



Republic of the Philippines
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION
Regional Office III

OFFICE MEMORANDUM
No. 017, series of 2023

For : **ATTY. FREDERICK MIKHAIL I. FAROLAN**
Director IV, Legal and Legislative Service

Subject : **COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION REGIONAL OFFICE III
COMMENTS ON SENATE BILL NOS. 1371, 1620 AND HOUSE
BILL NO. 6128**

Date : **February 16, 2023**

With reference to the Memorandum dated February 09, 2023 with subject "Updated Notice of Meeting of the Senate Committee on Higher, Technical and Vocational Education (CHTVE)" and to Attend its Hybrid Joint Public Hearing to Provide Comments on SB Nos. 1371 and 1620 & HB No. 6128, the Commission on Higher Education III (CHEDRO-III) respectfully submits the following comments/inputs:

After due evaluation by the Technical Division, the CHEDRO-III fully supports the eventual passage into law of Senate Bill No. 1371 (An Act Establishing the Bataan Crop Research and Development Center on the Campus of the Bataan Peninsula State University in the Municipality of Abucay, Province of Bataan, and Appropriating Funds Therefor), Senate Bill No. 1620 (An Act Establishing the Bulacan State University System Integrating All Its Campuses, Appropriating Funds Therefor, and for other Purposes) and HB No. 6128 (An Act Establishing in the Municipality of Floridablanca, Province of Pampanga, A Campus of the Pampanga State Agricultural University, to be Known as the Pampanga State Agricultural University-Floridablanca Campus, and Appropriating Funds Therefor) with the following comments:

A. On Senate Bill No. 1371

- The Senate Bill No. 1371 is fully supported by the CHEDRO-III given that one of the flagship programs of BPSU is agriculture. It is predicted by agricultural experts and scientists that, in marginal agricultural areas with high poverty and food insecurity levels, the Province of Bataan included, current crops may lose viability as climate impacts intensify and agroecological zones shift. Against the current backdrop of increasing frequency of extreme events such as shifting temperature and rainfall patterns as well as higher incidence of pests and other diseases which have negatively affected crop yields in most parts of the

country, and the continuing threat of climate change which have directly impacted on food security, agriculture and particularly crop production, the establishment of the Bataan Crop Research Center at BPSU-Abucay Campus, is of pivotal importance;

- While incremental adaptation measures intended to build the resilience of existing crop production systems may be adequate in some places of the country, in other locations, including Bataan, it will require the eventual transformative adaptation measures to fundamentally change crop production systems geared at improving local, regional and national food security. This can only be assured and ensured if the Bataan Crop Research and Development Center is already in place;
- Realizing that such investments in crop research and development (R&D) through the establishment of the Bataan Crop Research and Development Center at BPSU-Abucay Campus will eventually yield important technological advancements/gains that will support incremental adaptation such as faster breeding times for more stress-resistant, productive and nutritious crops, these investments will enable transformative adaptation by improving farmers' access to new and more diverse crops, eventually creating a more robust and agile seed production and distribution systems in the Province of Bataan;
- Recognizing the strategic importance of the proposed center to be established at BPSU-Abucay Campus, the future pool of researchers in the Center may take the proactive lead in undertaking research studies on changing crop suitability patterns that will guide local and regional adaptation planning, identify opportunities to increase investments in high yielding crops, among others. They might also likewise consider studies on establishing creative markets and financial mechanisms for the adoption of new crops suitable for the future climate as well as studies on maladaptation in a socially equitable and gender-responsive innovative ways;
- Recognizing further that although there is a growing body of scientific research on the impacts of climate change on crop production, much more localized and specific analysis of crop viability and options for new crops is needed to inform adaptation planning in the Province of Bataan. This lens can be taken care of by the researchers in the proposed Center;
- Finally, and more importantly, the proposed Center will be the hub of incubation and innovation in agricultural research with emphasis on crop production and development that will serve as the laboratory for learning for the agriculture students of BPSU and its various stakeholders.

B. On Senate Bill No. 1620

- The Senate Bill No. 1620 calling for the establishment of the Bulacan State University System integrating all its campuses therein is another noteworthy legislative landmark in higher education, once successfully enacted into law. BULSU is one of the oldest state universities in the country. As a premier state university in Bulacan, the integration of its campuses into a system will serve as an innovation incubator. It can assist all its campuses in building a data driven strategic enrollment and student lifecycle management infrastructure needed to support higher education as it transits into the Fifth Industrial Revolution in Education (I. R. 5.0 or Education 5.0). This will serve as the engine of growth in further enhancing access, affordability, student success, and institutional sustainability with the end goal of developing outcomes-driven, competency-based, career-oriented professionals which are the complex demands of the workplace of the future. Recognizing further the inherent capacity of a system, BULSU as a system will be well-positioned to devise strategic plans that will allow its campuses to fulfill their distinct mission and build their unique strengths to better serve the communities where they are geographically situated.

C. On House Bill No. 6128

- Similarly, the House Bill No. 6128 calling for the establishment of Pampanga State Agricultural University in the Municipality of Floridablanca, Pampanga is likewise of economic and practical necessity. PSAU which maintains its main campus in Magalang, Pampanga, as the only state university in the province offering agricultural programs need to expand its educational reach and influence for the total economic development of the Province along the area of agriculture. Agriculture research and development is seen as a major force for productivity and diversification. On top of it, the offering of agricultural programs is certified and identified as one of the priority areas/niche areas of the Commission on Higher Education in Central Luzon.

The CHEDRO-III therefore commends the authors of SB No. 1371, SB No. 1620 and HB No. 6128. These are vital pieces of legislation that will further push regional and national development in all fronts, particularly along the neglected area of agriculture, which is supposed to the backbone of our national economy.

Should there be any queries or clarifications, the designated staff may directly coordinate with the CHEDRO-III Technical Division at telephone number (045) 455-1662/402-6659 or email at chedro3@ched.gov.ph.



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