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PCCI seeks review of Tourism Act IRR

By **BERNIE CAHILES-MAGKILAT**

Some private stakeholders in the tourism industry have asked for a review of the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of the Tourism Industry Act saying it was done in haste and none of their critical recommendations have been taken into consideration.

Samie Lim, chairman of the tourism committee of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI), said they were never consulted when the final IRR was formulated. "They basically spent two-thirds

of the IRR on how to reorganize the Department of Tourism, the Philippine Tourism Authority, the Philippine Retirement Authority but there was nothing on the policy on tourism," Lim said.

Upon the call of Tourism Secretary Ace Durano for inputs from the private sector, Lim said the PCCI organized a big event to gather industry stakeholders and even experts from abroad with the help of the German Technical Cooperation to gather their inputs for the IRR of the new law.

Unfortunately, Lim said none of their recommendations were consid-

ered and some sectors are not invited to today's (Wednesday) Tourism Congress, which the law has mandated to be convened.

Lim even said that under the new law, Durano has 30 days to convene the Tourism Congress, which 35 members have the power to appoint the composition of the different boards related to the industry including the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA), the Philippine Retirement Authority, Philippine Tourism and Promotion Board, Duty Free Shopping of the Philippines, the Philip-

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PCCI...

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pine Amusement and Gaming Corp., the National Park Development Committee and the Philippine Commission on Scuba Diving, among others.

"As of now the PCCI and the Philippine Retailers Association have not been invited yet. We, in PCCI, have been doing nationwide tourism

promotion and we wonder if again this is again a controlled group that comprised the Tourism Congress," said Lim.

Lim said that PCCI is an umbrella organization with involvement in tourism and suppliers of the industry while the PRA has a stake in the tourism industry because 60 percent of the expenditures of tourists go to shopping.

"We are against this rush because

Durano has until Dec. 10 yet to convene the Tourism Congress. Apparently the industry was caught flat footed when we are supposed to view first the final draft of the IRR," Lim said.

Today's Tourism Congress is supposed to come up with Constitution and By-Laws and officers and choose people in the different tourism boards, but the private sector stakeholders feared of having a "stamp pad" board.