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More truckers to hike fees by 30%

- *The Inland Haulers and Truckers Association will soon issue an advisory for a trucking rate hike of 30% to 35%*
- *Confederation of Trucking Association of the Philippines members earlier issued an advisory for a 30% rate adjustment*
- *The increases follow the continuous increase in fuel prices*

TRUCKERS are increasing their rates by 30% to 35% as a result of soaring fuel prices.

Inland Haulers and Truckers Association (INHTA) president Teodoro Ger-vacio, in a text message to *PortCalls*, said they will increase trucking rates from 30% to 35%. An advisory will soon be issued to members as well as to INHTA clients

Supply Chain Management Association of the Philippines and Philippine Liner Shipping Association.

Members of the Confederation of Trucking Association of the Philippines (CTAP) have already jacked up their rates by 30% based on an advisory dated March 7. CTAP said the adjustment allows their members "to continuously provide an exceptional and quality service to their respective client."

The association asked for understanding from clients, noting its members have "been absorbing the burden of the weekly increase of fuel price" due to the "uncontrollable spiraling increase of fuel prices in the country."

The advisory said "another truck rate

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Shipping lines call PPA proposed Tier-2 port rates “insensitive”

- Philippine Liner Shipping Association members described as “insensitive” the Philippine Ports Authority’s proposed base rates for Tier 2 ports
- The ports will be bid out under the agency’s new terminal management policy
- They say the proposed Tier 2 rates are the same as Tier 3 rates being enforced without taking into consideration position papers submitted by oppositors

THE Philippine Liner Shipping Association (PLSA) strongly opposed implementation of the Philippine Ports Authority’s proposed base rates for Tier 2 ports to be bid out under its new terminal management policy.

Given headwinds created by the COVID-19 pandemic and exacerbated by the Russian-Ukraine conflict, “subjecting the economy to yet another round of increases ...to be borne by port stakeholders, cargo owners, shippers and shipping lines, is insensitive and with no fiscal support makes government impervious to the general public and to the consumers’ woes”, PLSA said in a position paper dated March 15.

In separate public hearings on March 11 and 14, PPA proposed tariff to be used by cargo-handling and terminal operators that will win Tier 2 port contracts under PPA’s Port Terminal Management Regulatory Framework (PTMRF).

Under the proposal, the tariff for domestic cargoes at Tier 2 ports will be the same as the tariff for Tier 3 ports “for uniformity as Tier 2 and Tier 3 mostly handle domestic cargoes.”

For foreign cargoes, PPA is proposing that the tariff be based on the current Cebu Port Authority foreign tariff plus an additional 10%.

PLSA said it is against the proposed Tier 2 rates as they are the same as Tier 3 ports’ rates, which “continue to be implemented despite the submission of position papers then opposing the same, despite vehement and unceasing dissent from shippers, local Chambers of Commerce, shipping lines, among others.”

PLSA claimed the then proposed Tier 3 rates in 2019 “were hastily subjected



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to public bidding and winning bidders markedly dominated and won between two select companies.”

Several industry organizations have asked for suspension of Tier 3 rates under PPA Administrative Order No. 10-2019 pending thorough consultation with stakeholders, as they claim the new rates are very much higher than previous rates. “We fear that cargo-handling rates at Tier 2 ports, having the same and equal CH rates currently implemented at Tier 3 ports, subject of public consultations held March 11 and 14, 2022, may be a ‘farce’,” PLSA stated.

The group said that during both public hearings on March 11 and 14, “PPA did not present any formula to show how the tariff rates were computed” for Tier 2 ports.

“As such, it is difficult to determine the reasonableness and the basis for the proposed uniform rates,” PLSA pointed out.

It said during the hearings, PPA explained that Tier 2 domestic cargo-handling rates were “copied” from existing cargo rates of Cagayan De Oro – the

highest in the country – while foreign rates are based on existing cargo-handling rates for foreign cargoes at Cebu port plus an additional 10%, of which 7% covers inflation and 3% extraordinary situations such as the pandemic.

“Otherwise, there was no sufficient explanation, no feasibility study to validate why CH rates at said ports were used as bases,” PLSA stated.

Moreover, PPA did not provide explanation on how the increase in existing rates at Tier 2 ports Iloilo and Davao vis-à-vis the proposed tariff will be supported by the provision of infrastructure, deployment of equipment and necessary gear to justify such increases, PLSA said.

The association said PPA did not disclose other relevant information during the public hearings, such as key performance indicators, economic market projections, and technical and equipment deployment scheduling, among others.

“In the spirit of transparency, PPA should have provided such information to PISA [Philippine Inter-island Shipping

Association]-PLSA whose members are among the major port stakeholders, noting the astronomical increases resulting from the proposed CH rates which will be borne by both shipping lines and cargo owners/shippers/consignees,” PLSA said.

Similar to the public hearing for Tier 3 ports tariff, PLSA said PPA did not present any guidelines on how cargo-handling rates at Tier 2 ports will be implemented.

PLSA noted that in its position paper for Tier 3 ports tariff submitted on September 9, 2019, it opposed the use of the term stevedoring, which bundled arrastre and stevedoring.

The group explained: “Such term sowed confusion among [shipping lines] and cargo owners, noting that stevedoring has always been a vessel-related charge thus paid for by the SLs (shipping lines). Upon the release of the guidelines, it was provided that SLs were mandated to collect all ‘stevedoring’ fees, ensure proper ‘accounting’ and remit the same to the Terminal Operator.

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PPA hikes by 8.5% 2021 remittance to government

- The Philippine Ports Authority remitted P4.08 billion representing dividends to the national coffers in 2021, up 8.5% from 2020
- The amount is equivalent to 60% of net income compared to 57% in 2020
- The port regulator completed 240 port projects from 2016 to 2021
- PPA and its mother agency, the Department of Transportation, will inaugurate at least 13 more completed port projects before June 30

THE Philippine Ports Authority has remitted a total of P4.08 billion in dividends to the national coffers for 2021, larger by 8.5% than its contribution in 2020.

The amount remitted to the Department of Finance on March 21 represents 60% of PPA’s P6.79 billion net income in 2021, the ports authority said in a statement.

PPA general manager Jay Daniel Santiago in a statement said PPA had increased the percentage of its dividend remittance from 57% in 2020 to 60% in 2021 “to help

the government in its COVID-19 response, as well as offer enough flexibility in the delivery of services as the country starts to recover from the pandemic.”

As a government-owned and controlled corporation, PPA was mandated to remit 50% of its annual net income to the national coffers after it was granted fiscal autonomy during the term of former president Corazon C. Aquino.

For the period 2016 to 2021, PPA remitted a total of P43.98 billion of taxes and dividends to the national coffers. It said the amount is 41.64% higher than the total contribution from 2010 to 2015.

Of that amount, P21.43 billion represented dividends, which were 159% higher than the P8.267 billion remitted from 2010 to 2015.

In terms of taxes, PPA paid P22.55 billion from 2016 to 2021, greater by 70% than the 2010 to 2015 figure.

The state-owned agency also reported P19.87 billion in total expense to complete 240 port projects from 2016 to 2021.

“PPA is in good standing right now due to the institutional changes implemented by the current administration to fulfill

the mandate of the agency to improve and build ports to properly connect the archipelago and spur economic growth among the islands,” Santiago said.

PPA recorded P34.90 billion in net income from 2016 to 2021, 95.57% higher than the net income for 2010 to 2015.

Before June 30 this year, PPA and its mother agency, the Department of Transportation, are set to inaugurate at least 13 more completed port projects.

These projects include Currimaog Port in Ilocos Norte, which is ready to handle bigger cruise ships; Bulan Port in Sorsogon, an alternative jump-off point to Masbate and Cebu; Banago Port in Negros Occidental, which will provide more capacity for the burgeoning cargo traffic to and from the area; ports of Baybay and Palompon in Leyte, to enable greater trade and tourism connectivity to Cebu and Bohol; and the completion of the passenger terminal buildings in Batangas and Calapan, soon-to-be two of the biggest terminals in the country.

“The projects that were completed also prepare the country to take in the

shipping and logistical demands of both local and international players in the short- to mid-term as the world transitions to the normal,” Santiago noted.

He said the “remaining days of this administration are now focused on further streamlining systems and procedures to achieve seamless interconnectivity not only of the ports but also its processes, resulting in efficiency across all aspects of PPA operations.”

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DHL Express rolls out new xray at NAIA

- DHL’s Manila airport office installs new screening equipment
- Six others will soon be added in the Manila, Ortigas and Cebu offices
- The equipment features high image quality and threat detection alert capabilities
- It can detect a broad spectrum of drugs and dangerous goods

DHL Express has installed a new x-ray for its Manila office at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport that scans incoming and outgoing shipments at a faster rate and with greater precision.

DHL Express Philippines country manager Nigel Lockett in a statement said the equipment is the first for the year, with six more to be added in Manila, Ortigas, and Cebu.

The company said the x-ray’s high detection accuracy will help ensure any attempt to ship illegal items and dangerous commodities across its network is spotted quickly. This also supports the Philippine Bureau of Customs’ mandate to strengthen border security.

“We take our role in border security very seriously and ensure that we remain a secure and trusted network for our customers,” Lockett said.

The equipment, which complies with domestic and international regulations, is a high-performance 1,010 x 1,010mm tunnel dual-view screening system with exceptional image quality and threat detection alert capabilities, DHL said.

This type of equipment can be found in a variety of DHL facilities, Lockett noted.

It can display pictures in Classic 4-color and the new proprietary Spectrum 4-color (SP4) options, providing higher image quality and enabling customs compliance officers to detect

non-compliant shipments with speed and precision.

DHL Express said the equipment is also designed to detect a broad spectrum of explosives and drugs in realtime during scanning by highlighting a possible hazard on the X-ray picture.

The new dual-mode feature aids in the accurate and quick identification of organic materials, whether in range mode, which highlights areas based on the range selected by the operator, or in interactive mode, which gives the operator the option to display areas based on the value of the pixel, the company said.



Shipping lines call PPA...

Continued from page 2

“We are constrained to strongly oppose this again as SLs should not be made a collecting agent for the payment of stevedoring rates nor take out from the cargo owners/shippers the option to directly pay for CH fees due them.”

Further, PLSA said PPA did not present a regulatory impact assessment to show the impact of such increases on port stakeholders, in particular, and on consumers in general, as required by Republic Act No. 11032 or the Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2018.

PLSA noted “any and all increases attendant to any PPA-mandated increase, including costs for repositioning empty containers of shipping lines, costs due to the imbalance in trade volume southbound vis-à-vis northbound, costs in delays owing to port congestion and vessel queues due to the inefficient implementation of port development—dreaded to most likely happen at the bidding for Iloilo ports – and as such shipping lines will be constrained to pass on all increases to its clients, customers, cargo owners, consignees, forwarders

and shippers.”

PLSA also shared its position on the conduct of biddings under PTMRF, pointing out that “biddings should be made more transparent, observers invited at the least, shall include concerned stakeholders with technical knowledge of port operations.”

It added that the award of contract should not be based on the highest concession fee only among the bidders but rather on the bid most responsive to requirements of port infrastructure and minimum cargo-handling rate to be charged to port users, effectively balancing cost, quality of service and efficiency.

The proposed tariff for Tier 2 ports is still subject to the evaluation by the PPA Board technical working group and for approval of the PPA Board.

PPA in 2020 started bidding out Tier 3 ports under its PTMRF, which outlines guidelines for awarding terminal management contracts, and prescribes categorizing investments into six tiers to make it easier to determine the investment arrangements of a port. – **Roumina Pablo**

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Skyway open to buses, delivery vans from April 1

- *Starting April 1, the Skyway system will be open again to public utility buses and closed van delivery trucks*
 - *All Class 2 vehicles--primarily buses and closed vans exceeding seven feet in height and with valid Autosweep RFID stickers—may use the entire elevated Skyway system*
- (SOMCO).
- The Skyway system comprises Skyway Stages 1, 2, 3, and Skyway extension.
- Buses and closed vans were previously restricted from using the Skyway for safety reasons. The construction of the South Luzon Expressway (SLEX) elevated extension in Muntinlupa City required the use of a temporary steel access ramp at the Alabang viaduct – which was only

Starting April 1, the Skyway system will be open again to public utility buses and closed van delivery trucks.

All Class 2 vehicles, which are primarily buses and closed vans exceeding seven feet in height and with valid Autosweep RFID stickers, will be allowed on the entire elevated Skyway system, according to operator Skyway O&M Corporation.

(SOMCO).

The Skyway system comprises Skyway Stages 1, 2, 3, and Skyway extension.

Buses and closed vans were previously restricted from using the Skyway for safety reasons. The construction of the South Luzon Expressway (SLEX) elevated extension in Muntinlupa City required the use of a temporary steel access ramp at the Alabang viaduct – which was only intended for light vehicles.

The re-opening of the elevated expressway to Class 2 vehicles follows completion of major construction works on Skyway Stage 3 and Skyway extension.

SOMCO said buses can enter and pass through the Skyway elevated sections spanning Alabang to Bicutan (Stage 2), Bicutan to Buendia (Stage 1), and Buendia to Balintawak (Stage 3) starting April 1;

soon they may also be able to access the new SLEX elevated extension and Ninoy Aquino International Airport Expressway (NAIAX).

Dedicated lanes for Class 2 vehicles will be provided in the following locations to avoid long queues in toll plazas:

Quezon Avenue northbound (NB)/
southbound (SB)

- Main Plaza Sucat area
- Quirino NB/SB exit
- Dr. A. Santos
- Doña Soledad
- Buendia NB/SB
- Del Monte NB/SB
- G. Araneta NB entry
- Nagtahan NB/SB
- NAIAX

Modified 4- or 6-wheeler and closed delivery vans are not allowed on the elevated ramps.

Moreover, a speed limit of 60 kilometers per hour will be strictly enforced.

Class 2 vehicles should also ensure their Autosweep RFID has enough load. Only buses and closed vans with sufficient Autosweep RFID balance can be accommodated at the elevated Skyway; vehicles with insufficient load must use the at-grade section.

"With the re-opening of the Skyway to public buses and select transport trucks, we're hopeful that many of our countrymen from both north and south can benefit from the convenience provided by the entire Skyway system," said Ramon Ang, president of San Miguel Corp., the parent firm of SOMCO.

“This is an option for commuters as well as public transport services, who would like to have a faster, more direct, or even point-to-point access to their destinations. This will also help to further decongest our public roads, given that we are now back to pre-pandemic levels of traffic,” Ang added.

New route to Meycauayan and Marilao bypassing congested artery opens

- An alternative route to and from Meycauayan and Marilao, Bulacan, opened on March 21
- The route helps decongest traffic in the narrow artery linking those two towns
- It uses a section of North Luzon Expressway and allows motorists coming from Paso de Blas, Valenzuela City to go all the way to Lias, Marilao, avoiding the congestion

A new two-lane road that will serve as an alternative route to and from Meycauayan and Marilao, Bulacan is now formally open, according to tollway company NLEX Corp.

Built by the Department of Public Works and Highways, the new service road opened on March 21. It occupies a portion of the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX) right-of-way covering Barangay Lias in Marilao, Bulacan.

NLEX Corp. said the project aims to improve the Bulacan road network, boosting economic activities in the province and enabling the public to experience travel convenience.

The opening of the service road is also seen to help ease traffic on the Meycauayan-Marilao corridor as it bypasses MacArthur Highway and other congested streets.

Now, motorists coming from Paso de Blas, Valenzuela City can go all the way to Lias, Marilao by using the service road.

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Duterte signs amended...

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law the easing of foreign equity restrictions will attract more global investors modernize several sectors of public service and improve the delivery of essential services.”

He said RA 11659, together with the amended Foreign Investments Act, will help stimulate the economy, and is expected to generate more jobs, improve basic services, and allow for the exchange of skills in technology.

Various business groups, industry organizations, and government agencies have been pushing for the passage of the bills amending the PSA to promote foreign direct investments and boost the country's post-pandemic recovery.

The American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (AmCham) on Monday (March 21) said the signing of the amended PSA and the earlier enactment of investment-easing measures made the Duterte administration “very business-friendly.”

The Joint Foreign Chambers described the amended PSA as a game-changing law.

Safeguard measures

One of the safeguard features of the law authorizes the President to suspend or prohibit any proposed merger or acquisition transaction, or any investment in a public service that will grant control to a foreigner or a foreign corporation.

Another safeguard provision prohibits foreign state-owned enterprises from owning capital in any public service classified as public utility or critical infrastructure.

Foreign nationals are also not allowed to own more than 50% of the capital of entities engaged in the operation and management of critical infrastructure, unless their country accords reciprocity to Philippine nationals.

To ensure all public services in the country comply with the terms of their certificates and the relevant rules and regulations of the appropriate administrative agencies, the measure includes penal provisions with flexible amounts of fines to accommodate future developments.

House Ways and Means Committee chairman Joey Salceda, sponsor of the bill, earlier said the Philippines may attract up to P299 billion in new investments in the next five years once the amended PSA becomes law.

Senator Grace Poe, Senate committee on public services chairperson and bill sponsor, said in a February statement: “By easing the foreign equity restrictions in such industries, we are confident that our economy, which is lagging even behind our ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) neighbors, will thrive and grow, and that more jobs will be created for our kababayans (countrymen).”

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PEZA seeks locators' exemption from Comelec transport ban on regulated chemicals

- The Philippine Economic Zone Authority is asking the Commission on Elections to immediately issue ecozone locators permits to transport regulated chemicals and raw materials
- The Election Code bans the transport of guns, ammunition and hazardous chemicals during the election period for security reasons
- PEZA says locators that use the regulated chemicals have a good track record and have never been involved in any election-related violence
- Nine PEZA-registered enterprises are awaiting approval of their applications
- Operations of 2 enterprises have shut since late February and another two had used up their chemical supplies on the first week of March

to immediately issue to locators a Certificate of Authority to Transport (CA-TT) regulated chemicals and raw materials in order to avert factory shutdowns.

The Election Code bans the transport of guns, ammunition and hazardous chemicals during the election period for security reasons.

PEZA Director General Charito Plaza said she has received reports from locators that their request to transport chemicals had been denied by Comelec.

Nine PEZA-registered enterprises are awaiting approval of their permit applications. Two companies have shut their operations since the last week of February and another two had already used up their chemical supplies on the first week of March.

Plaza noted PEZA locators using regulated chemicals have a good track record as manufacturers and exporters and have never been involved in any election-related violence.

She added she hopes Comelec will "review the CA-TT application process especially in our ecozones so that transport of regulated chemicals will not stop or be

delayed during the election period."

PEZA-registered manufacturing companies use chemicals in their operations and are regulated by the Philippine National Police Firearms and Explosives Office (PNP-FEO). Such chemicals include sulfur powder, nitric acid, hydrogen peroxide and potassium permanganate.

While the use, importation, transport, or manufacture of these chemicals is already covered by PNP-FEO permits, Comelec each election season issues a resolution requiring duplicate permits through the Committee on Ban on Firearms and Security Concerns.

On March 16, Plaza met with newly appointed Comelec chairman Saidamen Balt Pangarungan to request exemption

of PEZA-registered enterprises from the election ban.

"Based on PNP-FEO records, manufacturers using regulated chemicals only form a small fraction of permit applicants during the election period, compared with the gun or ammunition applications," Plaza pointed out.

She said Pangarungan "expressed his firm support in addressing the competitiveness issues faced by manufacturers and buyers of regulated chemicals" and has "vowed to establish a transparent and expeditious processing of CA-TTs."

Plaza added PEZA also sought the help of the Department of Trade and Industry and the Anti-Red Tape Authority to hasten release of CA-TT permits.

New route to Meycauayan and Marilao bypassing congested...

Continued from page 5

The project is also expected to improve traffic flow at the Meycauayan Interchange on peak hours and provide a convenient alternative route for motorists, especially those traveling between Iba, Libtong, Malhacan, and Pandayan in Meycauayan and Lias, Ibayo, Saog, and Lambakin in Marilao.

THE Philippine Economic Zone Authority has asked the Commission on Elections

Webinar explores MatchBox platform benefits to landside box transport

- MatchBox Exchange's open-market digital platform allows logistics companies to reuse and exchange empty containers with instant approval from shipping lines
- It operates as a neutral platform where sharing of data is integrated between MatchBox Exchange and multiple shipping lines
- All registered users have access to availability of shipping containers in one place

platform which seeks to make landside container transport more efficient and economical.

MatchBox Exchange's open-market digital platform allows logistics companies to reuse and exchange empty containers with instant approval from shipping lines. This helps eliminate the need to transit through container depots, MatchBox said in a statement.

Bottlenecks at container yards is a recurring challenge faced by the container transport industry in the Philippines, MatchBox said. Drivers spend up to 24 hours queuing up at the yards, which not only impacts productivity but comes at a cost to trucking companies, freight forward-

ers, and importers and exporters. Due to the congestion, businesses are forced to incur additional charges, placing the industry as a whole, in a disadvantaged position.

Yeya Berjaoui, CMA CGM Philippines general manager, said customers can maximize productivity and savings through the platform by using its exchange feature: "For instance, importers and exporters are able to send in their requests for exchange of empty containers with 24/7 instant approval. This allows our customers to optimize their container transport planning, enabling them to save on transport costs and time, ease congestions as well as reduce CO2 emissions since unnecessary trucking trips are minimized."

MatchBox Exchange launched its services in the Philippines in May 2020 in partnership with CMA CGM. Having worked with the CMA CGM Group for over five years across the Asia Pacific, the alliance has yielded 75,000+ total bookings.

Operating as a neutral platform where sharing of data is integrated between multiple shipping lines and MatchBox Exchange, all registered users have access to availability of shipping containers in one place, proving to add value to all key players in the container transport industry by providing opportunities to save on costs and time while having a positive impact on the environment.

MATCHBOX Exchange and CMA CGM Philippines recently hosted a webinar that highlighted Matchbox Exchange's digital

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