

ERC starts issuing approvals for power plants' COCs

By MYRNA M. VELASCO

Filipino consumers must no longer be jittery of power supply interruptions during the summer months, as the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) has started delivering on its promised approval of certificates of compliance (COCs), or the operating licenses of power plants.

The regulatory body noted that the approvals it granted to generation companies (GenCos) were mixed of final COCs and provisional authorities to operate (PAO) for their electricity-generating assets.

It is being rambunctiously talked about in the industry that GenCos have been personally engaged by ERC Chairperson Agnes T. Devanadera that they must support the bid of its four suspended Commissioners for a temporary restraining order (TRO) from the Court, since after all, this will eventually benefit them on their continued operations.

The suspended ERC officials had been back to work since February 12 on the strength of a 60-day TRO from the Court of Appeals, and when they faced the media on that day, the Commission gave word that it will prioritize issuance of COCs to the GenCos.

Prior to the return-to-work of the suspended Commissioners, the industry was literally on the edge because about 5,500 megawatts of available capacities have either expired COCs or with pending application for operating licenses.

In a statement to the media, the ERC

noted that the COCs it issued included those on the 150-megawatt Panay Energy Development Corporation in Iloilo City; and the 25MW solar plant in Silay City.

Those that were given provisional approvals have been the 135MW Palm Concepcion Power Corporation facility; the 10.4MW diesel-fired power plant underpinning the energy needs of Nickel Asia Corporation; the 0.6144MW solar rooftop of Energy Development Corporation in Iloilo as well as its 1.0304MW solar rooftop installation at Gaisano Mall in Iloilo City; and the 150MW unit 2 of the Limay thermal facility of SMC Consolidated Power Corporation of the San Miguel Group.

ERC Chairperson Agnes T. Devanadera qualified that "it is imperative for a generation company to secure a COC or a

PAO from the ERC prior to its commercial operation."

She added that the regulatory body "recognizes the need for the immediate issuance of the COCs and PAOs to GenCos in order to ensure a reliable and sustainable power supply especially that there is an upsurge in power demand during the summer months."

The COCs, according to the ERC, are being issued to power generation companies in keeping with the mandate and policy prescriptions of the Electric Power Industry Reform Act.

And if a final COC cannot be issued yet pending some deliberation processes at the ERC, the regulatory body indicated that a provisional approval could be a legally binding option.

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