

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

House Bill No. **4786**



Introduced by REP. BEN P. EVARDONE
Lone District, Eastern Samar

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The **Philippine Arena** is a multi-purpose indoor arena at Ciudad de Victoria, a 140-hectare tourism enterprise zone in Bocaue and Santa Maria, Bulacan, Philippines. With a minimum capacity of 55,000 seats, it is the **world's largest indoor arena**. It is the centerpiece of the many centennial projects of the Iglesia Ni Cristo (INC) for their grand celebration (on July 27, 2014).¹

The Arena has been built on a 99,200 square meters of land and has a dome of 36,000 square metres. The roof spans some 160 meters and contains 9,000 tons of steel work. The arena is 62 meters in height, or about fifteen stories high and founded on pile construction. For earthquake loads, about a third of the dead load of the building was designed. Its landscape covers a series of outdoor plazas, gardens and performance venues that form the setting for the development, including: The North and South Arrival Plazas, The Promontory Plaza, The Great Stairs, and Ciudad de Victoria Plaza, all related to each other with two cross axes (N-S and E-W) intersecting at the Promontory Plaza.²

The arena will not only hold major church gatherings, it will also operate as a multi-use sports and concert venue, capable of holding a range of events from boxing and basketball to live music performances. There is clear "line of sight" for every seat from each tier, even for various arena configurations such as church ceremonies, international boxing, tennis, concerts or indoor gymnastics. The overall vision of the masterplan will eventually see inclusion of shopping centers, a hospital and large scale residential developments.³ Truly, the Philippine Arena is, by and large, a gift to Philippine Tourism and to the Filipino people.

Hence, this bill seeks to declare the Philippine Arena as a tourism enterprise under existing laws, and to exempt it from the payment of application and similar fees and other requirements. It also proposes the grant of appropriate and available fiscal and non-fiscal incentives and benefits similarly enjoyed by registered tourism enterprises (RTE), made retroactive to the initial phase of the Arena's construction.

Under current laws, fiscal incentives that may possibly be enjoyed by registered tourism enterprises include 6-year income tax exemptions and/or holidays; net operating loss carry-over incentive; payment five percent (5%) of the gross income taxation in lieu of all other national and local taxes, license fees, imposts and assessments; 100-percent tax and customs duties exemption from importation of capital investments and equipments;

¹ Accessed July 23, 2014: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philippine_Arena

² Accessed July 23, 2014: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philippine_Arena

³ Accessed July 23, 2014: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philippine_Arena

transportation equipment and spare parts tax and customs duties exemption; social responsibility incentive. Non-fiscal incentives include employment of foreign national; Special investor's resident visa incentive; foreign currency transactions incentives like repatriation of investments, remittance of foreign exchange, incentives involving foreign loans and contracts; non-requisition of investments; lease and ownership of land.

Hence, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



BEN P. EVARDONE

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AN ACT

DECLARING THE PHILIPPINE ARENA IN CIUDAD DE VICTORIA, BOCAUE AND SANTA MARIA, BULACAN AS A TOURISM ENTERPRISE, GRANTING INCENTIVES AND BENEFITS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. The Philippine Arena and its premises located in Ciudad de Victoria, Bocaue and Santa Maria, Province of Bulacan is hereby declared a tourism enterprise. As such, it shall be exempt from payment of application fees and related charges and allowed to enjoy appropriate incentives and benefits similarly enjoyed by registered tourism enterprises under existing laws, rules and regulations: PROVIDED, that the Arena shall enjoy appropriate fiscal and/or non-fiscal incentives available from its initial phase of construction.

SECTION 2. Upon the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Tourism (DOT), in coordination with the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA) and other concerned agencies, shall immediately take steps to facilitate and assist in the formulation and implement of a tourism development plan for the Philippine Arena and incorporate the same in the Department of Tourism's (DOT) overall tourism development program for the ensuing calendar year.

SECTION 3. The DOT, in coordination with TIEZA and other concerned agencies shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the proper implementation of this Act.

SECTION 4. All laws, decrees, rules and regulations, which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby deemed repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect within fifteen (15) days following its complete publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines.

Approved,