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NEA, power co-ops hit 46% new electricity connections target in 1st semester

The National Electrification Administration (NEA) and the electric cooperatives (ECs) managed to reach 209,700 new consumer connections in the first half of 2020, down 15-percent compared to the same period last year as a result of the coronavirus crisis.

Based on the figures submitted to the NEA Information Technology and Communication Services Department (ITCSD), the ECs recorded 209,781 additional consumer connections from January to June 2020, making up about 46 percent of the 460,000 corporate target for the year.

NEA Administrator Edgardo Masongsong said the figures are 15-percent lower than the 281,246 consumer connections reported by the power cooperatives in the first six months of 2019.

Masongsong attributed the decline in new service connections due to the community quarantine restrictions imposed by both the national and local governments in view of the coronavirus pandemic.

Data from the NEA ITCSD showed that for the first quarter, the ECs delivered 134,435 new consumer connections. The number, however, was down 44 percent in the second quarter to 75,346 connections.

On a per island basis, Luzon registered a 43-percent reduction in new electricity connections, while Visayas and Mindanao registered a decrease of 41-percent and 47-percent, respectively.

"From the first quarter monthly average of 44,812 new connections, it dropped to 25,115 monthly during the second quarter. This accounts for 44 percent or 19,697 reduction in monthly new service connections," ITCSD said.

With restrictions on movement in place combined with non-availability of electrical construction materials due to the coronavirus pandemic, Masongsong said this year's corporate target of 460,000 additional consumer connections may not be reached.

The NEA chief, however, advised all electric cooperatives to still speed up the procurement process or maximize whatever available electrical materials in their respective warehouses, as well as mobilize their personnel, instead of waiting for the contractors.

The additional connections brought the overall level of energization within the coverage areas of the 121 non-profit distribution utilities nationwide is at 96.61 percent or 13,850,055 connections out of the 14,335,784 potential consumers based on the 2015 census. ###

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