

ACEN unit secures approval for 943-MW wind project in Australia

ACEN AUSTRALIA, a subsidiary of ACEN Corp., has secured approval from the Independent Planning Commission (IPC) of New South Wales for its planned 943-megawatt (MW) wind project with a 320-MW energy storage facility.

"The approval is a significant milestone for ACEN, as we progress development of our 13-gigawatt pipeline across Australia," ACEN Australia said in a statement last week.

The IPC approval, dated June 11, includes conditions on water sourcing, soil and water management, and a decommissioning and rehabilitation plan.

The commission also addressed concerns raised by the community and stakeholders by setting conditions related to bushfire management and the continuation of aviation activities at nearby aerodromes.

"Given the fact the project is in

a relatively early cohort of projects for the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone (CWO REZ), the Commission finds its cumulative impacts with those of existing and approved projects to be acceptable," it said.

The company thanked the local community, the Warrumbungle Shire Council, and stakeholders "for their continued feedback and support throughout the development phase of the project."

The Valley of the Winds project will consist of up to 131 wind turbines and is expected to generate enough electricity to power about 500,000 homes annually.

EnergyCo, the infrastructure planner for the state's REZ, will develop a high-voltage transmission line to connect the project to the National Electricity Market. — **Sheldeen Joy Talavera**

FULL STORY



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By Sheldeen Joy Talavera

Reporter

THE DECISION to postpone the mandated increases in the biodiesel blend this year and next year is a welcome development if it is intended to alleviate price pressures from the cost of coco methyl ester (CME), an industry player said.

Leo P. Bellas, president of Jeti Petroleum, Inc., said that suspending the implementation of the B4 biodiesel blend, which contains 4% CME, might be intended to prevent a further increase in the price of the component.

"If the move to suspend the implementation of B4 would help prevent the price of CME from spiking further, this will be a wel-

come development to the downstream oil industry, given that the current cost of CME is almost close to three times the price of the base diesel fuel," he told *BusinessWorld*.

CME is a biodiesel component derived from coconut oil.

In a briefing on Friday last week, Energy Undersecretary Alessandro O. Sales said that the National Biofuels Board (NBB) passed a resolution to suspend the implementation of the B4 blend in October this year and B5 next year.

"This was decided because of the prevailing high cost of coconut oil, which is the principal feedstock for our coco methyl ester (CME) as the biodiesel component in the diesel being sold in the Philippines," he said.

Mr. Sales said that the price of coconut oil in the international

market at the start of the year was about \$1,100 per metric ton. This has increased to over \$3,000 per metric ton at the time of the NBB's decision.

"The price last week has now subsided a bit, just below \$3,000 per metric ton. But still, it is a significant increase, and the increase actually translates to a higher cost of diesel at the pump because of the mandate, and increasing the mandate now to B4 would add to this price pressure," he said.

While the suspension is likely to proceed as planned, Mr. Sales said that there will be a periodic review and "the intent to increase the blend still is there."

Eugene Erik C. Lim, president and chief executive officer of Top Line Business Development Corp. (Topline), said that the company's business operations remain the same, "pending any implementation from the DoE (Department of Energy)."

"We are ready for any changes from the regulators that will comply with Philippine standards," he said.

Meanwhile, Chemrez Technologies, Inc., the country's largest biodiesel manufacturer, said that the industry awaits "a more definite date" for the resumption of the B4 mandate from the board. However, it would need at least five months to prepare for implementation.

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