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TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING ON HOUSE MEASURES

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Transportation (Technical Working Group)	HB 9324	Rep. Garin (S.)	Providing for relief package to the air transport sector	<p>The technical working group (TWG), presided by Rep. Sharon Garin (Party-List, AAMBIS-OWA), will deliberate further on HB 9324.</p> <p>The TWG agreed to draft a new version of the bill incorporating therein the suggestions of the resource persons.</p> <p>Rep. Garin, who is also the author of HB 9324, recognizes the need to help the airline industry recover from financial losses due to the travel restrictions imposed as early as March last year. She enjoined concerned agencies and stakeholders to help identify the measures that should be put in place in order to provide the much-needed assistance to the airline industry.</p> <p>Rep. Garin suggested that the TWG look into the possibility of increasing flight quotas both for domestic and international flights. She explained that adjusting the flight quotas is necessary to accommodate a higher number of passengers, which will redound to increased revenues for the airline.</p> <p>Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA) General Manager Eddie Monreal and Department of Health-Disease Prevention and Control Bureau OIC-Director Razel Nikka Hao said that flight quotas are set more specifically for international flights to control the number of travelers who enter the country.</p> <p>Hao further explained that other considerations in imposing flight quotas are the capacity of the quarantine facilities in the country and the government's ability to conduct mandatory Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT PCR) testing for all arriving overseas Filipinos.</p> <p>Muntinlupa City Rep. Ruffy Biazon stated that it is also important to put in place mechanisms to bring back the confidence of travelers to travel in and around the country again.</p> <p>Air Carriers Association of the Philippines (ACAP) Executive Director and Vice Chair Roberto Lim expressed support for the bill. He maintained that providing assistance to the airline industry will speed up its recovery from the adverse effects of the pandemic. He also stressed that helping the industry get back to its feet will boost the country's efforts towards economic recovery, citing the industry as a major contributor to the country's economy.</p>

<p>Continuation... Transportation (Technical Working Group)</p>				<p>Giving the TWG an idea of how much aid countries in the Asia Pacific have provided their airline industry, Lim said that Singapore has provided \$9.1 million; Hong Kong, \$5.07 million; and South Korea, \$3.1 million.</p> <p>To bring back consumer confidence and facilitate a safe restart for the airline industry, Lim said that it is important to accelerate the rollout of COVID-19 vaccination, strictly observe health protocols, and continue the implementation of surveillance testing, tracing and treatment of the COVID-19 infected individuals.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Rufus Rodriguez (2nd District, Cagayan de Oro City) asked what form of assistance can be extended that can help the industry to recover.</p> <p>Lim said that the government can help the industry in many ways such as guaranteeing the airlines' loans, providing a concessional rate, and deferring the imposition of regulatory fees.</p> <p>On the proposed deferment of regulatory fees, Monreal said that this will hurt the financial position and operations of MIAA as it depends on the revenues collected from the airline companies to fund its operations. He stated that there are other solutions to balance the interest of the airline companies and the need to maintain the airports.</p> <p>Civil Aeronautics Board Acting Board Secretary Clarabel Anne Lacsina reported that CAB's collections from fees and charges decreased due to the drop in the sale of passenger tickets by airline companies. This means that CAB has lesser funds for some of its projects.</p> <p>Cebu Pacific, Air Asia, and Philippine Airlines confirmed that they have incurred huge losses due to the imposition of travel restrictions and flight quotas both domestically and internationally. The representatives from the airline industry also disclosed that they had to retrench some of their employees or offer others voluntary retirement benefits due to economic losses.</p> <p>The resource persons were directed to submit copies of their presentation as well as their position paper for consideration in the crafting of the final version of the bill.</p>
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