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COMMITTEE MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Agriculture and Food	HB 3393	Rep. Garin (S.)	Promoting the production, processing, marketing, and distribution of Philippine mango, mandating the creation of a framework for development plan, providing funds therefor	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Wilfrido Mark Enverga (1st District, Quezon), approved HB 3393 subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>Rep. Sharon Garin (Party-List, AAMBIS-OWA), author of HB 3393, said that production of high-value mangoes in the country is going down with 73% derived from backyard production. To remedy this, the proposed law seeks to strengthen the mango industry through the creation of a mango development plan which will provide substantial government support to the backyard farmers in terms of mango production, processing, marketing and distribution.</p> <p>Expressing support for the bill were representatives from the Departments of Agriculture (DA), Agrarian Reform (DAR), Trade and Industry (DTI), and Interior and Local Government (DILG), Cooperative Development Authority, and Development Bank of the Philippines.</p> <p>Bureau of the Treasury's Research Service Director Robert Dominick Mariano will submit to the Committee the appropriate language of the provision in the bill creating a Mango Development Fund to conform to existing rules and guidelines, particularly on the one-fund concept.</p>
Agriculture and Food jt. w/ Food Security	Substitute Bill to HBs 284, 855, 2119, 3412, 4081 & 5640	Reps. Suansing (E.), Aglipay, Deputy Speaker Romero, Reps. Benitez, De Venecia, and Mariano-Hernandez	Promoting integrated urban agriculture in urban areas nationwide to address food security and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Joint Committee, co-chaired by Rep. Wilfrido Mark Enverga (1st District, Quezon), Chair of the Committee on Agriculture and Food, and Rep. Wilfredo "Willy" Caminero (2nd District, Cebu), Chair of the Special Committee on Food Security, approved the substitute bill subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>The Secretariat was directed to transmit the bill to the Committee on Ways and Means and Committee on Appropriations for their consideration of the bill's tax and appropriations provisions, respectively.</p> <p>Rep. Caminero said that a bill with similar subject matter was approved on Third Reading during the 17th Congress.</p> <p>Rep. Francisco "Kiko" Benitez (3rd District, Negros Occidental), author of HB 3412, said that because of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is now a renewed sense of urgency to achieve food sufficiency and security</p>

Continuation... Agriculture and Food jt. w/ Food Security				<p>particularly in urban areas where food supply had been hampered by the lockdown.</p> <p>Department of Agriculture (DA) Undersecretary Evelyn Laviña said that the Bureau of Plant Industry has identified crops suitable for planting in home environments in the urban areas. She added that the DA continues to promote vegetable farming in backyards as this makes food readily accessible to families in times of crisis.</p> <p>Reps. Garin, Argel Joseph Cabatbat (Party-List, MAGSASAKA), and Christopher de Venecia (4th District, Pangasinan) expressed support for the bill.</p> <p>Likewise, Rep. Rosanna "Ria" Vergara (3rd District, Nueva Ecija) supports the bill but suggested that there should be a provision that would protect the rights of private landowners from those who might unduly take over their properties in the guise of implementing urban farming projects.</p> <p>Reps. Arlene Brosas (Party-List, GABRIELA) and Eufemia "Ka Femia" Cullamat (Party-List, BAYAN MUNA) sought for a review of certain provisions of the proposed law that may be construed as allowing indiscriminate demolition of informal settlers residing in areas considered as idle lands.</p>
Legislative Franchises jt. w/ Good Government and Public Accountability	HBs 6694 & 6901	Reps. Rodriguez and Salo	Granting ABS-CBN Corporation (formerly ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corporation) a franchise to construct, install, operate and maintain radio and television broadcasting stations in the Philippines	<p>The Joint Committee, co-chaired by Rep. Franz "Chicoy" Alvarez (1st District, Palawan), Chair of the Committee on Legislative Franchises, and Rep. "Kuya" Jose Antonio Sy-Alvarado (1st District, Bulacan), Chair of the Committee on Good Government and Public Accountability, will deliberate further on the 18 measures in its next meeting.</p> <p>In today's meeting, the Joint Committee continued its discussion on whether or not the acquisition of ABS-CBN by the Lopez family after the EDSA revolution is pursuant to the Constitution. It likewise discussed the issue of whether or not the ABS-CBN franchise application violates the 50-year constitutional limitation for a franchise.</p> <p>ABS-CBN Vice Chair Augusto "Jake" Almeda-Lopez testified that ABS-CBN had been in radio and television operation since 1953. But it was shut down in 1972 when Martial Law was declared by the late President Ferdinand Marcos.</p> <p>He said that for the next 14 years the station was operated by the Marcos government, and it was only after the EDSA Revolution that the Lopez family was able to take it back.</p> <p>Almeda-Lopez also said that when emissaries of the late President Corazon Aquino approached him to take the television station,</p>
	HBs 676, 3521, 3713, 3947, 4305, 5608, 5705, 5753, 6052, 6138 & 6293	Rep. Violago, Deputy Speaker Arenas, Reps. Tambunting, Aragones, Deputy Speakers Santos-Recto and Gonzales (A.), Reps. Rodriguez, Ramirez-Sato, Zarate, Go (M.), and Deputy Speaker Legarda	Renewing for another 25 years the franchise granted to ABS-CBN Corporation under RA 7966	
	HR 639	Rep. Lagman	Urging the Committee on Legislative Franchises to report out without further delay for plenary action a consolidated version of eight pending bills proposing for the renewal for another 25 years of the legislative franchise of ABS-CBN Corporation	
	HR 839	Rep. Fortun	Condemning the issuance by the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) of	

Continuation... Legislative Franchises jt. w/ Good Government and Public Accountability			a cease and desist order against ABS-CBN in wanton disregard of its commitment to both Houses of Congress to grant the broadcasting network a provisional authority to operate pending renewal of its franchise	he refused and insisted that his family be given authority to operate the station, and thus, he was appointed as its Officer-in-Charge.
	HR 846	Rep. Defensor (M.)	Calling on the appropriate House committees to investigate and file criminal cases as warranted against the Commissioners and officers of the NTC and the Solicitor General and such other officials and individuals for perjury and for violation of the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees and the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act and other applicable laws	Former Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile clarified that in spite of the sequestration order issued during the administration of President Marcos on all television and radio stations in the country, the Lopez family did not lose ownership of ABS-CBN and title over its properties were never passed to the government.
	HR 853	Deputy Speaker Duterte	Inquiry into the probable violations of ABS-CBN Corporation of its legislative franchise under RA 7966	Enrile refuted the statement of Almeda-Lopez that President Marcos took ABS-CBN from the Lopez family. He explained that the placing of the entire facilities of ABS-CBN under the care of the government was part of the national policy then to immobilize and control the communication system and other information outlets in the country in order to diminish reaction or opposition to the declaration of martial law.
	HR 863	Rep. Sarmiento	Urging the House of Representatives, through the Committee on Legislative Franchises, to admonish the NTC on its failure to comply with their commitment under oath and to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the same and on possible measures to be taken on the matter	He added that in 1973, ABS-CBN was reopened by the Marcos government and used to broadcast vital information for the country until the EDSA Revolution in 1986. Thereafter, he, as then Secretary of National Defense, issued an order lifting the sequestration of ABS-CBN.
			Show cause order issued by the Committee on Legislative Franchises to the NTC	<p>Meanwhile, Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) Commissioners John Agbayani testified that on March 1, 1986, Enrile issued Ministry Order A-0003, which sequestered the funds and assets of the Roberto Benedicto group of companies that included the defunct Banahaw Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Radio Philippines Network (RPN), and Intercontinental Broadcasting Corporation (IBC). But it did not include the properties of ABS-CBN.</p> <p>Agbayani also stated that at the time of the aforesaid sequestration, the equipment of ABS-CBN were still in the possession of the Benedicto group of companies under a lease contract they entered into. Such that the equipment owned by ABS-CBN were inadvertently included in the sequestration.</p> <p>However, Agbayani noted that the real properties of ABS-CBN were not included because there really was no sequestration order against ABS-CBN and the Lopezes.</p> <p>Agbayani further said that the sequestration order was effectively lifted on October 2, 1992 when the compromise agreement between Benedicto and the PCGG was upheld by the Sandiganbayan, which vested ownership of the sequestered assets to the Philippine government.</p> <p>He compared the order of sequestration to a</p>

<p>Continuation... Legislative Franchises jt. w/ Good Government and Public Accountability</p>				<p>writ of attachment that is preservatory, conservatory and temporary in character until finally the sequestration is affirmed by a competent court or proper agency.</p> <p>However, Agbayani said he is not privy to the contents of the compromise agreement since it was made before his time in the PCGG, and no record of the matter could be found in his office. Thus, he could not intelligently testify on the veracity of its provisions nor comment on the stipulation that the Philippine government would have to pay P97.5 million to ABS-CBN in rental fees for the use of its equipment. He added that in a regular process, if one asset is sequestered, the PCGG initiates the disposal of the asset and the income derived from it will be placed in an escrow and remitted to the National Treasury.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Rodante Marcoleta (Party-List, SAGIP) noted that there were two arbitration agreements made in 1987 and 1993, which similarly contained two essential provisions pertaining to ownership of the sequestered properties subject of the arbitration and the payment of rentals or damages for the use of the properties.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Marcoleta and Rep. Elpidio Barzaga Jr. (4th District, Cavite) stated that the compromise agreement executed in the arbitration proceeding only settled the issue on the payment of rentals and damages. But, nothing was mentioned of the more important objective of the arbitration, which is the return of the television and radio stations together with the operating equipment to the rightful owner.</p> <p>According to Deputy Speaker Marcoleta, the ABS-CBN's ownership of the assets subject of the arbitration should have been established first in the compromise agreement before the claim of rentals and damages could have been appreciated.</p> <p>Rep. Edcel Lagman (1st District, Albay) maintained that the allegations against the Lopezes with regard to the supposed questionable reacquisition of ABS-CBN is flawed because the Lopez family's ownership of the media company has long been established and remains unchallenged.</p> <p>On the alleged violation of ABS-CBN of the 50-year constitutional limitation for a franchise, Atty. Mario "Ayo" Bautista, legal counsel for ABS-CBN, argued that the media company did not violate this constitutional provision. He explained that this provision pertains to an individual franchise and does not prohibit the issuance of a new franchise to the same entity even to exceed 50 years collectively. He cited the renewal of franchises granted by Congress to public utility companies which have been</p>
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Continuation... Legislative Franchises jt. w/ Good Government and Public Accountability				<p>operating for more than 50 years, such as the Manila Electric Company and PLDT, Inc.</p> <p>This claim was supported by Reps. Lagman, Rufus Rodriguez (2nd District, Cagayan de Oro City), Carlos Isagani Zarate (Party-List, BAYAN MUNA), and Lawrence “Law” Fortun (1st District, Agusan del Norte).</p> <p>Rep. Rodriguez emphasized that the Constitution clearly states that the grant of a franchise should not exceed 50 years regardless of the number of years that the company has been operating. He added that if the law is clear on its face, there is no room for any contrary interpretation, even from Congress.</p> <p>Department of Justice (DOJ) Assistant Secretary Nicholas Felix Ty likewise said that the 50-year constitutional proscription refers to the franchise itself and not to the grantee. According to him, Congress can issue multiple franchises that collectively exceed 50 years as long as the individual franchises do not exceed 50 years.</p> <p>Reps. Jose Atienza Jr. (Party-List, BUHAY) and Lagman shared the same view that despite several hearings of the Joint Committee none of the violations ascribed to ABS-CBN was ever proven.</p> <p>Rep. Atienza further advised that the Joint Committee consider the contributions of ABS-CBN to the country in its decision on whether or not to grant or renew the franchise of the media company. He also underscored the importance of conducting an impartial hearing on the matter.</p> <p>Both Reps. Sy-Alvarado and Alvarez stressed that the Joint Committee is committed to conduct fair and impartial hearings on the issues at hand.</p>
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DEFEAT COVID-19 AD-HOC COMMITTEE MEETING				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
New Normal Cluster	HB 6706	Rep. Go (M.)	Providing for a recovery assistance package for higher education and technical-vocational education and training, appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Cluster, chaired by Deputy Speaker Loren Legarda (Antique), approved HB 6706 subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>Baguio City Rep. Mark Go, author of HB 6706, said that his bill seeks to provide a P38-billion Recovery Assistance Package for higher education and technical vocational education and training (TVET) institutions, as the country transitions to the “new normal” where adopting an alternative learning system for students becomes a necessity.</p>

<p>Continuation... New Normal Cluster</p>				<p>The proposed recovery assistance package will be used to upgrade and rehabilitate the information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure and connectivity of state-run higher education institutions (HEIs); provide complementary training programs for faculty members and financial assistance to teaching and non-teaching personnel of higher TVET institutions; and provide subsidies and loans with 0% interest rate to students and faculty of tertiary schools and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) to pay for tuition and school fees and electronic devices that will be used for flexible learning.</p> <p>Expressing their support for the bill were representatives from TESDA, Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Coordinating Council of Private Educational Associations (COCOPEA), Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges (PASUC), Education Network (E-Net) Philippines, Globe Telecom, Inc., and the DITO Telecommunity.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Legarda inquired on the total number of TESDA centers in the country and whether it implements online training programs. TESDA Director General Isidro Lapeña said that there are 4,042 TESDA centers nationwide. He also said that TESDA adopts a blended learning approach which uses both online and traditional face-to-face teaching.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Legarda requested TESDA to submit a list of TESDA centers with no internet connectivity. She also recommended to TESDA to include training courses on emergency response for barangay officials and personnel, adding that this type of training is needed in her district.</p> <p>Rep. Sarah Jane Elago (Party-List, KABATAAN) expressed concern that many students will be left behind if some private schools will only offer online modes of teaching.</p> <p>CHED Commissioner Perfecto Albin replied that the mode of teaching that will be adopted by private schools in this time of pandemic will depend on the outcome of consultations between the latter and the students. However, he assured the body that no private schools are offering only online learning to date.</p> <p>Resource persons from the Department of Budget and Management and the Department of Finance said that the Bureau of Treasury (BTr) should first certify the availability of funds for the proposed law.</p>
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Continuation... New Normal Cluster				Rep. Go said that he is amendable to this suggestion. The Cluster agreed to coordinate with the BTr on the matter.
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AGENCY BRIEFING				
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER			DISCUSSIONS
Housing and Urban Development	Briefing by the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD) and key housing agencies on their interventions to implement RA 11469, otherwise known as the "Bayanihan to Heal as One Act," and on the status of implementation of EO 114, institutionalizing the "Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa Program"			<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Strike Revilla (2nd District, Cavite), listened to the briefing of the DHSUD and other key housing agencies on their efforts relative to the implementation of the "Bayanihan to Heal as One Act" and the "Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa (BP2) Program."</p> <p>DHSUD Secretary Eduardo del Rosario discussed the following regulatory interventions in the housing sector in line with the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declaring a three-month moratorium starting March 17, 2020 on the loan payments to the Home Development Mutual Fund (Pag-IBIG), National Housing Authority (NHA), Social Housing Finance Corporation (SHFC), and National Home Mortgage Finance Corporation (NHMF), benefitting a total of 5,521,611 borrowers; • Providing a grace period for the payment of loans incurred by buyers under in-house financing plans of private project owners/developers for the duration of the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) plus one-month grace period after the lifting of the ECQ; and • Issuance of guidelines on the extension or adjustment of deadlines and compliance periods and on the resumption of real estate construction and business operations. <p>As co-convenor of the BP2 Program Strategic Communications Group, the DHSUD is responsible for establishing a mechanism for feedback and consultation on policy issues and program design at the national and regional levels.</p> <p>Under the BP2 program are three phases of intervention: Immediate phase, which involves the provision of transportation, cash assistance amounting to P15,000, and livelihood opportunities to those who wish to return to their provinces; Mediate phase, which assures beneficiaries with decent jobs and house and lot, as well as the institutionalization of health and education services; and Long-term phase, which entails initiatives from the government and private sector that will spearhead rural development.</p> <p>The responsibilities of the DHSUD in the BP2 program are to facilitate the matching and access of the identified beneficiaries to available government housing or financing programs; to identify and support the development of idle government lands suitable for the BP2 program; provide technical assistance to local government unit (LGU)-led housing projects; promote the development of regional centers, and ensure the provision of adequate basic services and facilities.</p> <p>The BP2 Program is different from the "Hatid Tulong" initiative of the government which is a short-term humanitarian assistance to individuals stranded in Metro Manila to be able to go back to their respective provinces.</p>

<p>Continuation... Housing and Urban Development</p>		<p>NHA Management Services Group Manager Marissa Maniquis reported that the NHA has granted a three-month moratorium or suspension of amortization or lease payments of clients of NHA housing projects, and waived the delinquency interest in all commercial, industrial and institutional accounts to alleviate the adverse economic difficulties they suffered due to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>According to Maniquis, the prolonged ECQ has caused the delay in the bidding of NHA projects and has delayed the completion of housing projects because of frequent suspension of work and the unavailability of construction materials.</p> <p>As the Secretariat of the BP2 Council and lead facilitator of the BP2 Program, the NHA will be responsible for the construction of a multi-purpose center as dispatch area, and the provision of housing units for “Balik Paninirahan” families by utilizing available unoccupied housing units in several housing project sites originally intended for the members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police around the country.</p> <p>To date, a total of 89,116 applications under the BP2 Program have been filed, 11% of which have identified Leyte as the preferred destination. However, the dispatch of the beneficiaries to the provinces was suspended to give way to the <i>Hatid Tulong</i> program of the government even as it continued to accept and process applications.</p> <p>Pag-IBIG Fund Chief Executive Officer Acmad Rizaldy Moti also reported on the loan relief granted to Pag-IBIG members in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which includes the mandatory grace period and the three-month moratorium for the payment of loans.</p> <p>Moti added that the Pag-IBIG Board of Trustees, in consultation with the top four developers in the country, has increased the agency’s House Construction Fund to P10 billion to encourage the construction of socialized and low-cost housing units and to serve as a bridge financing facility for housing developers.</p> <p>SHFC Planning Department Manager Florencio Carandang informed the body that the SHFC has contributed P611 million to augment the funds needed by the government in its fight against COVID-19. He also highlighted the following interventions relative to the Bayanihan to Heal As One Act: extension of contract time or completion date for the contractors; three-month moratorium on the payment of monthly amortizations on housing loans for all its projects nationwide; financial assistance for agency-hired personnel; donation of medical supplies to health workers; and work-from-home arrangement, shuttle service, and rapid testing for SHFC employees.</p> <p>Carandang added that the SHFC’s contribution to the BP2 Program involved the vigorous implementation of the community mortgage program (CMP) modalities to help informal settler families (ISFs) return to their provinces.</p> <p>NHMFC Department Manager for Corporate Planning and Management Information Systems Rajewen Zabala reported that the corporation also extended a three-month moratorium on housing loan payments, implemented the mandatory grace period on loans, and contributed to the national government a total amount of P14 million.</p>
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<p>Continuation... Housing and Urban Development</p>		<p>Meanwhile, Atty. Reuben Zabala of the Human Settlements Adjudication Commission (HSAC) presented some of the guidelines and memorandum circulars issued by the HSAC to stem COVID-19 transmission. He said that a work-from-home arrangement was adopted and the use of teleconference in the conduct of hearings was promoted in the Commission. A skeletal workforce is also deployed daily to maintain public service. The filing of pleadings was also extended while case deliberations and regional adjudication hearings were suspended.</p> <p>Reps. France Castro (Party-List, ACT-TEACHERS) and Rosanna "Ria" Vergara (3rd District, Nueva Ecija) said that relocated or displaced residents of Marawi should be given priority in the BP2 Program.</p> <p>Rep. Paul Ruiz Daza (1st District, Northern Samar) manifested that he will file a resolution encouraging Pag-IBIG to distribute 100% of its earnings as dividends to all Pag-IBIG members in this time of pandemic.</p> <p>Moti commented that Pag-IBIG will study the feasibility of the proposal. He recalled though that in 2019, 90% dividends were distributed to members.</p> <p>Rep. Arlene Brosas (Party-List, GABRIELA) emphasized the need to conduct COVID-19 tests first on returning residents under the BP2 Program to prevent the spread of the virus in the provinces. Maniquis replied that this is not within the scope of the Program.</p> <p>The BP2 Program Secretariat was requested to submit a list of the initial beneficiaries under the BP2 Program and a copy of the approved Implementing Rules and Regulations of EO 114.</p> <p>The DHSUD was directed to submit the timeframe for the full relocation of the displaced Marawi residents to their respective places or resettlement sites and the number of families involved.</p>
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