.</p> <p>Save the Children Philippines basic education advisor Sierra Paraan recommended that the budget allocation for the two groups should also be separate to ensure that the learners with disabilities (LWDs) or children with learning disabilities will get a fair share.</p> <p>DepEd-Dagupan City Schools Division Superintendent Maria Celia Fernandez said that the DepEd will make sure that funds will be distributed equitably between the gifted or talented and the LWDs.</p> <p>Rep. Paul Ruiz Daza (1st District, Northern Samar) and Rep. Ramon Guico III (5th District, Pangasinan), author of HB 4214, agreed that the bill should focus only on LWDs.</p> <p>The TWG agreed to retain Section 5 of the bill which establishes the IELRCs.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their respective position papers on the bill for consideration by the TWG.</p>
Local Government (Technical Working Group)	Draft Substitute Bill to HBs 41, 89, 180, 650, 2176 & 3756	Reps. Benitez, Garbin, Suansing (H.), Tambunting, Castelo, and Rodriguez	Changing the term of office of barangay officials and members of the Sangguniang Kabataan from three to five years, and providing for limitations on recall, amending for the purpose Section 43 (c) and 74 of RA 7160, as amended, otherwise known as the Local Government Code of 1991	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Alfredo Garbin Jr. (Party-List, AKO BICOL), terminated its deliberation on the draft substitute bill. The bill will be presented to the mother Committee for its consideration and approval.</p> <p>Rep. Garbin, also the author of HB 89, said that the draft substitute bill seeks to change the term of office of barangay officials and members of the Sangguniang Kabataan from three to five years. He added that the proposed measure provides that no recall of any elective barangay official shall take place within two years from the date of the official’s assumption to office or two years immediately preceding a regular or local election.</p> <p>Reps. Francisco “Kiko” Benitez (3rd District, Negros Occidental) and Ferdinand Gaité (Party-List, BAYAN MUNA) expressed their support for the bill. They both agreed with Rep. Garbin that part of the intention of the bill is to prevent the national government from holding two elections on the same year.</p> <p>Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP) Executive Director Bernardino Sayo likewise manifested his support for the bill.</p>

People's Participation (Technical Working Group)	HR 273	Rep. Robes	Commending the Philippine National Volunteer Service Coordinating Agency (PNVSCA) for its valuable contribution to national development and congratulating the Agency on its 55 th anniversary	<p>The technical working group (TWG), presided by Committee Secretary Rolando Cronico, will deliberate further on HR 273 in its next meeting.</p> <p>The recommendations of the members of the TWG on the resolution were duly noted by Cronico.</p> <p>The TWG also discussed with the officials and technical staff of the PNVSCA the necessary arrangements for the awarding ceremony of the 2019 outstanding volunteers which would take place at the House of Representatives on December 16.</p>
--	--------	------------	---	--

AGENCY BRIEFINGS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Agrarian Reform	Briefing by the Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) on the status of implementation of RA 10878 or the law strengthening and institutionalizing direct credit support of the LBP to agrarian reform beneficiaries, small farmers, and fisherfolk, further amending RA 3844, otherwise known as the Agricultural Land Reform Code, as amended	<p>The Committee, chaired by Ifugao Rep. Solomon Chungalao, listened to the presentation of Land Bank on the status of implementation of RA 10878.</p> <p>LBP First Vice President and Strategic Planning Group Head Elcid Pangilinan said that the LBP is a state-owned bank dedicated to support countryside development by providing credit assistance to farmers, including agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs), and fisherfolk. It also serves local and national government banking needs and supports overall development program of the government.</p> <p>LBP Senior Vice President and Agrarian Services Group Head Alex Lorayes claimed that while the overall bank loans to the agriculture sector have been on the downtrend since 2008, the LBP continued to increase loan servicing to this sector by an annual average of 10.94%.</p> <p>Pangilinan said that among the challenges in the implementation of the law are the low profitability of loans to agriculture and the outdated registry of small farmers and fisherfolk with the Department of Agriculture (DA).</p> <p>To address these concerns, the LBP intends to strengthen its capacity building services to farmers and increase the allocation for the program from P30 million to P100 million in 2020; increase loans to the agriculture sector by at least 15% annually; and help DA update its registry of small farmers and fisherfolk to make LBP's financing services more inclusive, Pangilinan added.</p> <p>Rep. Chungalao noted that the state-owned bank seems to be shifting its focus toward operating as a commercial bank and earning profits, reminding the bank that it was created to primarily serve the small farmers.</p> <p>Lorayes clarified that the LBP is still true to its mandate, explaining that the bank ventured into other programs to generate income that will subsidize the bank's losses in agriculture. Moreover, Lorayes said that the direction of the bank is guided by the instruction of President Rodrigo Duterte to focus more on helping the agricultural sector.</p> <p>Replying to the query of Rep. France Castro (Party-List, ACT-TEACHERS), Pangilinan said that the LBP was able to provide loan assistance to one million small farmers this year and targets to service two million beneficiaries by next year. Currently, there are 2.8 million ARBs who are small farmers owning land of five hectares and below.</p>

Continuation... Agrarian Reform	Briefing by the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) and National Food Authority (NFA) on their accomplishments and programs relative to the agrarian reform program	<p>The Committee listened to the briefing by NIA and NFA on their accomplishments and programs in support of the government's agrarian reform program.</p> <p>The NIA focused its report on the number of irrigation projects it has completed and its targets for this year, while the NFA talked of the support it has extended to ARBs through the procurement of their palay produce, which is currently at P19 per kilo.</p> <p>Rep. Castro inquired about the status of the free irrigation project of the government. NIA Deputy Administrator Mercy Yacapin said that the use of the government's irrigation system by farmers with land size of eight hectares and below is free of charge. However, Yacapin explained that corporate farms and fish ponds are charged accordingly regardless of land size.</p> <p>On the query of Rep. Argel Joseph Cabatbat (Party-List, MAGSASAKA), Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) Assistant Secretary Milagros Cristobal said that the Department provides legal service to ARBs but admitted that it lacks manpower to be able to assist all of those who seek free legal assistance.</p> <p>Rep. Chungalao suggested that the services of other government agencies such as the Public Attorney's Office (PAO) should be tapped to assist ARBs in their legal requirements.</p>
North Luzon Growth Quadrangle (Special Committee)	Briefing by the Department of Agriculture (DA) on its budget, plans and programs for Regions 1 and 2, and the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR)	<p>The Committee, chaired by Abra Rep. Joseph Sto. Niño Bernos, listened to the briefing of the DA regional directors on the Department's budget, plans and programs for Regions 1 and 2, and CAR.</p> <p>DA Regional Field Office I (RFO1) Executive Director Lucrecio Alviar discussed the Department's main interventions for the region which include education and training as well as research and development, particularly on increasing rice production. Another important intervention is the provision of agricultural machinery, equipment, and facilities and the construction of infrastructure such as farm-to-market roads and irrigation networks.</p> <p>Other programs being implemented in the region by RFO1 are the Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP) and the Agricultural Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (ACEF) Lending Program. Alviar added that RFO1 was given a budget of P2.15 billion for 2019.</p> <p>DA RFO2 Technical Director for Operations and Extension Roberto Busania reported that as of November 15, 2019, the DA regional office has already accomplished 92.89% of its physical targets for the year. He added that out of the actual obligated fund of P1.42 billion for 2019, 78.74% or P1.12 billion has already been disbursed for the implementation of programs and projects in the region.</p> <p>Busania also presented the action plans to address problems on the drop of palay farmgate price, African swine fever (ASF), and infestation of fall armyworm (an insect causing damage to crops). He also discussed the rehabilitation plan for the earthquake-affected areas in Itbayat, Batanes.</p> <p>DA CAR OIC-Executive Director Cameron Odsey said that the DA exerts efforts to address current concerns such as low farm productivity and production, high cost of inputs, vulnerability to climate change, and weak marketing linkages.</p> <p>DA's major programs for CAR include the following: provision of agricultural machinery, equipment, and facilities; construction of infrastructure facilities; technical support services; and plant and animal regulation services.</p> <p>CAR's 2019 budget of P1.95 billion is distributed as follows: personnel services (PS), P105.47 million; maintenance and other operating</p>

<p>Continuation... North Luzon Growth Quadrangle (Special Committee)</p>		<p>expenses (MOOE), P1.11 billion; capital outlay (CO), P734.12 million; and financial expenses (FinEx), P60 million.</p> <p>DA Undersecretary Ariel Cayanán gave assurance that the DA regional offices will coordinate with the district representatives with regard to the projects and programs that will be implemented in their respective areas.</p> <p>Rep. Antonio "Tonypet" Albano (1st District, Isabela) informed the body that he will head the Committee created by President Rodrigo Duterte tasked with studying the effects of RA 11203 or the law liberalizing the importation, exportation and trading of rice, lifting for the purpose the quantitative import restriction on rice.</p> <p>The DA was requested to submit in the next meeting the documents requested of them by the Members.</p>
<p>Public Accounts</p>	<p>Briefing by the Philippine National Police (PNP) on the disbursement of the ₱35 million reward money intended for the prosecution witnesses in the murder case of former Rep. Rodel Batocabe</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Michael Defensor (Party-List, ANAKALUSUGAN), listened to the briefing conducted by the PNP on the disbursement of the P35 million bounty intended for the prosecution witnesses in the murder case.</p> <p>Rep. Defensor expressed the sentiment of the House Members who want to know the status of the case regarding the murder of former House Member, Rep. Batocabe, and the P35 million reward money intended for the prosecution witnesses to ensure that justice is served.</p> <p>PNP Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) legal officer Joseph Orsos said that two counts of murder and several counts of frustrated murder were filed by the PNP against the suspects. However, Orsos lamented that inspite of the strong case the PNP has built against the suspects, the Regional Trial Court (RTC) in Legaspi City granted bail to former Daraga Mayor Carlwyn Baldos, the alleged mastermind of Rep. Batocabe's murder.</p> <p>CIDG Acting Director Joel Napoleon Coronel explained that the bulk of the P35 million bounty was raised by the Office of the President (OP), P20 million, and by the House of Representatives, P13 million. He reported that the P20 million from the OP was fully liquidated but claimed that he has no record of the details of the liquidation because it was already transmitted to the OP.</p> <p>PNP Major General Amador Corpuz said that the P13 million reward money from the House Members of the 17th Congress was given to six witnesses or individuals including witness Emmanuel Judavar, who was present in today's meeting. Corpuz added that another P2 million reward money came from the Provincial Government of Albay the disbursement of which was handled by the PNP Region 5 Office - Daraga Police.</p> <p>Rep. Stella Luz Quimbo (2nd District, Marikina City) and other House Members wanted to find out the PNP's standard operating procedure for handling reward money.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Atty. Justin Batocabe, son of the late Rep. Batocabe, said that the murder suspects recanted their extrajudicial confessions after receiving the reward money.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to invite in its next meeting Albayalde and PNP Region 5-Daraga Police Chief Rodelon Betita to shed light on the matter. It likewise agreed to have the three suspects in the murder of the late Rep. Batocabe, who are currently detained, appear before the Committee in its next meeting.</p> <p>Upon the motion of Rep. Jose Christopher Belmonte (6th District, Quezon City), the Committee held an executive session to continue its discussion of the murder case and the disbursement of the reward money in consideration of the confidentiality of certain information and sensitivity of the issues at hand.</p>

DISCUSSION WITH AGENCIES/ENTITIES		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Energy	<p>Briefing by the following industry players on the issues and challenges being faced in the downstream oil industry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Philippine Institute of Petroleum (PIP) Independent Philippine Petroleum Companies Association (IPPCA) 	<p>The Committee, presided by its Vice Chair, Rep. Juan Miguel Macapagal Arroyo (2nd District, Pampanga), listened to the briefing of the PIP and IPPCA on the issues and challenges in the downstream oil industry and their recommendations to address the same.</p> <p>PIP Executive Director Teodoro Reyes said that PIP is a non-stock, non-profit Security and Exchange Commission (SEC)-registered grouping of businesses operating in the oil industry in the Philippines. Its members include Chevron Corporation, Isla LPG, Petron, PTT Philippines Corporation, Shell Philippines, and Total.</p> <p>Among the issues brought to the Committee's attention were the non-compliance of some oil industry players with the Biofuels Act of 2006 (RA 9367) and the unabated smuggling of fuel products which both result in unfair competition. RA 9367 requires the use of locally sourced biofuels (biodiesel and bioethanol) as blends in all liquid fuels for motors and engines sold in the Philippines.</p> <p>To address fuel smuggling, Reyes recommended the stricter implementation of the fuel marking program by the Department of Finance (DOF), plugging of loopholes in tax collection, and effective monitoring of marine vessels.</p> <p>Reyes also discussed the mandated compliance with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) 2020 regulation which would entail higher price in marine fuel resulting in higher freight cost and prices of commodities. IMO 2020, which will take effect in January 2020, limits the sulphur content in bunker fuel to 0.5% for all commercial shipping vessels, down from the current 3.5%.</p> <p>He assured the Committee of the PIP members' commitment to observe the guidelines on fuel marking. Joint Circular No. 001-2019, issued by the DOF, Bureau of Internal Revenue, and Bureau of Customs, provides the guidelines for the Fuel Marking Program. This circular implements the mandatory marking of petroleum products that are refined, manufactured, or imported to the Philippines such as unleaded premium gasoline, kerosene, and diesel, after the taxes and duties thereon have been paid.</p> <p>IPPCA Director Noel Soriano presented the benefits of the Downstream Oil Industry Deregulation Act of 1998 (RA 8479) on local oil companies. He said that based on the studies/reviews commissioned by the Department of Energy (DOE) in 2005 and 2012, the passage of RA 8479 gave way to better priced quality petroleum products and allowed for a levelled playing field which prevented the occurrence of cartelization or price fixing.</p> <p>IPPCA is an association of local independent petroleum companies aiming to provide better oil alternatives to Filipino consumers. IPPCA's members include Clean Fuel, Eastern Petroleum, FIIOil, Petro Gazz, Metro, Omni Petroleum Corporation SEA OIL, UNIOil and USA 88.</p> <p>Soriano said that the IPPCA requests the Committee's intervention in ensuring a uniform implementation of the guidelines on fuel marking and in addressing oil smuggling.</p> <p>Rep. Rosanna "Ria" Vergara (3rd District, Nueva Ecija) said that the PIP and IPPCA have not been transparent in their oil pricing, adding that the resistance of the oil companies to unbundle their rates or to itemize the base prices of petroleum products only means there are hidden costs.</p> <p>Reyes said that under the Oil Deregulation Law, the oil companies are not mandated to unbundle their rates.</p>

Continuation... Energy		<p>However, DOE Assistant Secretary Leonido Pulido III said that the Oil Deregulation Law does not prevent the DOE to require the oil companies to unbundle their prices or provide information on their pricing. He disclosed that the DOE is drafting amendments to RA 8479.</p> <p>Rep. Arroyo directed the Secretariat to make a formal request to the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) to provide data on the annual tax collected from the oil industry starting on the year that RA 8479 was implemented. Likewise, the DOE was requested to finance another study on oil deregulation to update and validate the reports of the previous reviews.</p>
---------------------------	--	---

FORUM		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Welfare of Children	Forum on Alternative Child Care	<p>The Committee on Welfare of Children, in partnership with the SOS Children's Villages Philippines, conducted a policy forum on Alternative Child Care on November 20 at the Zulueta Hall, House of Representatives. This is the third of a series of fora conducted by the Committee in celebration of the National Children's Month and the 30th anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.</p> <p>SOS Children's Villages President Angeles Guanzon-Lapena, in her welcome remarks, said that the SOS Children's Villages, a private, non-political, non-denominational organization, advocates Family-Like Care (FLC), which is an alternative child care option.</p> <p>According to its National Director Gemma Goliat, the SOS Children's Villages, whose mantra is "No child should grow up alone," pioneered the FLC model wherein house parents, who are professional caregivers, provide care to abandoned children resembling a family setting.</p> <p>As a former SOS child, SOS Children's Village Director Leonilo "Bem" Rivero attested to the effectiveness of the alternative child care approach adopted by his organization which provides a literal and figurative home for the children until they are capable of living independently. FLC model illustrates that alternative child care should not rely on adoption alone.</p> <p>Committee Vice Chair, Rep. Ma. Lourdes Acosta-Alba (1st District, Bukidnon), commended SOS Children's Villages for establishing a home for parentless children. She acknowledged the hardships and perseverance of the management of the SOS Children's Villages in advocating alternative child care that should serve as an inspiration for the legislators to likewise push for the passage of HB 2282, or the Alternative Care of Children Act, this 18th Congress. She mentioned that bills of similar intent have been filed in the previous two congresses but have not been acted upon.</p> <p>The resource speakers from the SOS Children's Villages Philippines expressed their support for HB 2282.</p> <p>HB 2282, authored by Rep. Acosta-Alba, seeks to institutionalize alternative family care for children as an option other than adoption and foster family care.</p>