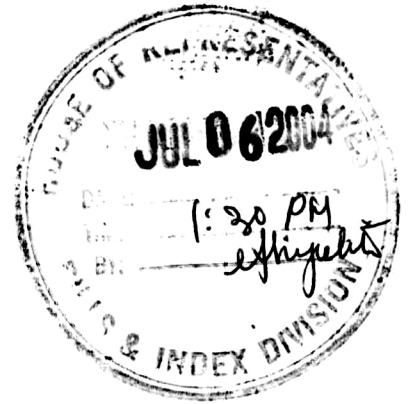


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 1147



Introduced By Honorable ELADIO M. JALA

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The world famous 1,268 Chocolate Hills in the towns of Carmen, Sagbayan and Batuan are facing the dangers of plunder, destruction and defacement.

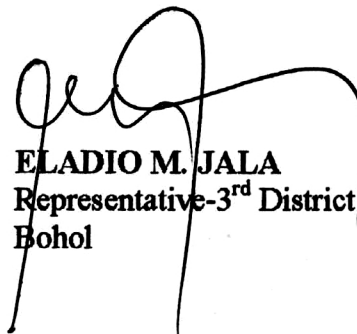
The Chocolate Hills -- Bohol's number one tourist attraction and considered as one of the Wonders of the World -- are being decimated with the destruction of seven hills in Camanayon, Buenos Aires, La Paz, Villaflor and La Victoria in Carmen, Bohol and in Poblacion and Sta. Catalina in Sagbayan, Bohol.

It is ironic that the hills were plundered notwithstanding their declaration on June 18, 1988 as National Geological Monuments because of their special characteristics, scientific importance, uniqueness and high scenic value by the National Committee on Geological Sciences, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and the Department of Tourism. There is, however, no penal sanction for the plunder, destruction and defacement of this rare natural phenomenon.

The Chocolate Hills are also part of the national patrimony and heritage aside from their tourism value, and so they must be protected and preserved for the present and future generations.

Thus, the Congress -- in the interest of justice, public order and the law of the land - finds compelling reasons to impose stiffer penalties for the plunder, destruction and defacement of the world famous Chocolate Hills in order to preserve their unique status as national patrimony and geological monuments.

The early approval of this bill is, therefore, earnestly requested considering the imperative need to protect the Chocolate Hills from further destruction by unscrupulous persons and entities.



ELADIO M. JALA
Representative-3rd District
Bohol

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

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AN ACT
DECLARING THE CHOCOLATE HILLS AS NATIONAL PATRIMONY AND
GEOLOGICAL MONUMENTS, PENALIZING THEIR PLUNDER, DESTRUCTION OR
DEFACEMENT, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "CHOCOLATE
HILLS PROTECTION ACT OF 2001".

SECTION. 2. *Definition of Terms.* - For the purposes of this Act, the following
terms are hereby defined as follows:

1. *Plunder* - means the destruction of any of the Chocolate Hills without permit
from the proper authorities concerned and the required Environmental Clearance
Certificate from the Department of Environment and Natural resources through quarrying
or hauling therefrom of limestone, rocks, soil and road surfacing materials or for
backfilling in any construction.

2. *Destruction* - means to ruin or devastate completely any of the Chocolate
Hills with permit duly issued by the proper authorities concerned and the Environmental
Clearance Certificate by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources through
quarrying or hauling therefrom of limestone, rocks, soil and road surfacing materials or
for backfilling in any construction.

3. *Defacement* - means to mar the appearance or disfigure any of the Chocolate
Hills through any means or device with permit issued by the proper authorities
concerned.

SECTION 3. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is hereby declared the policy of the
State to protect and preserve the Chocolate Hills found in the 32 barangays in the

municipalities of Carmen, Batuan, and Sagbayan, Province of Bohol, to wit: La Paz, Buenos Aires, Tamboan, Alegria, Villaflor, Matin-ao, Calatrava, Monte Video, Nueva Vida Sur, La Victoria, Muntisunting, Nueva Vida Este Nueva Vida Norte and Buenavista in the Municipality of Carmen, Province of Bohol; Sta Cruz, Aloja, Garcia and Behind the Clouds in the Municipality of Batuan, Province of Bohol; Sta. Cruz, Sagbayan Sur, Katipunan, Ubojan, Canmaya Diot, Libertad Sur, San Vicente Sur, Libertad Norte, Canmano, Sta. Catalina, Canmaya Centro, Kagawasan, Poblacion and San Agustin in the Municipality of Sagbayan, Province of Bohol.

SECTION 4. *National Patrimony and Geological Monuments.* - The aforestated Chocolate Hills are hereby declared as National Patrimony and Geological monuments for which quarrying or hauling of limestone, rocks, soil and road materials therefrom for whatever purpose is hereby banned and prohibited.

SECTION 5. *Penalties.* - (a) All persons, whether natural or juridical, who violate this Act which causes the plunder of any Chocolate Hill shall upon conviction, be punished with an imprisonment of 12 years and one day to 20 years and a fine of P120,000.00 to P200,000.00;

(A) All persons, whether natural or juridical, who violate this Act which causes the destruction of any Chocolate Hill shall, upon conviction, be punished with an imprisonment of eight years, four months and one day to 12 years and a fine of P85,000.00 to P120,000.00; and

(b) All persons, whether natural or juridical, who violate this Act which causes the defacement of any Chocolate Hill shall, upon conviction, be punished with an imprisonment of six years and one day to eight years and four months and a fine of P60,000.00 to P84,000.00.

For purposes of this section, the President, the Chairman of the Board, the General Manager and Project Manager, in case of corporation, and the proprietor and manager, in case of sole proprietorship, shall be held responsible for the violation committed by juridical persons.

In any of the offenses herein-above committed, the Court may order the offender to restore the Chocolate Hills thus plundered, destroyed or defaced: provided however, that in the event the offender is a public official who directly committed any of the offenses or conspired with the offender or offenders in the commission of any of the offenses the court shall impose the accessory penalty of perpetual disqualification to hold public office.

SECTION 6. *Separability Clause.* - If any part or section of this Act is declared unconstitutional, such declaration shall not affect the other parts or sections of this Act.

SECTION 7. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations inconsistent with any provisions of this Act shall be deemed repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 8. *Effectivity Clause.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,