

MALAYA, (May 26, 2006, FRIDAY)

Port users want new operators at N. Harbor

PORT USERS want a new operator for the North Harbor saying the entry of Asia Terminal Inc. or Harbour Centre would not provide competition.

The Export Development Council said the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) wants to see "real competition" in the domestic port operations.

"We want to see real competition in the market and if existing players will come in that may not be a good competition," said Enrico Basilio, co-chairman of a committee on transportation and logistics of the Export Development Council.

Basilio, who is also a professor at the University of Asia and the Pacific (UA&P) School of Economics, said the PCCI stressed this in a letter to the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA).

He said this means port operators Asian Terminals, Inc, which operates the South Harbor, and Harbour Centre, should be barred from operating the North Harbor.

He quoted the PCCI letter as saying competition means allowing the same kinds of services to each of the competing terminals and ports.

But he said the PCCI did not discuss its position on whether the existing port operators in Manila should be allowed to bid for the North Harbor.