

Committee on Appropriations Vice-Chairman and Congressman Celso L. Lobregat warned the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) of facing an ombudsman case if they will carry-on with the transfer of its regional office which is presently based here in Zamboanga City to Pagadian.

This was the stern warning given by Lobregat during the recent budget hearing in congress to DAR Secretary Rafael Mariano, who was caught un-aware of the present moratorium on the implementation of such regional transfer which emanated from the time of former President Gloria-Macapagal-Arroyo but was halt by the previous administration under President Benigno Aquino III.

Congressman Lobregat invoked the present status quo of all regional offices based in Zamboanga City to remain here, since Memorandum Circular No.11 is still in effect and was not lifted yet by the Duterte administration.

“I am warning you Secretary Mariano, if you are going to transfer to Pagadian, you will be facing an ombudsman case,” Lobregat said.

The solon also asked Secretary Mariano to order his regional director here in Region IX Julita Ragandang to write National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) to recall their earlier resolution and endorsement for the transfer of DAR office from Zamboanga City to Pagadian in order not to suffer the consequences of their acts in violation to the circular which is still in effect.

When asked about such issue during the hearing, DAR IX Regional Director Julita Ragandang was also interpellated by Congressman Lobregat about the status of their pending transfer.

Ragandang told the House Budget Committee that there is a resolution of the Regional Development Council IX, to put up a budget/funding for the construction of the office of the regional director of DAR in Pagadian, Zamboanga del Sur. However, the said plan was miscarried due to inavailability of funds from its national office.

Ragandang also told the panel that only five of the regional offices here have completed their buildings in Pagadian and most of the regional offices are still holding office in Zamboanga City at present.

Congressman Lobregat said that he will not be proposing nor approving any budget for the transfer of DAR office to Pagadian either.

Due to this development, Secretary Mariano has immediately ordered Ragandang and his head office staff present during the budget hearing last week to write an official communication to NEDA stressing the cognizance of Memorandum Circular No.11 which is still in effect.

Memorandum Circular No.11 which was issued on December 22,2010 – directs a moratorium on the transfer of regional offices of all department and agencies from Zamboanga City to Pagadian City pursuant to Executive Order No.249, series of 1990.

Section 1 of such circular states that all departments, bureaus and other government agencies are enjoined to SUSPEND the transfer of their offices in Region IX from Zamboanga City to Pagadian City pending the study on the matter and consultations with relevant stakeholders. The Regional Offices that are already in Pagadian shall continue to operate thereat.

Executive Order 249, reorganized the administrative regions in Mindanao to guarantee the effective delivery of the field services of government agencies by taking into consideration the formation of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. – Dexter Yap