FOURTH TWG MEET ON SINGLE-USE PLASTIC FOR CONGRESS

Monday, 01 March 2021

STC attended the 4th Congressional TWG Meeting on Single-Use Plastic Bags on March 1, 2021 consolidating some 61 bills on the issue. This is the most serious effort by the Lower House to come up with a Law that guides LGUs regarding the treatment of used plastic bags as a pollutant in our seas, waterways and landfill. Three presentations filled up the more-than-three hour virtual Meet. First one was by EU-ASEAN Green Technology Expert Dr. Evelyn B. Taboada of the University of San Carlos illustrating the Plastic Materials Flow Analysis and stressing that the Philippines ranks #3 as biggest contributor to ocean pollution worldwide. She also showed accountability by the local corporations as those whose packaging floats out the most to sea. Second presentation was done by Plastic Credit Exchange's (PCEx) Nanette Medved-Po on the worldwide movement of co-processing as having the most comprehensive solution to the problem of improper disposal of plastic bags/packaging and this having the backing of major manufacturers worldwide. A similar concept was presented by World Wildlife Fund's (WWF) Atty. Ina Cojuangco Guingona on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR). As the session was about to end, STC commented on the big amounts of fines the DTI and DENR will charge violators if retailers don't charge P5 for new plastic bags if customers don't return so-and-so amount of used plastic bags (as proposed by this consolidated Bill). He politely asked who will enforce this? Inspectors of the DTI or the DENR? He said are the charges here practicable? Can they be carried out effectively? Corollary to this, has any retailer been charged with the fines attached to the No-Shortchange Law? With that, this TWG will resume again to discuss these unresolved issues.