

MiC	MATICHON INFORMATION CENTER	Subject Heading :
Source :	The Nation	
Date : 5 OCT 2018	Page : 28	No : 61322643

RP energy chief backs bid for solar franchise

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
ASIA NEWS NETWORK
MANILA

PHILIPPINES' Energy Secretary Alfonso Cusi has expressed support for a legislative franchise for Solar Para sa Bayan Corp. (SPSB) as he noted that the public's perception of electric cooperatives needed rethinking.

"I want this to be very clear, the [SPSB franchise] that is being [sought in Congress], to me that is a positive disruptive activity. DOE's position is we should rethink our mind-set about [cooperatives]. What are the functions of co-ops? They have a franchise in their respective areas. Their franchises [come] with responsibilities. They have to energize their entire franchise area," Cusi said.

SPSB has applied for a non-exclusive franchise to extend its services to other parts of the Philippines that want alternative choices for electric service.

Cusi told reporters a franchise for SPSB was "a positive disruptive activity" as it would help hasten the achievement of the government's goal of providing electricity to about two million households that do not yet enjoy power services.

The government is aiming at attaining 100-percent electrification by 2022.

"We cannot let Filipinos wait forever. There are efficient cooperatives. There are inefficient cooperatives. Are we going to allow Filipinos to suffer because of inefficient cooperatives? I don't think that is right," he said.

SPSB founder Leandro Leviste and the company's competitors — including rural power distributors — are locked in a publicity war about whether or not Congress should grant SPSB a national franchise.

Electric cooperatives are concerned that a franchise-armed SPSB would enable the company to encroach on their franchise areas.