

MALAYA (May 22, 2006, Monday)

PCCI prefers new player for N. Harbor

BY PRIAM NEPOMUCENO

THE PHILIPPINE Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) said it would be better if a new player will win the right to operate and manage Manila's North Harbor.

Donald Dee, PCCI president, said it would be better for competition if another operator managed the country's busiest port.

He said it is not advisable for a shipping line to control the port.

Harbour Centre Port Terminals, Inc. (HCPTI), a relative newcomer in the port logistics industry, last week notified the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) it will bid for the North Harbor.

Dee said it would be better for Harbour Centre to focus on its existing business even if Harbour had already formed a consortium to bid for the North Harbor.

Asian Terminals, Inc. (ATI) and International Container Terminal Services, Inc. (ICTSI) earlier said that they are not interested in bidding for North Harbor.

The Exporters Development Council and Distribution Management Association of the Philippines (DMAP) favor the same idea.

Under the proposal, PPA could immediately bid out terminal one covering piers 14 to 16 and the marine shipway while terminal two, covering piers 4, 6 and 8 to 12 can be bid out later and meantime the PPA should continue operating this terminal for older ships and as a minor terminal for both roll on-roll off and lift on-lift off vessels, while undertaking a thorough review and benchmarking.

"The privatization should be done in stages to avoid over-modernization, over-investment and overcapacity if we go by the single terminal concept. This would not be beneficial to consumers. Competition in terminal one is viable on the basis of current volume," Dee added.