EMB LAUNCHES NEW AND IMPROVED OPMS PTO VERSION 2.0

As part of its commitment of promoting environmental protection, particularly addressing air pollution and, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Environmental Management Bureau (DENR-EMB) has launched the new and improved Permit to Operate (PTO) Air Pollution Source Equipment and Installation Version 2.0, as part of its Online Permitting and Monitoring Systems on August 18, 2021.

The launch, which was attended by officials and employees of the EMB Central and Regional Offices, partners, and stakeholders, was conducted through Zoom and streamed live over the EMB Central Office Facebook Page.

In her opening message, Assistant Director Engr. Vizminda A. Osorio said that the development of the new PTO system is part of the Bureau's strengthening of the implementation of RA 8749 (Philippine Clean Air Act of 1999), particularly the abatement and prevention of air pollution. By virtue of EMB Memorandum Circular 2020-17, all Regional Offices of the Bureau are mandated the utilize the OPMS for the processing of application and issuance of the PTO, to reduce red tape, and expedite the processing of transactions.

Likewise, it is also the response of the EMB to the current COVID 19 pandemic, which reduces the needs for applicants to personally visit the Bureau's Regional Offices, and request and apply for their needed clearances and permits.

"We at the EMB realize the challenges of the current pandemic. By improving and enhancing our online systems, we would like to make the application of the PTO easier and accessible to our stakeholders and regulated industry partners, to achieve environmental compliance. Through this new system, we aim to provide the best service to our stakeholders," Assistant Director Osorio said.

DENR Undersecretary for Field Operations and Environment, Atty. Juan Miguel T. Cuna, likewise commended the EMB for the launch and implementation of the new OPMS-PTO system.

"This new version is designed to help Pollution Control Officers, project proponents and other stakeholders to easily navigate the system for an easy and hassle-free experience, while at the same time, addressing previous malfunctions and glitches encountered by users. All these, with the goal of strengthening environmental compliance among industries, the private sector, and other sectors," Usec. Cuna said.

System improvements and salient features of the new OPMS-PTO version were discussed by Engr. Marcelino N. Rivera, Jr., OIC-Chief of the EMB Environmental Quality Management Division (EQMD). Engr. Rivera cited the following major improvements of the new version:

a. Distinctions between the four (4) PTO application types:
   1. Temporary PTO (TPTO) is needed for applicants requiring source emission testing. TPTO is valid for 90 days;
   2. Once source emission testing has been conducted, application from a Temporary to a Regular PTO must be done, which is valid for 4 years and 9 months;
   3. If the applicant's source is not required to conduct source emission testing, a new Regular PTO may be applied for, which is valid for 5 years;
   4. A Renewal must be applied for thirty (30) days prior to the expiration of the permit, which is valid for 5 years.
b. The applicant may now view the requirements to be uploaded in Step 1 by clicking on "View Requirements".
c. In Step 3, the applicant may now view the list of Accredited Third-Party Source Emission Testing Firms (TPSETF) and list of DENR Recognized Laboratories by clicking the buttons linked to the EMB website.
d. If the plant information is the same as the establishment information, the proponent may tick the "Same as Establishment?" drop down menu.
e. Air Pollution Source Installation (APSI) and Air Pollution Control Device (APCD) have been improved to include a "Delete All" button and forces the applicant to view the "Instruction" option before downloading the CSV template.
f. The APSI and APCD photos are displaying correctly again.
g. The Sampling and Analysis Methods have been streamlined to approved methods as per policies, and;
h. The requirements have been streamlined based on the size of the APSI.

Engr. Jundy del Socorro, Chief of the AQMD-Air Quality Management Section (AQMS), discussed the history of the OPMS, which was initially called the Computerized Permitting Administrative System (CPAS), under DENR Administrative Order 2000-82 (Integrated Air Quality Improvement Framework- Air Quality Control Action Plan), The prototype of the CPAS was launched in 2001, while the Bureau's online systems were officially developed to address the needs of its clients, stakeholders and project proponents.

Engr. del Socorro also explained that the first OPMS was made possible through the help of the University of the Philippines Information Technology Development Center (UP-ITDC), and EMB regional offices from 2017 to 2020.

"We had one year to implement the system, and we have encountered a lot of challenges. That's why gathered the comments of our partners from the private sector and the EMB Regional Offices for the improvement of the system. I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the improvement of the new OPMS," Engr. del Socorro said.

The EMB Online Permitting and Monitoring Systems website may be accessed at https://opms.emb.gov.ph. For the OPMS-PTO Version 2.0 Instructional Video, go to https://youtu.be/zQPQwdq3pt4. Meanwhile, the full video of the launch may be accessed at: https://fb.watch/7CJAjThJLL/. Don't forget to follow the official EMB Facebook Page and YouTube Channel: EMB Central Office. ###