

Environmentalists ask House to go slow on WTE measure

ENVIRONMENTALISTS said the House of Representatives needs to reconsider the priority status of a Waste-to-Energy (WTE) bill, citing the need for further study to ensure sufficient protections for public health and the environment.

At the House Committee on Ecology on Wednesday, they called for rigorous examination of the bill amid disputes over the broader impact of incinerating solid waste.

Filed on Aug. 27 and currently with the House Committee on Energy, House Bill No. 4054, or the proposed Waste-to-Energy Act, seeks to promote the use of WTE technologies, positioning them as a potential solution to the solid waste problem.

WTE technologies convert solid waste into usable energy, such as electricity or heat, typically through thermal processes. In most models, plastic and other non-biodegradable waste form the bulk of the feedstock.

The proposed legislation, which is among the 44 priority bills of the 20th Congress, provides a framework to encourage the private sector and local government units to invest in WTE facilities, which are seen as a stable, local source of electricity.

Lea Guerrero, country director of Greenpeace Philippines, urged the House Committee on Ecology to act as a “neutral party” on the WTE bill, cautioning against treating it as a priority.

“I want to make a humble request to the Committee on Ecology to be a neutral party to the WTE bill, and not treat the WTE bill as a priority, but really look at examining and being a platform to really study the pros and cons of the technology,” she said.

Ms. Guerrero also cited the lack of upstream measures, such as regulations or bans on plastic products in WTE roadmaps. “When we’re talking about WTE, we are talking about plas-

tic waste. We are not going to burn biodegradable waste. But in the roadmap presented by the (Department of Environment and Natural Resources), there is no presence of upstream measures like regulations or bans for plastic products.”

She said having local governments commit to supplying plastic waste to incinerators could also create perverse incentives that weaken waste reduction programs.

Ms. Guerrero further raised concerns about weak air quality standards and the lack of regulation for hazardous chemicals found in some plastics.

“Are we ready for incinerating plastic waste... When our air quality standards are not up to (World Health Organization) standards?” she said.

Marvelous L. Misolas, executive director of the Environmental Studies Institute of Miriam College, called for more evidence WTE is not harmful.

“We need feasibility studies, rigorous studies here in the Philippines. We don’t have studies on the harmful effects of chemicals from WTE. We are not Sweden. We are not Norway. We don’t yet have the capacity to do this,” she said.

Zero-waste advocates likewise pushed for full implementation of Republic Act (RA) No. 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, instead of pursuing WTE projects.

Mother Earth Foundation chairperson Sonia Mendoza said that community-based waste reduction methods already offer low-emission solutions.

“With zero waste, segregation at source, segregated collection, composting, and recycling, there are almost no emissions. Instead of endorsing just the WTE bill, we need to endorse the implementation of RA 9003 and a true circular economy,” she said.

— **Vonn Andrei E. Villamiel**

DoF does not see corruption scandals affecting PHL ratings

THE PHILIPPINES is unlikely to face a credit rating downgrade as a result of its various corruption scandals, with macroeconomic fundamentals still intact, according to the Department of Finance (DoF).

“Personally, I find it remote that we actually have to go through a downgrade because the macroeconomic fundamentals, which are one of the major criteria for S&P, are still there. They’re intact despite this problem,” Finance Assistant Secretary Neil Adrian S. Cabiles said on the sidelines of a *BusinessWorld* event on Tuesday.

Executive Secretary and former Finance Secretary Ralph G. Recto has said that the multibillion-peso flood control scandal prevented the Philippines from winning



DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
a credit rating upgrade from S&P Global Ratings.

In November 2024, S&P affirmed its “BBB+” long-term credit rating for the Philippines, which is a notch below the “A” level grade targeted by the government.

Mr. Cabiles also noted that the corruption issue is just one factor credit raters consider.

Communications industry skills mentorship program scaling up with regional partnerships

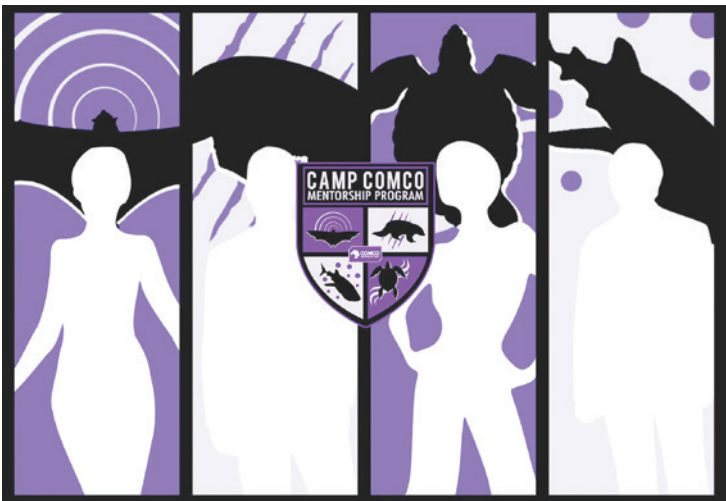
THE COMMUNICATIONS industry is increasingly challenged by skills gaps that are increasingly more apparent in the transition from school to workplace, COMCO Mundo said.

“There are many challenges in the communications industry. But one thing that we are focused on is bridging the gap between academia and the workplace,” according to Ferdinand L. Bondoy, COMCO Mundo League of Enterprises’ Interregional president.

“I think we need to help in terms of the readiness of the workforce, not only on the skills but also on the behavioral mindset and, of course, adapting to the culture,” he added.

As such, COMCO Mundo has rolled out an industry linkage program known as the Camp ComCo Mentorship.

“When we have apprentices or interns, or even fresh graduates who would like to join the workforce, we continue the education, so we’re giving them real-life situ-



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ations, practical applications in the communications industry,” he said.

“We’ve been doing that since we started in 2016, and we are in 23 cycles now,” he added.

He said there are plans to replicate the scheme around the region through the newly launched Southeast Asia Communications Agencies Network Alliance (SEA CAN Alliance).

“That’s something that they also want to adapt in their respective markets. So they also want that kind of mentorship, very integrated, so that the culture is inculcated as they start, and then they really grow in the field and the profession,” he said.

“I think we’re planning for something bigger for Camp ComCo. It won’t be just Philippine-

wide anymore; we are thinking of scaling that up across Southeast Asia,” he added.

On Wednesday, COMCO Mundo launched the SEA CAN Alliance, which brought together agencies from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

“With SEA CAN Alliance, we are building more than just a network; we are creating an ecosystem that connects local expertise with regional synergy, reinforcing excellence in the communications industry,” Mr. Bondoy, who is also the lead convenor of the alliance, said.

“Our goal is to empower independent agencies to grow together, share strengths, and deliver world-class communication campaigns rooted in authentic Southeast Asian perspectives,” he added.

The alliance is also seen to enable brands to scale their campaigns regionally while being culturally fluent and impactful. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

Surplus, from SI/1

The wider surplus could also signal more disciplined spending, Mr. Ricafort said in a Viber message.

Mr. Erece also noted that a surplus is not necessarily a positive sign and may signal poor budget efficiency.

“Surpluses mean that there are still cash or resources that can be used to further drive growth,” he said.

10-MONTH DEFICIT

For the first 10 months, the NG budget deficit sharply widened to P1.11 trillion from the P963.9-billion gap in the same period last year.

“The 10-month fiscal gap was underpinned by a 1.13% growth in revenues, amidst the non-recurrence of last year’s extraordinary nontax receipts, matched with a modest 3.9% expansion in expenditures,” the BTr said.

The Treasury said the end-October fiscal gap showed the “government’s continued implementation of priority programs and projects to accelerate inclusive economic growth and drive meaningful social transformation.”

“The year-to-date deficit remains in line with the government’s fiscal consolidation goal at 70.83% of the FY 2025 revised full-year target of P1.56 trillion,” BTr said.

State spending rose by 3.9% to P4.91 trillion in the January-to-October period. This was already 80.8% of the P6.08-trillion revised full-year expenditure program.

Primary expenditures rose by 2.45% to P4.19 trillion as of end-October, while interest payments went up by 13.24% to P723.2 billion.

Red onions, from SI/1

Sought for comment, Danilo V. Fausto, president of the Philippine Chamber of Agriculture and Food, Inc., said that while onion prices normally increase as the holiday season approaches due to tight supply, importers may also be deliberately delaying shipments.

“I think traders are trying to leverage for good prices, but I think they can do this only up to December. Shortage of supply could be deliberate to bring up prices,” he told *BusinessWorld* via Viber.

He added that some cold storage facilities still hold imported and local onions and will only release them starting next week.

According to the DA, all SPSICs must be used by Jan. 15, 2026, a deadline set to prevent

“The minimal growth in primary expenditures was affected by the contraction in infrastructure spending amid the ongoing probe on the DPWH’s flood control issues and review of project implementation,” it said.

Meanwhile, total revenue collection during the January-to-October period slipped by 1.13% to P3.81 trillion. The BTr said the cumulative collection was 84.25% of the P4.52-trillion revised full-year program.

Tax revenues rose by 7.45% to P3.47 trillion, which was already 82.28% of the P4.21-trillion target.

BIR collections went up by 7.45% to P3.47 trillion, accounting for 82.35% of the agency’s P3.22-trillion full-year target.

Customs collection inched up by 0.91% to P784.6 billion as of end-October. This was 81.84% of the revised P958.7-billion program for the year.

Nontax revenues plunged by 36.71% to P341.3 billion for the first ten months of the year, even as it has already exceeded the P301.5-billion full-year nontax revenue program by 11.37%.

Treasury income slipped by 6.75% to P209.6 billion as of end-October, while other offices’ income slumped by 58.12% to P131.7 billion.

In the coming months, Mr. Ricafort said there is still a “good chance” that the NG could hit the P1.56-trillion budget deficit ceiling by yearend.

“(This) could be made possible by further fiscal reform measures, tax reform measures, especially anti-corruption measures/reforms to increase the structural source of National Government revenues and to prevent corruption, wastage, leakages on the government expenditure side, as part of the overall priority on governance reforms,” he said.



PHILIPPINE STAR/WALTER BOLLOZOS

RED ONIONS are sold at a market in Manila in this file photo.

importers from hoarding clearances to influence supply and prices.

The schedule is also designed to ensure that arrivals of imported onions do not overlap with the domestic harvest, which could depress farmgate prices and hurt local farmers.

Wyeth Nutrition® marks 110 years of nourishing tomorrows at Museo Pambata’s Ang Katawan Ko exhibit

The health of a Filipino child is often a story of potential but looking at the reality on the ground, it is still being overshadowed by more complex issues. In a country where poor nutrition continues to be a great challenge, the need for a strong foundation for a child’s overall growth and development becomes even more urgent, making it crucial to choose the right nutrition partner — one that’s always been credible for years.

Wyeth Nutrition®, the maker of trusted milk brands such as Promil® and Bonakid Pre-School®, celebrates its 110th year of nourishing generations through innovation and science-based nutrition. Throughout the years, the company has remained committed to its mission of Nourishing Healthier Tomorrows — a vision brought to life through continuous innovation, quality, and advocacy for proper growth and development among Filipino families.

This year, Wyeth Nutrition® marks its milestone anniversary by joining hands with Museo Pambata in refreshing the museum’s iconic “Ang Katawan Ko” Room, a long-standing exhibit that helps children explore and understand the human body through play and discovery. The room features interactive sections that teach kids about different body parts such as the Lungs, Heart, Intestines, Brain, Bones, and Muscles.

Notably, the Brain Corner highlights the four key milestones of brain development: focus, memory, language, and problem-solving



Nanay na may laban and Gifted moms with their kids experience the Museo Pambata’s “Ang Katawan Ko” Room that features interactive sections where children can learn about different body parts and organs, and how they work.

— all vital elements in nurturing a gifted brain. Meanwhile, the Bones and Muscles section helps kids understand how they grow, maintain a healthy BMI (body mass index), or *Wastong timbang-tangkad*, so they are Laban-ready sa paglaki, to fuel their activities.

“We believe that hands-on learning and playing are a great way to teach our children, that’s why we found the perfect match with Museo Pambata. More than just an exhibit, we consider this installation to be a physical representation of Wyeth Nutrition’s commitment to nurturing healthier tomorrows of Filipino children,” Wyeth Nutrition® President and General Manager Arlene Tan-Bantoto said. “It’s a fantastic way to teach children how their body works, while also giving parents better awareness and knowledge to support their child’s growth.”

Ms. Tan-Bantoto noted that Wyeth Nutrition’s goal, beyond its products, is to provide solutions and learning resources that make complex topics like the human body fun and easy to understand.

Wilma Huang, president of Museo Pambata Foundation, Inc., expressed gratitude for



Wyeth Nutrition celebrates 110 years of nourishing healthier tomorrows for Filipino families through high-quality, and science-based products and championing environmental sustainability.



Wyeth Nutrition and Museo Pambata partner to bring new life to the museum’s iconic “Ang Katawan Ko” Room, advocating hands-on learning and play to learn about how their body works.



The iconic Ms. Big Mouth has also undergone a refresh, welcoming visitors to the “Ang Katawan Ko” Room to learn about the human body in a fun and exciting way.

the partnership: “We really want Museo Pambata to be a place where learning feels like an adventure. Opening the new and improved *Ang Katawan Ko* room to the public allows us to reach wider communities and is perfect for mothers committed to ensuring a healthier and better future for their kids. We’re truly grateful for Wyeth Nutrition’s leadership and innovation in making this possible.”

As a pioneer in young child nutrition, for 110 years, Wyeth Nutrition’s legacy is built on meaningful partnerships with parents, healthcare professionals, and stakeholders that encourage lifelong learning. Its deep dedication to nurturing the potential of *Batang May Laban*®, Gifted Kids, and Ascending Children is reflected

in its expertise in providing high-quality, innovative, and science-proven products.

The ceremonial unveiling and ribbon-cutting of the refreshed *Ang Katawan Ko* Room took place on Nov. 12, 2025, attended by executives from Wyeth Nutrition, Asalus Corp. (Intellicare) and Conception-Carrier Air Conditioning Company, who are among the valued patrons of the exhibit renovation project.

The newly revamped *Ang Katawan Ko* Room is now open to the public, inviting children and families to experience immersive and educational activities that bring to life the wonders of the human body — making learning fun, interactive, and memorable for every Filipino child.