



PhP1.3B unused subsidies, dividends remitted to DOF; discontinued electrification projects to help bolster COVID-19 response

To support efforts to mitigate the impact of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID) pandemic, NEA remitted around P1.35 billion to the National Government (NG).

This, after the NEA Board of Administrators (BOA) approved the remittance of the P1,346,765,113 unused subsidies and dividends to the Bureau of Treasury, as requested by the Department of Finance (DOF).

Of the amount, P1.26 billion represents unutilized subsidy funds received in 2016 and earlier, and P85.71 million in dividends to the national government for 2019 operations.

The move was pursuant to Republic Act No. 11469 or the "Bayanihan to Heal as One Act."

Apart from this initiative, some P295-M unreleased funds for electrification programs was redirected to COVID-19 response.

NEA approved the discontinuance of P295-million worth of rural electrification programs this year. Said amount was composed of projects such as the P250-million appropriated for the implementation of the Electric Cooperatives



Power co-ops to assist education sector in shifting to 'new normal'

As the education sector shifts to a "new normal", NEA has directed the ECs to ensure reliable and sufficient electricity to households in rural communities.

Administrator Masongsong issued the statement as the Department of Education (DepEd) prepares to implement blended learning approach for students in the coming school year amid the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic.

"Electricity will play an important role in DepEd's blended learning scheme, which includes the use of television, radio, and online platforms. Also, the

need of fiber optic cables in the power distribution systems is now very relevant to the recent pronouncements of DepEd," Masongsong said.

The NEA chief said power distributors like ECs can also be internet service providers in their respective coverage areas, as some co-ops, particularly those in Mindanao, already have existing fiber-optic cable infrastructure.

He also urged the ECs to consider setting up microgrids and solar home systems to connect remote communities without access to electricity. ###

Emergency and Resiliency Fund (ECERF) Act and the P45 million for the establishment of Customer Management and Quick Response System for selected ECs.

Republic Act No. 11039, also known as the ECERF Act, seeks an orderly and continuing means of financial assistance to ECs in the form of grants for the immediate restoration or rehabilitation of damaged infrastructure after a fortuitous event or force majeure.

These were the programs recommended by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) for discontinuance to partially generate the required amount to help address the pandemic situation in the country. Under the 2020 General Appropriations Act (GAA), about P500 million was allotted to implement the ECERF Law, enacted in June 2018.