

ARTA orders automatic approval of SEC, FDA pending applications

September 9, 2019 -The Anti-Red Tape Authority (ARTA) is ordering the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to approve pending applications and to address backlogs following mounting complaints received by the Authority against the two agencies.

The announcement came after a surprise visit conducted by Director General Jeremiah Belgica to the head office of SEC last August 19 to observe the agency's frontline services and to monitor their compliance to R.A. 11032. During the said visit, he spoke with SEC Chairman Emilio Aquino and the two discussed the agency's problematic transactions and how their service delivery could be further improved. DG Belgica assured Chairman Aquino that the Authority will assist SEC as it aims to improve their service delivery.

Meanwhile, a surprise visit was done in FDA Main Office last August 22. This resulted in a series of meeting last September 2 and September 6. During the dialogue between both agencies, FDA has the largest backlog on the processing and issuance of the Certificate of Product Registration with around 14,000 pending applications.

Following said meetings, ARTA directed SEC to submit the complete list of pending applications for Accreditation of Auditing Firms and External Auditors with complete documentary requirements and duly paid fees. Likewise, it directed FDA to submit the pending applications with the Center for Food Regulation and Research and the Center for Drug Regulation and Research, which were found to have the most number of backlogs in terms of various applications.

As of today, ARTA had received the list from SEC containing four (4) pending applications and that from FDA containing a total of 3,125 pending applications.

And today, by virtue of Section 10 of R.A. 11032, as reiterated in Section 4 of Rule VIII of its Implementing Rules and Regulations, the Authority declares the completeness of all the pending applications for automatic renewal in the list submitted by FDA, and the pending applications for accreditation of external auditors by the SEC. Consequently, said applications are deemed automatically approved by operation of law. The two Orders declaring the automatic approval were signed by Deputy Director General Ernesto Perez and DG Belgica.

ARTA will continue with its mandate to help government agencies in streamlining and reengineering their processes. In an interview, the Director General emphasized that all government agencies should effectively comply with the law's prescribed processing time and remove burdensome processes. With this, ARTA ensures effective practices aimed at efficient turnaround of the delivery of government services that will reduce red tape in the government.

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