

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Secretary Lapus cancels procurement of noodles

Department of Education Secretary Jesli Lapus today announced the cancellation of the pending procurement of fortified instant noodles for the School Feeding Program. The procurement was the subject of a recent Senate investigation on complaints of irregularity.

“There is a need to do a market analysis and study the assumptions in the on-going procurement. Given the controversy generated, we are concerned that the project might not be implemented this school year 2009-2010,” said Lapus. “If we continue, the project may meet obstacles in its execution. I am canceling the procurement because we cannot sacrifice the nutrition needs of our malnourished students and compromise the objectives of the school feeding program,” he said.

Earlier, Sec. Lapus had promptly ordered the deferment of the procurement in light of the need for further evaluation.

“We must move on and move forward to a new procurement to ensure that the program is in place. There is a bidding process to follow that requires a lead time for the production and delivery of the food items to remote schools, so we have to act now,” said Lapus.

In his order to the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), Sec. Lapus invoked Section 41 of the Implementing Rules & Regulations of R.A. 9184 (Government Procurement Reform Act) to ensure that the interest of the government is protected.

He also said that issues on nutritional content, cost effectiveness and efficiency of field operations can be resolved by the review committee composed of independent experts. The results will serve as inputs for the preparation of the new procurement.

Sec. Lapus emphasized that the welfare of school children is paramount as food sustenance is a major factor to keep students in school and help them learn.

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