



NEWS ROUNDUP

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MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

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By: Peter Tabingo

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MANILA BULLETIN

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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['The dumbest climate conversation of all time': experts on the Musk-Trump interview](#)

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THE MANILA TIMES

[Business groups back balanced energy policy](#)

By Janine Alexis Miguel

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THE PHILIPPINE STAR

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Information and Knowledge Management Division

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CSC adopts flexible work arrangement

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The Civil Service Commission (CSC) is now on its ninth day of implementing a hybrid work arrangement for all personnel in its central and regional offices, except those providing frontline services, allowing them to report to the office for only four days in a week and to work remotely on Fridays.

CSC chairperson Karlo Nograles said starting August 1, 2024, all CSC officials and employees were encouraged to observe Friday as the uniform remote day while ensuring continuous delivery of external frontline services from Monday to Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The commission outlined the adoption of a flexible work arrangement (FWA) under CSC Resolution No. 2400579 issued on July 10, 2024.

“As the central human resource (HR) agency of the government, the CSC is committed to leading the way in adopting sustainable HR management practices that contribute to climate change mitigation measures. At the same time, we shall set an example by ensuring that the service provided to our stakeholders and the general public remains uninterrupted, even amidst the hybrid work arrangement,” said Nograles.

Nograles said the new policy is intended to institutionalize suitable work arrangements for government officials and employees while ensuring the protection of their health, safety, and welfare.

Likewise, the agency hopes to help the government minimize the impact of steep global prices of petroleum products, reduce the consumption of both electricity and fuel, and alleviate traffic congestion.

“We are optimistic that this policy will uplift the morale and boost the productivity of CSC employees by providing reasonable work arrangements that facilitate work-life balance.

Additionally, we hope this will inspire other government agencies to appreciate the benefits of a hybrid work setup in driving employee well-being and performance,” Nograles added.

External frontline services at the CSC Central Office include the Integrated Records Management Office, Information and Communications Technology Office, Public Assistance and Information Office, Office for Financial and Assets Management, Office for Legal Affairs, and the Examination Recruitment and Placement Office.

On the other hand, the Regional Offices have the prerogative to determine their external frontline staff.

Under the CSC FWA policy, all officials and employees are still required to render 40 hours of service in a week regardless of employment status: permanent, temporary, coterminous, casual, and contractual.

The same rules apply to contract of service and job order workers, in accordance with the provisions allowed in their contracts.

MANILA BULLETIN

[Private sector groups stand with energy chief](#)

By: Chino S. Leyco

Several private sector organizations raised the need for the Philippines to balance energy security, affordability, and climate change concerns to drive its economic progress.

In a joint statement on Tuesday, Aug. 13, the groups emphasized that the country ranks third lowest in energy supply per capita in Southeast Asia; thus, the Department of Energy (DOE) must prioritize increasing power capacity.

For this reason, the organizations expressed their support for the DOE and Energy Secretary Raphael P.M. Lotilla in crafting an energy policy tailored to the country's specific requirements.

The joint statement was signed by the Blockchain Council of the Philippines (BCP), Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP), Federation of Philippine Industries (FPI), Financial Executives Institute of the Philippines (FINEX) and Fintech Alliance.PH.

It also included Foundation for Economic Freedom (FEF), the Makati Business Club (MBC), Management Association of the Philippines (MAP), and Women's Business Council Philippines (WomenBizPH).

This joint statement came after the Power for People Coalition (P4P) filed complaints against Lotilla for endorsing the Aboitiz-owned Therma Visayas, Inc. Unit 3 expansion in Cebu.

P4P said that the project's approval by Lotilla was against the ban on new coal-fired power projects implemented by the previous administration.

The private sector organizations, however, said that the DOE has clarified that its moratorium on coal-fired power plants pertains to greenfield projects.

"As an emerging market, the country must balance energy security and affordability with climate change concerns to support its economic progress," the groups said.

"Even with government's goal of a 50 percent renewable energy share in the country's power generation mix by 2040, it has left a sizable proportion for fossil fuel-based sources," they added.

The groups emphasized that the increasing energy needs of the Philippines make energy insecurity costly.

In particular, they pointed out that the power outage in Panay Island in January resulted in an estimated economic loss of around P3.8 billion for the Province of Iloilo alone.

“We also laud the DOE's pursuit to develop indigenous resources to reduce our heavy dependence on imported fossil fuels, to lower power costs, and to pursue energy efficiency as an essential element in maximizing our energy resources,” the groups said.

“We unite behind the DOE in the pursuit of these objectives,” they added.

On Aug. 5, the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industries (PCCI) voiced its support for Lotilla amid the graft complaint filed against him by certain progressive groups.

The PCCI dismissed the graft charges alleging Lotilla of violating the moratorium on coal-fired power generating facility projects as “unfounded complaints.”

“We recognize the excellent work that Secretary Lotilla is doing,” PCCI said.

“We support the directions he is taking to achieve energy security and affordability for the country, the two key components to bring in investments, expand domestic enterprises and enhance our productivity and competitiveness,” it added.

MANILA STANDARD

[Revilla lauds DPWH plan on plastic waste on roads](#)

By: Macon Ramos-Araneta

Senate Committee on Public Works chairperson Ramon Revilla, Jr. on Tuesday lauded the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) on their new policy of using shredded plastic waste as an additive in asphalt.

This would reportedly extend the lifespan of roads across the country.

In Department Order No. 139, s. 2024, DPWH approved the use of low-density polyethylene (LDPE) plastic bag waste in hot mix asphalt (HMA).

Revilla said this sets a new standard in the use of the Bituminous Concrete Surface Course now that it is incorporated with the new material.

In line with the new policy, DPWH Secretary Manuel Bonoan directed all regional offices, district engineering offices, and Unified Project Management Office clusters to comply with the said issuance on road construction projects.

“We congratulate the DPWH for their innovative policy of integrating plastic waste in their infra projects, especially on road construction,” said Revilla. “Nakakatuwa kasi hindi lang ito para mas magiging sustainable ang mga proyekto nila kundi malaking tulong rin ito sa waste management.”

The senator has been calling for resilient and sustainable infrastructure projects in the past. During the public hearing of the Senate Committee on Public Works in 2022, he called on government agencies to invest in projects that can sustainably solve flooding.

Revilla said he has recommended the DPWH to make resilient and sustainable projects. “And they did not disappoint me with this new policy. “

The senator aired his support to the DPWH as long as they are compliant with the standards with the materials to guarantee that the infra projects are not compromised,” he said.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[Gov't green lanes world's largest solar power project](#)

The Board of Investments (BOI) has granted a green lane certificate to a solar power project claimed to be the world's largest being undertaken by one of the companies of business mogul Manuel Pangilinan.

In a statement Tuesday, the BOI said it awarded the certificate of green lane endorsement to Terra Solar Philippines, Inc. (TSPI) last Aug. 5 for its 3,500-megawatt Terra Solar project with a 4,500-megawatt hour battery energy storage system (BESS).

The company claims to be the largest solar power project in the world that spans across 3,500 hectares of land in two provinces —Bulacan and Nueva Ecija.

The green lane certificate was received by Pangilinan and Meralco PowerGen Company (MGen) president and chief executive officer Emmanuel Rubio.

TSPI is a subsidiary of SP New Energy Corporation (SPNEC) —chaired by Pangilinan — and MGen Renewable Energy, Inc. (MGreen), the renewable energy arm of MGen — a unit of Pangilinan-led Manila Electric Company (Meralco).

The project is already registered with the BOI in July, with an investment value of P185.28 billion and is expected to create 4,165 jobs.

“The basic objective of the Philippines now under this administration is not just to grow —we are already the fastest-growing economy in the region— but more importantly to transform the Philippine economy into a smart and sustainable hub for manufacturing and services, and exactly supporting that would be the sectors and industries that you are investing in,” BOI Undersecretary Ceferino Rodolfo said.

The project also received a Certificate of Energy Project of National Significance from the Department of Energy last July 23, as any national energy project with a capital exceeding US\$59 million is deemed significant.

The company said the government's green lane initiatives could help it achieve its timeline for the project to start commercial operations for the first phase by February 2026 and the second phase a year after.

“Having the green lane certificate is a testament to our commitment to excellence, innovation, and environmental stewardship. It's also a recognition of our collective efforts to prioritize and fast track projects that will accelerate the country's low carbon transition —and this one is expected to deliver by February 2026,” Rubio said.

In February 2023, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. signed Executive Order 18, establishing the One-Stop Action Center for Strategic Investments within the BOI. This

center aims to expedite the processing of permits and licenses for strategic investments—those with significant economic impact—across relevant national government agencies and local government units.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[DPWH's use of plastic waste as additive for road projects lauded](#)

By: Wilnard Bacelonia

The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) was commended by Senator Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr. on Tuesday for allowing shredded plastic waste as an additive in asphalt to extend the lifespan of roads across the country.

"Noon pa man ay minumungkahi ko na sa DPWH na gawing resilient at sustainable ang mga proyekto nila (I have long suggested to DPWH to make their projects sustainable and resilient), and they did not disappoint with this new policy," Revilla said in a news release.

Under Department Order 139 s. 2024, the DPWH approved the use of low-density polyethylene plastic bag waste in hot mix asphalt, which sets a new standard in the use of Bituminous Concrete Surface Course that is now incorporated with the new material.

In line with the new policy, Public Works Secretary Manuel Bonoan directed all regional offices, district engineering offices, and Unified Project Management Office clusters to comply with the order as it not only promotes recycling efforts but also improves asphalt's resistance to deformation.

"Nakakatuwa kasi hindi lang ito para mas magiging sustainable ang mga proyekto nila kundi malaking tulong rin ito sa waste management (I am glad because this will not only make projects sustainable but it is also a big help to waste management)," Revilla said.

Senators back creation of Department of Water Resources

By: Wilnard Bacelonia

The majority of the senators have given their support to the Senate Bill (SB) No. 2771 or the National Water Resources Act, which seeks to establish the Department of Water Resources (DWR).

Under the proposed measure, the DWR shall be the “primary policy, planning, coordinating, implementing, monitoring, and administrative entity of the Executive Branch of the government responsible for the comprehensive, sustainable, climate-resilient, and integrated development and management of the water resources of the Philippines.”

It shall also be in charge of determining the “optimal allocation and use for domestic and municipal water supply, sanitation, irrigation, hydropower, industry, navigation, flood management, and recreation, as well as water utilization aspects of fisheries or aquaculture.”

The proposal, one of the priority measures of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., also includes the establishment of the Water Regulatory Commission, an independent, quasi-judicial body tasked with overseeing and regulating all water service providers, both private and public.

Senator Alan Peter Cayetano, one of the 22 senators who signed the committee report on SB 2771, said the passage of the bill will significantly enhance the government's ability to address issues such as water scarcity, pollution, and infrastructure inefficiencies.

“Other countries have 10-year plans about their water resources. This should also be the case in our country to address not only the current shortages but also about future-proofing our water systems against the growing impacts of climate change and population growth,” he said in a statement on Tuesday.

SB 2771 was sponsored at the plenary by Senator Grace Poe on Monday, noting that it is a product of five years of study, consultations, and extensive dialogues with water sector agencies, including finance and management experts, private sector representatives, technical water experts from overseas, and relevant stakeholders.

Poe said the bill aims to achieve universal access to safe, adequate, affordable, and sustainable water supply, and improved sewerage and sanitation services, particularly for the 40 million Filipinos who currently lack access to formal water supply.

She also pointed out that the bill will consolidate various government offices under different departments that play significant roles in water management.

"Sa aming bilang (In our counting), at least 45 executive agencies composed of 15 departments, 16 attached agencies and the academe, and 14 bureaus or offices handle overlapping and sometimes even conflicting functions on water. All of them have their own water projects with little or no policy coordination or data-sharing," Poe said.

She also cited a United Nations report which declared that the global water crisis is imminent, as well as the World Resources Institute which ranked the Philippines 57th in water stress with projected high water shortage by 2040.

"We must act now before it is too late," Poe said.

THE DAILY GUARDIAN

['The dumbest climate conversation of all time': experts on the Musk-Trump interview](#)

Trump talked about 'nuclear warming' while Musk said the only reason to quit fossil fuels is that their supply is finite

'The dumbest climate conversation of all time': experts on the Musk-Trump interview
Trump talked about 'nuclear warming' while Musk said the only reason to quit fossil fuels is that their supply is finite

Donald Trump and Elon Musk both made discursive, often fact-free assertions about global heating, including that rising sea levels would create "more oceanfront property" and that there was no urgent need to cut carbon emissions, during an event labeled "the dumbest climate conversation of all time" by one prominent activist.

Trump, the Republican US presidential nominee, and Musk, the world's richest person, dwelled on the problem of the climate crisis during their much-hyped conversation on X, formerly known as Twitter and owned by Musk, on Monday, agreeing that the world has plenty of time to move away from fossil fuels, if at all.

"You sort of can't get away from it at this moment," Trump said of fossil fuels. "I think we have, you know, perhaps hundreds of years left. Nobody really knows." The former US president added that rising sea levels, caused by melting glaciers, would have the benefit of creating "more oceanfront property".

Trump, who famously once called the climate crisis a "hoax", also said it is a "disgrace" that Joe Biden's administration did not open up a vast Arctic wilderness in Alaska to oil drilling, claimed baselessly that farmers are having to give up their cattle because of climate edicts and that a far greater threat is posed by the prospect of nuclear war.

"The one thing that I don't understand is that people talk about global warming or they talk about climate change, but they never talk about nuclear warming," Trump pondered during the exchange.

Musk, meanwhile, said it was wrong to "vilify" the oil and gas industry, the key driver of planet-heating pollution, and that the only imperative to ditch fossil fuels was that they will one day run dry.

"If we were to stop using oil and gas right now, we would all be starving and the economy would collapse," said Musk, who is also chief executive of the electric car company Tesla. "We do over time want to move to a sustainable energy economy because eventually you do run out of oil and gas.

“We still have quite a bit of time ... we don't need to rush and we don't need to like, you know, stop farmers from farming or, you know, prevent people from having steaks or basic stuff like that. Like, leave the farmers alone.”

Musk said the main danger of allowing carbon dioxide to build up in the atmosphere was that at some point it will become difficult to breathe, causing “headaches and nausea” to people. This would occur with CO₂ at about 1,000 parts per million of the Earth's atmosphere, more than double the current record-breaking concentrations.

Scientists have been clear that current global temperatures are hotter than at any point in human civilization, and probably long before this time too, which is causing mounting disastrous impacts in terms of heatwaves, droughts, floods and the destruction of the natural world.

Governments have agreed to restrain the global temperatures rise to 1.5C above the preindustrial era, with researchers warning of cascading catastrophes beyond this point. The world faces the steep task of rapidly cutting emissions in half this decade, and then to net zero by 2050, to avoid these worst impacts.

Despite Trump's claims of new beaches, sea levels are rising faster along the US coastline than the global average, with up to 1ft of sea level rise expected in the next 30 years – an increase that equals the total rise seen over the past century, US government scientists have found.

Instances of significant flooding have risen by 50% since the 1990s, with millions of Americans set to be affected as homes, highways and other infrastructure are inundated. In Florida, where Trump has his own coastal property at Mar-a-Lago, several insurers have decided to exit the state due to the increasing costs of flooding from the rising seas and fiercer storms.

Trump and Musk's discussion on the climate crisis, therefore, “spelunked down into entirely new levels of stupidity”, according to Bill McKibben, a veteran climate activist and co-founder of 350.org. McKibben wrote it was “the dumbest climate conversation of all time”.

“The damaging impacts of climate change, and in particular from more extreme weather events, such as wildfires, floods, heatwaves, more intense hurricanes, are actually in many respects exceeding the predictions made just a decade ago,” said Michael Mann, a leading climate scientist and author. “It is sad that Elon Musk has become a climate change denier, but that's what he is. He's literally denying what the science has to say here.”

Mann said that if CO₂ levels get so high breathing becomes difficult, then the impacts of the climate crisis “will be so devastating as to have already caused societal collapse. It's actually Elon's ill-informed and ill-premised statements that are causing headaches and nausea.”

Mann added that Trump's statement that sea level rise will lead to more oceanfront property "does not betray a lack of understanding of climate physics. It betrays a lack of understanding of grade school geometry."

During his election campaigning, Trump has routinely denigrated electric vehicles but has recently changed his stance towards them after an endorsement from Musk, who previously described himself as a moderate Democrat.

Trump, the former president convicted of 34 felonies, has vowed to undo the "lunacy" of Biden's climate policies should he return to the White House, with his presidency expected to unleash a glut of new oil and gas drilling, accelerate gas exports and remove the US, once again, from the Paris climate agreement.

THE MANILA TIMES

[Business groups back balanced energy policy](#)

By Janine Alexis Miguel

A number of business groups have backed the Department of Energy's (DoE) balanced energy policy, noting the need to balance energy security and affordability with climate change concerns to foster economic growth.

In a joint statement on Tuesday, the business groups led by the Management Association of the Philippines said the DoE's approach to fostering a balanced energy mix was vital given increasing energy demand.

"We, the undersigned business groups, applaud how the Department of Energy, under the leadership of Secretary Raphael P.M. Lotilla, has pursued an energy policy appropriate to the country's particular context, recognizing the importance of pursuing a balanced energy mix," they said.

"As an emerging market, the country must balance energy security and affordability with climate change concerns to support its economic progress."

The Philippines was said to have the third-lowest energy supply per capita in Southeast Asia, which highlights the urgent need to enhance power capacity.

Despite a government target to achieve a 50-percent renewable energy share by 2040, the group said a significant portion of the energy generation would still come from fossil-based sources.

"Energy insecurity is expensive. The power outage in Panay Island in January this year was estimated to have led to about P3.8 billion in economic losses for the province of Iloilo alone," it added.

The statement also cited a DoE advisory on coal-fired power plants that specifically targets new greenfield projects.

To recall, cause-oriented groups, including Sanlakas and Power for People Coalition, among others, filed a complaint against Lotilla for alleged violations of a coal moratorium policy.

The DoE, however, said the policy issued in December 2020 was not a total ban.

"The policy does not cover existing and operational coal-fired power generation facilities as well as any coal-fired power projects considered committed power projects," it said.

The department added that existing power plant complexes that already had firm expansion plans and existing land site provisions with signed and notarized land acquisition or lease agreement for the projects were also exempted.

The Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry earlier said that allegations from cause-oriented groups on violating a coal power project moratorium were unfounded.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Earth registers hottest July on record — US agency](#)

Last month was the hottest July on record, making it the fourteenth straight record-breaking month, a US environmental agency reported Monday.

The monthly report from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) also said that 2024 now has a 77 percent chance of being the warmest year on record.

The July calculation by NOAA contradicted the EU's Copernicus climate monitor, which -- using a different dataset -- calculated last month's average temperature as being slightly lower than July 2023.

However both agencies agree on the alarming trend of record-breaking heat, with the past year seeing month after month of new highs.

According to NOAA, whose historical data goes back 175 years, 2024 will definitely be one of the five hottest years on record.

In July, the global temperature was 2.18 degrees Fahrenheit (1.21 degrees Celsius) above the 20th century average of 60.4F (15.8C), the US agency said.

The month saw a series of heat waves across Mediterranean and Gulf countries, NOAA said.

Africa, Europe and Asia recorded their hottest July on record, while North America was the second hottest.

Ocean temperatures were their second warmest ever in July, according to NOAA -- the same reading as Copernicus.

Scientists at Copernicus noted last week that "air temperatures over the ocean remained unusually high over many regions" despite a swing from the El Nino weather pattern that helped fuel a spike in global temperatures to its opposite La Nina, which has a cooling effect.

Last year was also the warmest year on record.

"The devastating effects of climate change started well before 2023 and will continue until global greenhouse gas emissions reach net zero," she said Samantha Burgess, deputy director of Copernicus.

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