

REFORM CARP MOVEMENT

c/o Centro Saka, Inc., Rm. 321 PSSC Building, Commonwealth Avenue,
Diliman, Quezon City

PRESS RELEASE

Farmers' Group prod Congress to enact CARP Extension with Reforms Bill

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Hundreds of farmers and advocates belonging to the Reform CARP Movement (RCM), a broad coalition calling for the extension and reform of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP), held a picket-rally last Wednesday at the House of Representatives during the House Committee on Agrarian Reform's public hearing on proposed bills to extend the agrarian reform program.

Composed of 30 organizations, Reform CARP Movement considers the Congressional deliberation as vital to saving the agrarian reform program from a likely termination in June. "In this crucial stage where the fate of CARP is in the hands of our legislators, the Committee should understand that land reform is not yet finished and that most of the agrarian reform beneficiaries have not received support services from the government," said PARAGOS-Pilipinas President Ka Jimmy Tadeo.

The public hearing aims to gather various positions of farmer stakeholders vis-à-vis different bills filed in Congress and eventually come up with a draft substitute bill in an effort to accommodate all the bills. Reform CARP Movement specifically pushed for the passage into law of House Bill (HB) No. 1257, which aims to extend CARP to seven years but with significant reforms. The reform measures under HB 1257, among others, include the revocation of non-redistributive schemes such as stock distribution option (SDO), voluntary land transfer (CLT), and leaseback arrangements. The bill also proposes the reorganization of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), the lead implementing agency of CARP.

HB 1257 was filed last year by AKBAYAN Party List Representative Riza Hontiveros-Baraquel. It was a result of more than a year of consultations with farmers groups and NGOs working on agrarian reform and rural development.

"Today is a make-or-break moment for the Committee (on Agrarian Reform). If they refuse to act immediately on the proposal to extend CARP implementation with the needed reforms, the Committee will only trigger increased rural poverty conditions and social unrest in the countryside," warned PKSK Chair Ka Ruperto Alerosa.

The public hearing followed in the wake of a series of provincial consultations held by the Committee in three provinces including La Union, Negros Oriental, and Davao del Sur. Reform CARP Movement had earlier commended the Committee for having objectively conducted the consultations. "The overwhelming support by several

farmers groups for CARP extension with reform manifested during the consultations should be enough reason to convince our legislators to hasten the passage of the bill. Now is the time for government to show that it is truly serious in protecting the rights and upholding social justice for the landless farmers and farm workers by enacting the CARP extension with reforms bill," said PKKK Chair Ka Trining Domingo.

For inquiries, please call Mr. Eugene Tecson at 9287464 or Mr. Dong Calmada at 4389762

Small farmer organizations: Alyansa ng mga Magsasaka sa Kanlurang Batangas (AMKB) * Katipunan ng Bagong Pilipina (KABAPA) * Makabayang Alyansa ng mga Magsasaka sa Pilipinas (MAKABAYAN-Pilipinas) * Negros Farmers Council (NFC) * Pambansang Kilusan ng mga Samahang Magsasaka (PAKISAMA) * Pagkakaisa para sa Tunay na Repormang Agraryo (PARAGOS-Pilipinas) * Pambansang Katipunan ng mga Samahan sa Kanayunan (PKSK) * Samahang 53 Ektarya ng Macabud * Non-government organizations: Agrarian Justice Foundation (AJF) * Center for Agrarian Reform Empowerment and Transformation (CARET) * Centro Saka Incorporated (CSI) * FOCUS on the Global South * Kaisahan Tungo sa Kaunlaran ng Kanayunan at Repormang Pansakahan (KAISAHAN) * Management and Organizational Development for Empowerment (MODE) * People's Alternative Study and Research Center (PASCRES) * Project Development Institute (PDI) * Philippine Ecumenical Action for Community Empowerment (PEACE Foundation) * Philippine Legislators' Committee on Population and Development (PLCPD) * Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM) * Rural Women Center-Centro Saka Incorporated (RWC-CSI) * Sentro ng Alternatibong Lingap Panligal (SALIGAN) * Coalitions: Peoples' Campaign for Agrarian Reform Network (AR Now!) * Kilusan para sa Pagsusulong ng Repormang Agraryo (KILOS AR) * Partnership for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development Services (PARRDS) * Paralegal Educational Skills Advancement and Networking Technology (PESANTech) * Pambansang Koalisyon ng Kababaihan sa Kanayunan (PKKK) * Sugar Workers Alliance of Negros (SWAN) * Party list organizations: AKBAYAN * AMIN * Individual supporters: Prof. Juan Amor Palafox (UP SOLAIR)