

# Cebu's major firms respond to water crisis

By JUDY ANN DINOPOL, CHRISTOPHER MAHILUM, and REY VINCENT ALISON

**C**EBU CITY – Major companies and private organizations in Cebu have pledged efforts in alleviating the water crisis currently affecting Cebu.

To recall, Mayor Michael Rama Friday declared Cebu City in a state of emergency as a result of the seriousness of the water crisis.

During a Water Concern Coordination meeting presided by City Legal Office head Jerome Castillo at the Cebu City hall yesterday, 32 stakeholders, both public and private, committed to take action to address the water crisis caused by the dry spell phenomenon referred to as El Niño.

The entities represented at the meeting pledged contributions to help city barangays now experiencing lack of water. Included at the City Hall meeting yesterday were SM, Gaisano Country Mall, Golden Peak Hotel, Crown Port View Hotel, SM, Castle Peak Hotel, and the Bureau of Fire Protection.

Harold Alcontin, who heads the Cebu City Risk Reduction Office, stressed that the city is now in a state of preparedness and the purpose of the meeting was to come up with a plan of action.

Those who were pres-

ent at the meeting made a commitment to provide in the fastest time possible such provisions as water tankers, potable and non-potable water, water pumps, firetrucks among others. A number of establishments also pledged to help facilitate the distribution of contributed equipment.

During the same meeting yesterday, a new water command system aimed at addressing the immediate needs of

the public in relation to the water crisis was launched.

Cebu City Administrator Lucelle Mercado was appointed overall head of the water command system. Appointed under her was City Councilor Philip Zafra as ground command head for drinking water supply while Cebu City Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council Head, Harold Alcontin was designated ground commander head

for domestic water supply.

This new system was created to further organize solutions and moves to be taken by the local government to effectively address the water crisis and promote water conservation in the city.

"Hopefully this will run until July when the drought is over but there will be a continuing assessment of the situation" said Castillo.



**AVIAN EATING BREAK** – Migratory birds take a break in their flight to some destination to look for something to eat such as small snails which are abundant in the river at the South Road Properties in Cebu City. A resolution was passed by the Cebu Provincial Board urging the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Central Visayas to monitor tourist destinations where flora and fauna as well as submarine activities are promoted. One of the bird-watching areas in Cebu is Olang Island in Lapu-Lapu, Mactan Island. (Juan Carlo de Vela)

## Environmental clearance revoked for Yolanda housing site

By TARA YAP

**ILOILO CITY** – The environmental clearance for the P239 million government housing project in Roxas City, Capiz province intended for survivors of super typhoon Yolanda has been revoked.

Atty. Jonathan Bulos, Regional Director of the Environmental Management Bureau under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Western Visayas (EMB-DENR-6) confirmed this development with the Manila Bulletin.

To recall, in a March 22, 2016 decision, EMB-6 cancelled the environmental compliance certificate (ECC) of Goldenville Realty and Development Corp., the private contractor of the Yolanda housing project implemented by the National Housing Authority (NHA).

This is the latest controversy which has hit the housing project intended for Yolanda survivors in Capiz province, Panay Island.

The housing project is located near an existing farm of Cal's Poultry Supply Corp. (Cal's) in Barangay San Jose, Roxas City.

According to the Comprehensive Land Use Plan of the Roxas City government, the some 116,780 square-meter housing site for typhoon survivors sits on classified agricultural land.

Last year, the Roxas City Council approved the reclassification of the land

from agricultural to medium-density residential area. However, the Capiz Provincial Board declared as invalid this ruling of the Roxas City Council.

It was Cal's Poultry Supply Corp. that actually urged EMB-6 to cancel Goldenville's ECC as it claimed its poultry farm was already existing and the area for the housing site is not suitable as residential area given the classification of agri-industrial land.

Bulos reiterated that Goldenville must stop construction of the housing project since the ECC has been cancelled.

However, Manila Bulletin received reports that construction is still ongoing despite the ECC cancellation.

Another complaint was that no survivor of the super typhoon that hit Capiz in November 8, 2013, but rather, victims of a fire incident in Roxas City last March, 2015, currently lives in the housing project.

## Franchise conference seeks to aid Visayas SMEs

By CHRISTOPHER MAHILUM

**CEBU CITY** – The Philippine Franchise Association (PFA) is holding a Visayas conference designed to mentor small businesses in developing their expertise in business and franchising.

In a press conference held yesterday during the official opening of the conference named Franchise Visayas 2016: Franchising Negosyo Para sa Cebu at the Activity Center of Ayala Cebu, PFA Chairman Emeritus Samie Lim said the PFA is extending its presence in the Visayas region by mentoring small companies in how to venture into wider markets and develop further their franchising and business capacities.

"The region has a lot of potential when it comes to business especially in food products such as sansrival in Dumaguete City for instance," Lim said, adding that food and services are on top of the PFC's list of booming businesses currently.

Money, time and connections, and

a great interest to listen and learn are all that a potential franchisee needs, he stressed.

"Franchising is like getting married where you have to get to know your partner well for your business to be successful. There will never be love at first sight," he said.

For his part, PFA Vice Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of FRANCHISE PHILIPPINES Bing Sibal Limjoco cited Bo's Coffee, Island Souvenir, Penshoppe, Golden Cowrie, Chobbii Chobbii, Mr. Potato, Tablea, Life Care, Potato Corner, and Sunnies as some of the franchised business establishments now making a lot of profitable noise both nationally and overseas.

S. No. 2178  
H. No. 5412

Republic of the Philippines  
Congress of the Philippines  
Metro Manila  
Sixteenth Congress  
Third Regular Session

Begun and held in Metro Manila, on Monday, the twenty-seventh day of July, two thousand fifteen.

[ REPUBLIC ACT No. 10756 ]

AN ACT RENDERING ELECTION SERVICE NON-COMPULSORY FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS, AUTHORIZING THE APPOINTMENT OF OTHER QUALIFIED CITIZENS, PROVIDING FOR COMPENSATION AND OTHER BENEFITS

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the "Election Service Reform Act".

SEC. 2. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act:

(a) *Beneficiaries* shall refer to the qualified compulsory heirs of the deceased person rendering election service under this Act;

(b) *Commission* shall refer to the Commission on Elections;

(c) *Compensation* shall refer to *per diem*, honoraria, or allowances granted to the Chairperson and members of the Board of Election Inspectors (BEI), Special Board of Election Inspectors (SBEI), Board of Election Tellers (BET), Special Board of Election Tellers (SBET), hereinafter collectively referred to as "Electoral Boards", or Department of Education Supervisor Official (DESO), and their respective support staff under this Act;

(d) *Department or DepED* shall refer to the Department of Education;

(e) *Election-related risk* shall refer to any death or injury sustained by reason of or on the occasion of the performance of election service or duties;

(f) *Persons rendering election service* shall refer to persons appointed by the Commission to render election-related service as Chairperson or member of the Electoral Boards and DESO, and their respective support staff; and

(g) *Other benefits* shall refer to death and/or hospitalization benefits granted to persons rendering election service or to their beneficiaries under this Act, including the provision for legal assistance and legal indemnification.

SEC. 3. *Rendering of Election Service.* – The Electoral Boards to be constituted by the Commission shall be composed of a Chairperson and two (2) members, all of whom shall be public school teachers who are willing and available to render election service.

Should there be a lack of public school teachers willing, available or qualified to serve, the Commission may instead appoint the following persons in this order of preference:

(a) Private school teachers;

(b) National government employees:

(1) DepED nonteaching personnel;

(2) Other national government officials and employees holding regular or permanent positions, excluding uniformed personnel of the Department of National Defense and all its attached agencies;

(c) Members of the Commission-accredited citizen arms or other civil society organizations and nongovernmental organizations duly accredited by the Commission; and

(d) Any registered voter of the city or municipality of known integrity and competence who is not connected with any candidate or political party.

In cases where the peace and order situation so requires as determined by the Commission and where there are no qualified voters willing to serve, uniformed personnel of the Philippine National Police shall be deputized to render election service as a last resort.

SEC. 4. *Honoraria and Allowances.* – Persons rendering election service shall be entitled to honoraria, travel allowance, and such other benefits as may be granted by the Commission.

For the first implementation of this Act, the following shall be entitled to the corresponding honoraria:

|                                 |           |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| Chairperson of Electoral Boards | P6,000.00 |
| Members of Electoral Boards     | P5,000.00 |
| DESO                            | P4,000.00 |
| Support Staff                   | P2,000.00 |

All of the foregoing shall be entitled to an additional travel allowance of One thousand pesos (P1,000.00) each.

Such honoraria and allowances shall be paid within fifteen (15) days from the date of election.

Such amounts shall be reviewed by the Commission in consultation with the DepED every three (3) years from the effectivity of this Act, but in no case, shall the revised amounts be lower than herein provided.

SEC. 5. *Service Credit.* – A minimum of five (5) days service credit shall accrue to all government officials and employees serving as members of the Electoral Boards and DESO, and their respective support staff.

SEC. 6. *Other Benefits.* – Persons rendering election service shall be entitled to death and/or medical assistance for election-related risks to be drawn from the trust fund provided in this Act.

(a) *Death Benefits* – The amount of Five hundred thousand pesos (P500,000.00) shall be awarded to the beneficiaries in accordance with the implementing rules and regulations of this Act. Such amount shall be reviewed by the Commission every three (3) years thereafter, but in no case shall the revised amount be lower than herein provided.

(b) *Medical Assistance* – Persons rendering election service shall be entitled to medical assistance in such amount as may be determined by the Commission, sufficient to answer for medical and hospitalization expenses, until recovery.

SEC. 7. *Legal Assistance.* – Persons rendering election service are hereby authorized to engage the services of government or private lawyers immediately upon receipt of notice that a civil or criminal action, suit or administrative proceeding is filed against them in connection with their election service. The lawyer's fee shall be part of the indemnification package under this Act, subject to the provisions of the immediately succeeding section.

SEC. 8. *Indemnification.* – The Commission shall establish an equitable legal indemnification package for persons rendering election service which shall be in the form of legal assistance and other forms of legal protection and indemnification for all legal costs and expenses reasonably incurred by such persons in any administrative, civil, or criminal action, suit or proceeding to which they have been made a party by reason of the performance of their functions or duties, unless they are finally adjudged in such action or proceeding to be guilty of an election offense.

The legal assistance and indemnification shall not cover any action or suit initiated by a person rendering election service in his or her personal capacity or on behalf of the Commission, unless such action, proceeding, or claim was authorized by the Commission.

SEC. 9. *Procedure.* – The claimants shall file their respective claims for legal assistance and indemnification with their respective agencies and shall secure the approval of their respective heads of agencies on the terms and conditions of the engagement of counsel. Private individuals rendering election service shall file their claims with the Commission.

If the claimant is found not guilty of an election offense, he or she shall liquidate his or her cash advances or be allowed reimbursement for reasonable expenses, as the case may be. However, if the claimant is found to be guilty of an election offense, he or she shall be denied reimbursement or if cash advances have been made, he or she shall return the cash advance made through salary deduction or reimbursement, as may be applicable.

The funds to be used for the grant of legal assistance and indemnification shall be drawn from the agency's annual appropriation and from the trust fund provided under this Act.

SEC. 10. *Election Offense.* – Any person who makes or causes the delay in the payment of the honoraria and allowances due persons rendering election service beyond the prescribed period of fifteen (15) days from the date of election shall be liable for an election offense.

SEC. 11. *Establishment and Administration of a Trust Fund.* – The Commission shall establish a special trust fund for medical assistance, death benefits, legal assistance and indemnification as provided under this Act. The trust fund shall not be used for purposes other than what are provided for by this Act.

SEC. 12. *Appropriation Clause.* – The initial funding of this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriations of the Commission. Thereafter, such amount as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 13. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Commission with the assistance of the DepED, Office of the Solicitor General, Department of Justice, National Teacher Organizations, Election Monitoring Organizations and such other civil society organizations as may be determined by the Commission shall formulate the implementing rules and regulations of this Act.

SEC. 14. *Transitory Clause.* – Within thirty (30) days after the effectivity of this Act, the Commission shall determine if it still has material time to implement Section 3 hereof on the non-compulsory election service of public school teachers in the 2016 national and local elections, otherwise the same shall be implemented in subsequent elections.

SEC. 15. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, and issuances, or portions thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SEC. 16. *Separability Clause.* – Should any provision of this Act or part hereof be declared unconstitutional, the other provisions or parts not affected thereby shall remain valid and effective.

SEC. 17. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect immediately after its publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,

FELICIANO BELMONTE JR.  
Speaker of the House of Representatives

FRANKLIN M. DRILON  
President of the Senate

Senate Bill No. 2178, which was approved by the Senate on January 25, 2016, was adopted as an amendment to House Bill No. 5412 by the House of Representatives on January 26, 2016.

MARILYN B. BARUYAN  
Secretary General  
House of Representatives

OSCAR C. LABES  
Secretary of the Senate

APR 08 2016

Approved:

BENIGNO S. AQUINO III  
President of the Philippines

