

[REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9968, February 06, 2010]

AN ACT AMENDING ACT NO. 3118, GRANTING A FRANCHISE TO CABANATUAN ELECTRIC CORPORATION (FORMERLY *SAMAHANG MAGSASAKA, INCORPORADA*), TO CONSTRUCT, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN A DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM FOR THE CONVEYANCE OF ELECTRIC POWER TO THE END-USERS IN THE CITY OF CABANATUAN, PROVINCE OF NUEVA ECIJA, AND RENEWING/EXTENDING THE TERM OF THE FRANCHISE TO ANOTHER TWENTY-FIVE (25) YEARS FROM THE DATE OF APPROVAL OF THIS ACT

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representative of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. Republic Act No. 3118, granting a franchise to Cabanatuan Electric Corporation, (formerly *Samahang Magsasaka, Incorporada*) is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SECTION 1. *Nature and Scope of Franchise.* — Subject to the provisions of the Constitution and applicable laws, rules and regulations, there is hereby granted to Cabanatuan Electric Corporation (formerly *Samahang Magsasaka, Incorporada*), hereunder referred to as the grantee, its successors or assigns, a franchise to construct, operate and maintain in the public interest and for commercial purposes, a distribution system for the conveyance of electric power to the end-users in the City of Cabanatuan, Province of Nueva Ecija.

"As used in this Act, distribution system refers to the system of wires and associated facilities including sub-transmission lines belonging to a franchised distribution utility extending between the delivery point on the national transmission system or generating facility and the metering point/facility of the end-user."

"SEC. 2. *Manner of Operations of Facilities.* — All electric distribution facilities, lines and systems for electric services owned, maintained, operated or managed by the grantee, its successors or assigns, shall be operated and maintained at all times in a superior manner, and it shall be the duty of the grantee, its successor or assigns, whenever required to do so by the Energy Regulatory Commission, hereafter referred to as the ERC, or its legal successor, or the Department of Energy, hereinafter referred to as the DOE, or its legal successor, or any other government agency concerned, to modify, improve and change such facilities or systems in such manner and to such extent as the progress in science

and improvements in the electric power services may render reasonable and proper.

"Whenever practicable and for purposes of maintaining order, safety and aesthetics along the highways, roads, streets, alleys or right-of-way by interested parties upon reasonable compensation to the grantee considering costs incurred to accommodate and administer the use of the grantee's facilities by such parties. The ERC shall decide in case of dispute or disagreement between the parties."

"SEC. 3. *Authority of the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC).* — The grantee shall secure from the ERC, or any other government agency which has jurisdiction over the operation of the herein grantee, the necessary certificate of public convenience and necessity and other appropriate permits and licenses for the construction and operation of its electric distribution system."

"SEC. 4. *Ingress and Egress.* — For the purpose of erecting and maintaining poles and other supports for said facilities, wires or other conductors or for the purpose of laying and maintaining said facilities, wires, cables or other conductors, it shall be lawful for the grantee, its successors or assigns, with the prior approval of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) or the local government units (LGUs) concerned, as may be appropriate, to make excavations or lay conduits in any of the public places, highways, street, lanes, alleys, avenues, sidewalks or bridges of said provinces and/or municipalities: *Provided, however,* That any public place, highway, street, lane, alley, avenue, sidewalk or bridge disturbed, altered or changed by reason of the erection of poles or other supports, or the laying of wires, other conductors or conduits, shall be immediately repaired and properly restored at the expense of the grantee, its successors or assigns, in accordance with the standards set by the DPWH and LGUs.

"SEC. 5. *Responsibility to the Public.* — The grantee shall supply electricity to its captive market in the least-cost manner. In the interest of the public good and as far as feasible and whenever required by the ERC, the grantee shall modify, improve or change its facilities, poles, lines, systems and equipment for the purpose of providing efficient and reliable service and reduced electricity costs. The grantee shall charge reasonable and just power rates for its services to all types of consumers within its franchised areas in order that business and industries shall be able to compete.

"The grantee shall have the obligation to provide open and nondiscriminatory access to its distribution system and services for any end-user within its franchise area consistent with Republic Act No. 9136, otherwise known as the 'Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001'. The grantee shall not engage in any activity that will constitute an abuse of market power such as, but not limited to, unfair trade practices, monopolistic schemes and any other activities that will hinder competitiveness of businesses and industries."

"SEC. 6. *Rates for Services.* — The retail rates to its captive market and charges for the distribution of electric power by the grantee to its end-user shall be regulated by and subject to the approval of the ERC or its legal successor.

"The grantee shall identify and segregate in its electric bill to the end-users the components of the retail rate pursuant to Republic Act No. 9136, unless otherwise amended. Such rates charged by the grantee to the end-users shall be made public and transparent. The grantee shall implement lifeline rate to marginalized end-users as mandated under Republic Act No. 9136."

"SEC. 7. *Promotion of Consumer Interests.* — the herein grantee shall establish a consumer desk that will handle consumer complaints and ensure adequate promotion of consumer interests. The grantee shall act with dispatch on all complaints brought before it."

"SEC. 8. *Right of the Government.* — A special right is hereby reserved to the President of the Philippines in times of war, rebellion, public peril, calamity, emergency, disaster or disturbance of peace and order to take over and operate the distribution system of the grantee or to authorize the temporary use and operation thereof by any agency/department of the government upon due compensation to the grantee for the use of the said distribution system during the period when they shall be so operated."

"SEC. 9. *Tax Provision.* — In consideration of the franchise and rights hereby granted, the grantee, its successors or assigns, shall pay a franchise tax, which may be amended from time to time and is currently at the rate of and equivalent to fifty percent (50%) of one percent (1%) of all revenues derived by the grantee from its distribution wheeling services and captive market supply, excluding generation charge, transmission charge and system loss charge: *Provided*, that nothing herein shall be construed as repealing any tax exemptions, incentives or privileges granted under any relevant law: *Provided, further*, That the grantee, its successors or assigns, shall be liable to pay real property taxes only on their real estate and buildings, exclusive of this franchise, as other corporations are now or hereafter may be required by law to pay.

"The grantee shall file the return with the city where its principal place of office is located and pay the taxes due thereon to the Commissioner of Internal Revenue or his duly authorized representative in accordance with the National Internal Revenue Code (NIRC) and the return shall be subject to audit by the Bureau of Internal Revenue."

"SEC. 10. *Right of Eminent Domain.* — Subject to the limitations and procedures prescribed by law, the grantee is authorized to exercise the right of eminent domain insofar as it may be reasonably necessary for the efficient maintenance and operation of services. The grantee is authorized to install and maintain its poles, wires and other facilities over and across public property, including streets, highways, forest reserves