

Press Release - March 21, 2024

MAP urged State of Traffic Calamity Declaration in MM in a House Committee Hearing

The Management Association of the Philippines (MAP) Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, represented by Committee Chair Eduardo Yap, said that a calamity with estimated damage of P1 Billion qualifies for declaration of a state of calamity accompanied by the release of emergency state relief measures.

This traffic congestion in Metro Manila (MM) has been so severe that an estimated P3.5 Billion daily economic loss is being incurred continuously, and therefore more than merits a declaration of a state of calamity in MM by the President who may avail of emergency powers to provide relief measures, Mr. Yap said.

The MAP was invited to the March 20, 2024 public hearing of the House Committee on MM Development to speak on its Holistic Plan to address the ongoing severe traffic congestion problem, and HB#4363 providing emergency powers to the President to address the severe traffic problem, among other matters. The hearing was chaired by Rep. Rolando Valeriano, 2nd Dist., City of Manila.

The MAP Holistic Plan calls for such a declaration, albeit a traffic crisis, and a new management task force headed by a Traffic Czar to undertake a comprehensive program consisting of short, medium and long-term measures to provide the soonest relief with administrative and management measures, and long-term sustainability through structural interventions, particularly transportation infrastructures focused on mass public transportation, Yap further said.

Private EVs or electric vehicles, a matter also discussed in the said hearing, should be encouraged as laudable, being proposed by Bataan Rep. Albert Garcia, as they do not pollute the air, and for this purpose, public buses on the EDSA Busway be progressively converted to electric power, Mr. Yap suggested.

But private EVs and other private vehicles should not be allowed to use the EDSA Busway as it is dedicated for public buses. This Busway is unlike high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane where other private vehicles are allowed. To allow EVs on the Busway will violate globally accepted standards and best practices which are intended to ensure its efficiency as a public conveyance facility. Allowing other vehicles will congest the Busway and degrade its efficiency to the prejudice of commuters as their commute will be subjected to delay, Mr. Yap added.

This position against other vehicles on the Busway is consistent with MAP policy reflected on a public statement issued on December 16, 2022 when a similar proposal was made.

To incentivize private EVs, which is the laudable objective of Rep. Garcia, Mr. Yap suggested that EVs be instead exempted from the payment of road congestion charges when such a system of travel demand management, envisioned under the NEDA National Transport Plan, is finally instituted on congested private car lanes in major roads, such as EDSA.

The ideal time to institute this travel-demand-regulating measure is when the Busway and the MRT3 have been privatized and upgraded to global standards of efficiency. Such a situation will present an attractive mobility option, other than private vehicles, that will encourage motorists to shift to mass transit and spare motorists from incurring road congestion user charge while helping to decongest traffic.

The EDSA Busway is a private sector advocacy initiated under MAP and FINEX by Mr. Yap in 2015 and implemented on June 1, 2020 by the DOTr after persistent personal advocacy effort over 5 years. Hence, the Busway is being closely monitored by MAP to ensure compliance with global standards and best practices.

Mr. Yap said that current efforts at building big ticket transportation infrastructure and certain traffic measures will contribute to traffic decongestion, but all these disparate measures must be under a comprehensive plan, such as MAP's Holistic Plan, to effectively address this multi-decade long traffic congestion problem which is worsening by the year.



EDUARDO H. YAP

Chair, MAP Transportation and Infrastructure Committee