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BUDGET BRIEFINGS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Appropriations	<p>Briefing on the proposed FY 2019 budget, plans and programs, and major accomplishments of the following government offices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office of the President (OP) • Office of the Vice President (OVP) • Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) 	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Karlo Alexei Nograles (1st District, Davao City), listened to the presentations on the proposed FY 2019 budget, plans and programs, and major accomplishments of the OP, OVP, DILG, and DND.</p> <p>OP Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea said that under the FY 2019 National Expenditure Program (NEP), the OP is set to receive P6.77 billion, which is 12.32% higher than its current budget of P6.03 billion. He said that the increase will be used to implement the fourth tranche of the salary standardization law (SSL), retrofit old buildings, and replace worn out office furniture and equipment.</p> <p>OP Deputy Executive Secretary for Finance and Administration Rizalina Justol presented the breakdown, by expense class, of the OP's 2019 budget, as follows: personnel services (PS), P1.08 billion; maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE), P5.18 billion; and capital outlay (CO), P511.66 million.</p> <p>For the OVP's 2019 proposed budget, it was Vice President Maria Leonor Gerona Robredo herself who presented it. She said that the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) recommended a budget of P455.85 million for FY 2019 for the OVP, which is 17.27% lower than its FY 2018 budget of P550.99 million.</p> <p>By expense class, the OVP's 2019 budget will be distributed as follows: PS, P94.56 million; MOOE, P350.12 million; CO, P3 million; and Retirement and Life Insurance Premiums (RLIP), P8.17 million.</p> <p>The Committee Members had no queries concerning the proposed 2019 budget of both the OP and the OVP.</p> <p>Committee Vice Chair, Nueva Vizcaya Rep. Luisa Lloren Cuaresma, sat as the presiding officer during the budget briefing of the DILG and its attached agencies.</p> <p>DILG Officer-in-Charge Eduardo Año said that under the FY 2019 NEP, the DILG and its attached agencies are set to receive a total budget of P223.99 billion, which is 31% higher than their current budget of P170.76 billion. By expense class, DILG's 2019 proposed budget will be distributed as follows: PS, P188.06 billion; MOOE, P26.01 billion; and CO, P9.92 billion.</p> <p>Año also discussed the plans and programs, and thrusts and priorities of the DILG for 2019. He highlighted the proposed projects of the Department and the agencies under it including the construction of additional police stations, fire stations, and jail buildings and the procurement of police cars, firearms, fire trucks, and ICT equipment.</p> <p>Asked to explain the significant increase in the budget of the DILG for PS, Año said that the increase is mainly due to the 100% increase in</p>

<p>Continuation... Appropriations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of National Defense (DND) 	<p>the salaries of all personnel of the Philippine National Police (PNP). He added that the Department also intends to recruit additional personnel to entry level positions next year: 10,000 Police Officer I positions; 3,000 Fire Officer I; and 2,000 Jail Officer I.</p> <p>In response to the query of Baguio City Rep. Mark Go, PNP Director General Oscar Albayalde explained that the increase in the number of PNP's unfilled positions from 27,000 in 2015 to 41,510 this year is due to the difficulty in recruiting people who meet the qualification standards required of the positions. Nonetheless, Albayalde said that hiring additional PNP personnel, even if in just the entry-level positions, will improve police to population ratio from the present 1:521 to 1:506 in 2019.</p> <p>The DILG responded to the queries and concerns raised by the Members of the Committee with regard to their respective districts.</p> <p>Committee Vice Chair and Muntinlupa City Rep. Rozzano Rufino Biazon sat as the presiding officer during the hearing on the budget of the DND.</p> <p>Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said the DBM-recommended FY 2019 budget for DND and its line agencies is P251.17 billion which is 24% higher than the current budget of P202.14 billion. The Defense Department's 2019 proposed budget will be allocated to the Pension and Gratuity Fund, P68.05 billion (27%), and to the Regular Fund, P183.12 billion (73%).</p> <p>In terms of distribution by office, the bulk of the P183.12 billion Regular Fund will go to the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in the amount of P177.64 billion. The rest will go to the following DND civilian bureaus/agencies: DND Proper, P477.74 million; Government Arsenal (GA), P1.26 billion; Office of Civil Defense (OCD), P1.37 billion; National Defense College of the Philippines (NDCP), P98.79 billion; Philippine Veterans Affairs Office (PVAO), P553.30 million; and Veterans Memorial Medical Center (VMMC), P1.71 billion.</p> <p>Rep. Antonio Tinio (Party-List, ACT TEACHERS) questioned the increase in the budget of the DND given the Department's low budget utilization rate, which according to the DBM is the reason for other agencies' budget reduction.</p> <p>Lorenzana explained that the budget increase is due to the implementation of the second tranche of salary increase for military personnel and the fourth tranche of salary increase for civilians, among other expense items. DBM Director Amanella Arevalo added that some items in the 2019 DND proposed budget were based on "presidential instructions" such as the activation of the Citizen Auxiliary Force Geographical Unit (CAFGU) and the creation of additional positions in the Department.</p> <p>Rep. Carlos Isagani Zarate (Party-List, BAYAN MUNA) countered that the activation of the CAFGU contradicts the implementation of the Revised AFP Modernization Program.</p> <p>AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. explained that the increasing terrorism and insurgency threats, particularly in Mindanao, encouraged the DND to request authority from the President to activate the CAFGU.</p> <p>Lorenzana also informed the Committee that the AFP still needs to intensify its efforts at protecting the country's internal and external security because of continuing threats from the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and the Maute Group, whose recruitment activities are still being detected.</p>
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Continuation... Appropriations		<p>Asked about the status of the rehabilitation of Marawi City and the implementation of martial law in Mindanao, Lorenzana reported that Marawi's ground zero is already 90% clear of unexploded bombs and that the clearing of debris in the area is expected to be completed by mid-September of this year. On the other hand, Lorenzana claimed that the military rule in Mindanao has been effective in establishing peace and order in the area.</p> <p>Reps. Henry Oaminal (2nd District, Misamis Occidental) and Gary Alejano (Party-List, MAGDALO) expressed their support for the approval of the DND's 2019 proposed budget.</p>
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COMMITTEE MEETINGS				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Government Reorganization	Substitute Bill to HBs 68, 1274, 2207, 876 & 1529	Reps. Salceda, Biazon, Speaker Macapagal-Arroyo, Reps. Sarmiento (E.M.), and Gonzales (A.P.)	Instituting reforms in real property valuation and assessment in the Philippines, reorganizing the Bureau of Local Government Finance (BLGF), and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee, presided by KABAYAN Party-List Rep. Ron Salo, approved the substitute bill subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>BLGF OIC-Deputy Executive Director Jose Arnold Tan underscored the importance of giving back to the Finance Secretary the function of approving the schedule of market values (SMVs) that will be used by local government units (LGUs) and concerned government agencies in property valuation. He added that LGUs that do not follow the uniform SMV shall be disallowed to receive their performance-based grant from the national government and to borrow from government financial institutions (GFIs).</p> <p>Replying to the query of Rep. Salo, Tan said that under the proposed law, the provincial and city assessors will be tasked to prepare their respective SMVs and submit the same to the BLGF for the latter's review. After which, the BLGF will recommend the SMVs to the Secretary of the Department of Finance (DOF) for approval.</p> <p>Camiguin Rep. Xavier Jesus Romualdo proposed several amendments to the bill, among them were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To include in the mandate of the BLGF the formulation of standard operating procedures in the various transactions in the assessor's office (Section 4); • To set a deadline for the Registrar of Deeds to submit a copy of all contracts pertaining to the selling, transferring, conveying, leasing, or mortgaging of real property to the provincial, city or municipal assessors (Section 25); and • To require provincial or city assessors to have at least five years experience in real property valuation either in public or private practice, as well as for municipal assessors who should also have at least three years of similar work experience (Section 28).

Continuation... Government Reorganization				Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda (2 nd District, Albay) maintains that the position of the BLGF Executive Director should be upgraded to a Commissioner level, adding that he will elevate this matter to the Plenary for possible consideration.
Government Reorganization jt. w/ Welfare of Children	Substitute Bill to HB 6228, in consolidation with HB 7118	Speaker Macapagal- Arroyo and Rep. Sambar	Reorganizing the Council for the Welfare of Children into the Children's Welfare Commission, appropriating funds therefor	The Joint Committee, co-chaired by Camiguin Rep. Xavier Jesus Romualdo, Chair of the Committee on Government Reorganization, and Rep. Ma. Lourdes Aggabao (4 th District, Isabela) of the Committee on Welfare of Children, approved the Substitute Bill to HB 6228, in consolidation with HB 7118.
Housing and Urban Development	Substitute Bill to HBs 228, 1724, 2125 & 2807	Reps. Singson, Biazon, Ocampo, and Castelo	Prescribing the mechanisms to facilitate the disposition of idle government- owned lands for socialized housing	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Alfredo "Albee" Benitez (3 rd District, Negros Occidental), approved the Committee Report on the substitute bill.
	HBs 3738 & 7274	Reps. Marcoleta and Villafuerte	Establishing a Bayanihan Homebuilding Program for low income groups through graduated amortization payment (GAP) scheme	The Committee agreed to refer the bills to the Subcommittee on Urban Development for further deliberations. The Subcommittee is chaired by Rep. Gavini "Apol" Pancho (2 nd District, Bulacan). Resource persons from the Philippine Commission for the Urban Poor (PCUP) and National Housing Authority (NHA) expressed their support for the proposed law. Social Security System (SSS) Legislative Liaison Officer Joseph Desunia said that while the SSS supports the intention of the proposed law, some of its provisions might be in conflict with the SSS Charter. He promised to submit the position paper of SSS at the soonest possible time. He also expressed his willingness to share with the Committee the experience of SSS with regard to its previous program that was similar to what is being proposed in the bills. The Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC), Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), and Home Development Mutual Fund (HDMF) likewise promised to submit their respective position papers as soon as possible.
	HBs 4281, 4508, 6845, 7154 & 7931	Reps. Cortuna, Vargas, Rodriguez (M.), Belaro, and Villafuerte	Providing for a housing program for public school teachers, providing funds therefor	The Committee agreed to refer the bills to the Subcommittee on Housing for the Low Income and Marginalized Sector for further deliberations. The Subcommittee is chaired by Rep. Jose Christopher Belmonte (6 th District, Quezon City). Representatives from the HUDCC, GSIS, and HDMF expressed support for the proposed law. Philippine Public School Teachers Association (PPSTA) Regional President Cristina Manalo said that the best way to make public school teachers financially capable of availing themselves of government housing programs is to increase their

Continuation... Housing and Urban Development				<p>salaries, which was what President Rodrigo Duterte promised.</p> <p>Rep. Julieta Cortuna (Party-List, A TEACHER), author of HB 4281, said that bills seeking an increase in the salaries of teachers have been filed in the 17th Congress, but have not yet been acted upon citing possible factors such as the availability of funds.</p> <p>Manila Public School Teachers Association (MPSTA) President Solita Daz said that while she supports the intention of the proposed law, she has doubts whether the GSIS can be effective in its proposed role as one of the primary providers of funds for long-term housing mortgages under the bill. She explained that as of to date, the teachers are encountering some problems with the way GSIS is implementing the GSIS Financial Assistance Loan (GFAL) Program.</p> <p>Under the GFAL, the outstanding loan balance of eligible DepEd employees with private lending institutions accredited by DepEd will be refinanced by the GSIS at a lower nominal interest rate and longer loan term.</p>
Legislative Franchises	HB 4820	Rep. Salceda	Renewing for another 25 years the franchise granted to Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, Inc. under RA 5172	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Franz "Chicoy" Alvarez (1 st District, Palawan), approved the Committee Report on HB 4820.
	HB 5702	Rep. Singson	Renewing for another 25 years the franchise granted to Tirad Pass Radio TV Broadcasting Network, Inc. under RA 8070	The Committee approved the Committee Report on HB 5702.
	HB 7129	Rep. Go (M.)	Renewing for another 25 years the franchise granted to Mountain Province Broadcasting Corporation under RA 8164	The Committee approved the Committee Report on HB 7129.
	HB 6953	Speaker Macapagal-Arroyo	Renewing for another 25 years the franchise granted to Rajah Broadcasting Network, Inc. to construct, install, establish, operate and maintain radio and television broadcasting stations in the Philippines under RA 8104	<p>The Committee approved the bill subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>National Telecommunications Commission's (NTC) Broadcast Services Division Chief Alvin Bernard Blanco and Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) General Counsel Camilo Correa expressed support for the bill saying that the Rajah Broadcasting Network, Inc. has complied with all the requirements of their respective offices.</p>
	HB 7057	Speaker Macapagal-Arroyo	Renewing for another 25 years the franchise granted to Radioworld Broadcasting Corporation under RA 8219	<p>The Committee approved the bill subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>Blanco and Correa interposed no objection to the renewal of the franchise of Radioworld Broadcasting Corporation because it has complied with all the requirements of the NTC and SEC.</p>
	HB 7876	Rep. Tugna	Renewing for another 25 years the franchise granted to Southern Broadcasting Network under RA 8147	The Committee approved HB 7876 subject to style and amendment.

Continuation... Legislative Franchises				NTC and SEC expressed support for the bill explaining that the Southern Broadcasting Network complied with the requirements of their respective offices.
	HB 8015, in consolidation with HB 8013	Rep. Zamora (M.C.) and Deputy Speaker Yap (A.)	Granting Solar Para Sa Bayan Corporation a franchise to construct, install, establish, operate and maintain distributable power technologies and minigrid systems throughout the Philippines to improve access to sustainable energy	<p>The Committee approved HB 8015, in consolidation with HB 8013, subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>Leandro Antonio Leviste, President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Solar Para Sa Bayan Corporation made a brief presentation of the company's operations and achievements. He also discussed the benefits of using minigrids, which are integrated group of loads and technologies that may operate independently from or in conjunction with a power transmission or distribution system.</p> <p>The NTC, SEC, Department of Energy (DOE), Climate Change Commission (CCC), Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC), National Electrification Administration (NEA), and Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) expressed support for the bills.</p>
	HB 7515	Rep. Oaminal	Granting the Dan-ag Sa Dakbayan Broadcasting Corporation a franchise to construct, install, establish, maintain and operate radio broadcasting and television stations in the Island of Mindanao	The Committee deferred the deliberation on HB 7515 at the request of the author himself, Rep. Henry Oaminal (2 nd District, Misamis Occidental), because the company has failed to submit the documents required by the Committee.
Science and Technology	Substitute Bill to HBs 1205, 7011 & 7058	Reps. Yu, Aumentado, and Marquez	Converting the provincial science and technology center into provincial science and technology office in every province and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Erico Aristotle Aumentado (2 nd District, Bohol), approved the substitute bill.
	Substitute Bill to HBs 1444, 6706, 7048 & 7132	Reps. Belaro, Aumentado, and Arcillas	Strengthening the National Research Council of the Philippines of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) for the promotion of research work along scientific lines and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee approved the substitute bill to the four bills.</p> <p>Key officials from the National Research Council of the Philippines (NRCP) expressed support for the passage of the bill. They underscored the need for the Council to expand its mandate, extend its reach and provide support to the development of the countryside.</p> <p>Under the proposed law, the NRCP will also be mandated to establish the Center for Research and Development, and to offer research for development training in all regions in the country.</p>
	Substitute Bill to HB 2163	Rep. Ramirez-Sato	Strengthening the national policy on wealth generation from access and benefit-sharing from the utilization of Philippine genetic resources	The Committee approved the Substitute Bill to HB 2163 subject to style.
	HR 1595	Rep. Belaro	Commending Filipino scientist Apollo Arquiza, Ph.D. for bringing honor and prestige to the Philippines as the first scientist to cook by frying in a simulated low gravity environment on the G-Force	<p>The Committee adopted HR 1595.</p> <p>Rep. Salvador Belaro (Party-List, 1-ANG EDUKASYON), author of HR 1595, expressed his gratitude to the Committee for recognizing Apollo</p>

Continuation... Science and Technology			One plane under the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)-Reduced Gravity Program	<p>Arquiza for his outstanding achievement in the field of advanced science and space technology.</p> <p>Arquiza is a two-time participant to DOST's Balik Scientist program, who collaborated with the Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI) to develop technologies for "food for disasters" and "special dietary needs" among others.</p> <p>The Balik Scientist Program seeks to encourage highly-trained overseas Filipino scientists and technologists, experts, and professionals to return to the Philippines and share their expertise for the acceleration of the scientific, agro-industrial and economic development of the country (<i>Source: DOST website</i>).</p>
Women and Gender Equality	HBs 985 & 1915	Reps. Fortun and Violago	Providing for benefits and privileges to pregnant women and their families, appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee chaired by Rep. Bernadette Herrera-Dy (Party-List, BAGONG HENERASYON), agreed to consolidate HBs 985 and 1915 and come up with a substitute bill.</p> <p>Rep. Lawrence "Law" Fortun (1st District, Agusan del Norte), author of HB 985, said that his bill grants employed pregnant women medical leaves equivalent to one day during each month of their pregnancy and the opportunity to work on flexible hours.</p> <p>Rep. Fortun recommended the deletion of a provision in his bill that requires a pregnant woman to have rendered at least one year of service to be entitled to the proposed medical leave. The Committee agreed to solicit the comments of the Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP) on the matter.</p> <p>The stakeholders present were requested to submit their respective position papers on the bills.</p>
	HBs 2651, 2793 & 4543	Reps. Campos, Ferriol-Pascual, and Rodriguez (M.)	Establishing a resource development and crisis assistance center for women and children in every province and city of the country, amending for the purpose RA 8505, otherwise known as the Rape Victim Assistance and Protection Act of 1998	<p>The Committee agreed to consolidate the three bills and come up with a substitute bill.</p> <p>The stakeholders present were requested to submit their respective position papers on the bills.</p>
	HB 4870	Rep. Vargas	Establishing a refuge and assistance center for young pregnant women in every province, city and municipality of the Philippines, appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on HB 4870 in another meeting.</p> <p>The stakeholders present were requested to submit their respective position papers on the bill.</p>
	HB 5768	Rep. Rodriguez (M.)	Establishing a maternal and infant health home visiting program	<p>The Committee agreed to draft a substitute bill incorporating therein the pertinent recommendations of the stakeholders.</p> <p>Asked if DOH has an existing program similar to what is being espoused in the bill, Dr. Minerva Vinluan, program manager of the National Center for Disease Prevention and Control-Family Health Office of the Department of Health (DOH),</p>

Continuation... Women and Gender Equality				apprised the Committee of the DOH's pregnancy tracking program with the assistance of barangay health workers. This program is part of its Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health and Nutrition (MNCHN) service delivery network, which is a network of facilities and providers within a province or city health system offering integrated MNCHN services in a coordinated manner, including the supporting financing, communication and transportation systems.
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TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Government Enterprises and Privatization (Technical Working Group)	HBs 7139, 7381 & 7651	Reps. Silverio, Sy-Alvarado, and Garcia (J.E.)	Creating the Regional Investment and Infrastructure Corporation of Central Luzon to facilitate the creation of the Central Luzon Investment Corridor	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Mario Vittorio "Marvey" Mariño (5th District, Batangas), terminated its deliberations on the four bills. The Secretariat was directed to draft a substitute bill that will be presented to the mother Committee for its consideration and approval.</p> <p>National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Region III Director Leon Dacanay said that the proposed investment body duplicates the powers and functions of the Subic-Clark Alliance for Development (SCAD) Council. Instead of creating a new office for the promotion of investments in Central Luzon, Dacanay said that the powers and functions of SCAD should be strengthened.</p> <p>Rep. Mariño asked if the SCAD has a master plan for investments and livelihood activities in the entire Central Luzon.</p> <p>Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) OIC-Deputy Administrator for Business Ronnie Yambao said that SCAD developed a master plan in 2011 but was never implemented. On the other hand, Clark Development Corporation's (CDC) Corporate Planning Division Manager Tarcisius Tiotuyco explained that several coordinative efforts were undertaken between SCAD and CDC which resulted in the increase in the aggregate income of the investors in Clark Freeport Zone.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Rep. Lorna Silverio (3rd District, Bulacan) underscored the need to create a government office that will focus solely on harmonizing efforts for the promotion of investments in the Central Luzon corridor. Likewise, Rep. Jose Enrique "Joet" Garcia III (2nd District, Bataan) said that the proposed law will address the problem of unfunded projects in Central Luzon that were already approved by the Regional Development Council.</p> <p>The TWG agreed that the stakeholders shall meet among themselves to discuss and improve</p>
	HB 7380	Rep. Roman	Creating the Luzon Investment Corridor and the Regional Investment and Infrastructure Development Council	

Continuation... Government Enterprises and Privatization (Technical Working Group)				the proposed law and harmonize it with Senate Bill 1325 authored by Senator Richard Gordon. Afterwhich, their output will be submitted to the Committee Secretariat for consideration in the crafting of the substitute bill.
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AGENCY BRIEFINGS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Metro Manila Development	Briefing on the flagship infrastructure projects in Metro Manila	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Winston "Winnie" Castelo (2nd District, Quezon City), listened to the briefing conducted by the Department of Transportation (DOTr) and the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) on their flagship infrastructure projects in Metro Manila.</p> <p>Rep. Castelo conveyed that the Committee wishes to be updated on the major infrastructure projects intended for Metro Manila being undertaken by government agencies, such as the DOTr, DPWH, Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA), and the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Center. Most often, district Representatives are not consulted during the formulation and planning of these projects, Rep. Castelo said.</p> <p>DOTr Assistant Secretary Mark Richmond de Leon mentioned the following flagship projects of DOTr: Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange (PITX), Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), Taguig City Integrated Terminal Exchange (TCITX), Metro Railway Transit 7 (MRT-7), and the Subway System connecting Valenzuela City to Parañaque City.</p> <p>According to De Leon, the PITX project is already 97% complete as of August 26 and is scheduled to start its dry-run operations on September 11. With respect to the BRT, De Leon disclosed that the project is currently on hold as it is undergoing review. The pre-construction phase of TCITX is about to be completed.</p> <p>Replying to the query of Rep. Edgar Erice (2nd District, Caloocan City) pertaining to the master plan for the Metro Manila Subway System, De Leon revealed that it will be composed of several phases, with the subway system connecting Valenzuela City to Parañaque City as only the initial phase.</p> <p>Meanwhile, DPWH NCR Regional Director Melvin Navarro identified the following flagship projects of the Department for Metro Manila:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction/upgrading/rehabilitation of drainage system along national roads, Katipunan St., and Brgy. Concepcion Dos, Marikina City; • Installation of sheet/board piles and parapet walls, and construction of a four-lane concrete road including drainage structures and lighting facilities in Laguna Lake Highway (formerly C-6); • Widening of Fort Bonifacio-Nichols Field Road; and • Opening/concreting of four lanes on Mindanao Ave. Extension to General Luiz, Valenzuela, (Segment 2C Phases I & II) to decongest traffic in Novaliches, Caloocan and Valenzuela. <p>Rep. Cristal Bagatsing (5th District, Manila) expressed her dismay in not being consulted by the DPWH relative to its infrastructure projects in Metro Manila such as the Binondo-Intramuros Bridge. She advised the DPWH and the DOTr to also coordinate with the district Representatives and not just local government officials. Several House Members concurred with the suggestion.</p>

Continuation... Metro Manila Development		The Committee directed the DPWH to suspend the construction of 12 more bridges in Metro Manila until it is able to review the contracts and documents pertinent to these projects. A special committee, to be headed by Rep Erice, was tasked to undertake the review.
North Luzon Growth Quadrangle (Special Committee)	<p>Briefing on the budget, and plans and programs for North Luzon by the following agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) • Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Service (AMAS) 	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Deogracias Victor "DV" Savellano (1st District, Ilocos Sur), listened to the presentations of the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) and the Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Service (AMAS) on their 2019 proposed budget, and plans and programs for North Luzon.</p> <p>BPI Budget Section Chief Leonida Morales reported that under the 2019 National Expenditure Program (NEP), BPI is set to receive P903.75 million, of which P32.53 million will be allocated for North Luzon.</p> <p>BPI Planning Officer Rhoda Grace Pintuan presented the Bureau's mandate, functions, and strategic objectives. The BPI is a staff bureau of the Department of Agriculture (DA) that is mandated to ensure the availability of high quality seeds and planting materials, protection of agricultural crops from pests and diseases, and development of crop farming technology, among others.</p> <p>Reps. Savellano and Marlyn Primicias-Agabas (6th District, Pangasinan) underscored the need to increase the budget of the BPI to allow it to improve its program on the production and distribution of seedlings nationwide.</p> <p>AMAS Agribusiness Investment Promotion Division Chief Rowena Genete said that AMAS' 2019 proposed budget for North Luzon will be distributed as follows: Region I, P10.94 million; Region II, P17.64 million; and Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), P20.31 million.</p> <p>AMAS, one of the offices under the DA, is mandated to collaborate with, and provide direct assistance to the private sector including concerned non-government organizations (NGOs) and private organizations (POs), in marketing ventures and in the conduct of market analysis, identification and matching.</p> <p>Among the thrusts and priorities of AMAS for 2019 are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct aggressive market driven agribusiness investment and marketing promotions; • Intensify assistance to agri-fishery enterprises especially small farmers and fisherfolk; • Scale up collaborative efforts on production and marketing of agri-fishery products; • Enhance partnership with DA units and other agencies on market information, credit programs, and technologies; and • Strengthen the agro-enterprises' capacity in business operation and maintaining quality standards. <p>Replying to the query of Benguet Rep. Ronald Cosalan, AMAS CAR head Gerry Domoyan said that he will look into the status of the Benguet Agri-Pinoy Trading Center (BAPTC), which is situated on a land owned by the Benguet State University. The BAPTC aims to serve as an alternative marketing outlet to which vegetable farmers can directly sell their produce at rationalized prices, thereby ensuring reasonable returns to the farmer-producers.</p>