

## **PRIVILEGE SPEECH**

15<sup>th</sup> Regular Council  
Sangguniang Panlungsod  
Davao City  
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### **Mothers for Peace and the Pre-Paid Electric System**

By Councilor Pilar C. Braga, phd

Madam President, I take the opportunity to speak about two important concerns at the moment.

One is about PEACE – particularly, on MOTHERS FOR PEACE, of which I am a member. The present derailment of the ceasefire talks and various cases of conflicts and criminalities throughout Mindanao has caused alarm for all Mindanaoans.

The other concern is about our electric consumption and a technology which could help diminish our electric bills – this is the pre-paid electric system.

Of all the products and services that consumers avail or purchase, electricity is one that affects our daily lives. Because it is available to us anytime day or night, we often take it for granted and most of us do not give it a second thought until the bill ends up on the kitchen table. Then we begin to question things like, "Why is it so much?" or "Who left the lights on?" After the bill gets paid, we forget about it again until the next month.

Electric meters are usually read once a month by a meter reader employed by the electric provider. This means that the only usage information available is the amount of power we used since the last time it was read.

If you look at your monthly bill closely, you should see two readings in kilowatt hours, previous reading and current reading. The total kilowatt hours are multiplied by the rate per kilowatt hour and this is your total monthly energy charge. Since the meter is read only once per month, there is no way to monitor your usage from day to day.

Now, there is technology available to electric providers that allows them to read our meters everyday or in some cases every hour without the need to have a person come and physically look at it.

Amid the economic crunch and the tough times being experienced by consumers due to high prices of petroleum, food and electricity, there is now a scheme for consumers to use prepaid electricity meters. It is now being tested in an electric cooperative company in Leyte.

Over 40 countries have implemented prepaid meters in their markets. In United Kingdom the system, has been in use for well over 70 years with about 3.5 million consumers. The prepaid program in South Africa was started in 1992, since then they have installed over 6 million meters.

Other African counties such as Sudan, Madagascar are following the South African success. The concept has found ground in Argentina and New Zealand with few thousands of installations.

The pre-paid electric system is quite simple. A special prepaid meter is installed in lieu of the usual electric meters. The prepaid meter contains indicators that show up how much electricity credits are still available as well as a keypad which consumers can use to input electric load credits which they buy in increments of 100 pesos. The meter automatically shuts down a household's electricity system as soon as the credits are consumed.

Unlike the ordinary meters which only record consumption and which require a "reader" to monitor, the prepaid meter allows consumers to plan their electricity consumption more effectively.

There are many benefits that can be derived from implementing a prepaid electricity system.

1. There is no need for additional manpower to serve as meter readers. This translates into lower overhead costs for power suppliers.

2. Theoretically, power suppliers are also prevented from charging systems losses to consumers.

3. Long queues at payment stations as well as for other services are also done away.

4. Includes no billing thus saving on paper and transportation costs, reduction of disconnect/reconnect costs and avoids billing disputes, mistakes and utility disconnects.

5. The use of a system of pre-paid electricity would help address the problems of pilferage, which adds to the systems charge in consumers' monthly electricity bills.

6. The prepaid system teaches consumers to be conscious of their electricity consumption.

Madam President, we hope that the pre-paid electric system could be introduced here in Davao City. We also hope that our local government and our power supplier, the Davao Light and Power Company could come together and explore ways of testing and implementing the system.

The MOTHERS FOR PEACE, the Mindanao Commission on Women and other organizations all over the country have launched a nationwide campaign for peace called “Million TAPs for Peace.” TAP is short for ***Thoughts and Acts of Peace***. MOTHERS FOR PEACE, along with the Mindanao Commission on Women and other organizations all over the country believe that peace is still truly in our hands that is why they are calling on all mothers and other women – from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, and the rest of the world – to join the LIGHT A CEASEFIRE campaign. This campaign is part of the “Million TAPS (Thoughts and Acts of Peace) for Peace” campaign from September 1 to December 3, 2008.

Everyone is encouraged to participate and make peaceful acts a part of their everyday life. This may mean such acts as forgiving someone, smiling at a stranger, taking a break from vices, confronting one’s prejudices against other groups, help fighting friends or family members to reconcile and heal, asking for contributions or organizing fund-raising activities for the internally-displaced people, and encouraging children to use non-violent means to address a conflict, among others.

The campaign will involve as many people as possible in giving minutes of peace through silence, prayer, or meditation and sharing peace by doing acts of peace. It allows people to take a break from their daily routines to think peaceful thoughts and do peaceful acts, thereby achieving inner peace and contributing to peace in Mindanao and in the rest of the world.

We salute the women leaders behind this campaign – the Mothers for Peace, Muslim Women Peace Advocates, Mindanao Commission on Women, Mindanao Young Women Leaders Forum, Political Caucus of Women Leaders in Mindanao, Irene M. Santiago, Margie Moran Floirendo, Amina Rasul Bernardo, Arlene S. Lozano, Patricia M. Sarenas,

Ruth T. Montojo, Nida P. Dans, Myra Balandra, Geejay Arriola and Madett Gardiola and many others.

Let us all pray for peace and in our little ways, promote peaceful acts, in so doing we may possibly contribute to that elusive wish we all desire – peace in our family, peace in our community and peace in our nation.

Let us support MOTHERS FOR PEACE and actively promote this peace campaign.

Allow me therefore, Madam President, to pass the corresponding resolutions regarding these issues.

Thank you.

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Davao City