

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City



Seventeenth Congress

First Regular Session

House Bill No: **5231**

Introduced by REP. MERCEDES "DIDI" CAGAS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Whereas Batangas had been labelled as the coffee capital of the Philippines, there are a lot of areas in the Philippines with high coffee production potentials, and one of which is the Barangay Balutakay in Bansalan Davao del Sur.

Barangay Balutakay, located 400 to 1,000 meters above sea level at the foothills of Mt. Apo, has a micro-climate that favors coffee-growing efforts.

In addition, the volcanic soil of Barangay Balutakay gives the coffee a distinct flavor and quality. Despite these potentials, the coffee farmers of Barangay Balutakay are still met with some challenges brought by the lack of local market demand.

Reports from MindaNews said at present, around 60 farmers are engaged in coffee farming, with at least 50 hectares estimated to have been planted with Arabica coffee trees. Each hectare has around 1,800 to 2,000 trees. Harvest peaks between October to January, which yield the farmers around 10 to 20 metric tons of dried coffee beans.

Declaring Balutakay as an eco-agritourism site would not only assist the farmers with their livelihood but also promote the growing coffee plantation in the area and create lasting solutions to the challenges experienced by the farmers. Coffee production also provides a diverse habitat for native species, allows the soil to replenish nutrients and provides natural pest control. In addition, Barangay Balutakay is home to Salinta Monon, who is touted to be the "last Bagobo weaver" and a National Manlilikha awardee. Salinta has built a solid reputation for her weaves of traditional Bagobo-Tagabawa textiles. However, she passed into legend in 2009, which leaves us with few remaining weavers in barangay Balutukay.

Endangered not only for lack of proponents, the art, which is considered the last links to a colorful tradition of their tribe is also endangered because of the declining cultivation of abaca plant to make the distinctive cloth, *inabel*. The ancestral land of Salinta Monon no longer yields enough produce to sustain the materials, making life for the remaining weavers a constant struggle.

This declaration will promote the preservation of the knowledge and technique of weaving the traditional Bagobo-Tagabawa textiles, which has been enduring the verge of extinction for years.

It is the policy of State to accord priority status to sustainable, vibrant and profitable tourism development as one of the engines of socio-economic growth, cultural affirmation to generate investment, foreign exchange and employment.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is earnestly urged.


MERCEDES "DIDI" CAGAS

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

Seventeenth Congress

First Regular Session

House Bill No: **5231**

Introduced by REP. MERCEDES “DIDI” CAGAS

**AN ACT DECLARING BARANGAY BALUTAKAY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF
BANSALAN, PROVINCE OF DAVAO DEL SUR AS AN ECO-AGRITOURISM SITE
AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

SECTION 1. Title. - This Act shall be known as “Barangay Balutakay Eco-agritourism Act.”

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote a tourism industry that is ecologically sustainable, responsible, participative, culturally sensitive, economically viable, and equitable for local communities.

SECTION 3. Barangay Balutakay Eco-agritourism Site. –Barangay Balutakay in the Municipality of Bansalan, Davao Del Sur is hereby declared an eco-agritourism site. Its development shall be prioritized by the Department of Tourism (DOT) and shall be subject to the rules and regulations governing the development of the eco-agritourism site.

The DOT shall prepare a development plan that ensures the preservation and conservation of the natural resources of the area. The plan should also include construction and maintenance of necessary facilities to enhance the ecotourism area.

SECTION 4. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – It shall be the responsibility of DOT to promote Kapatagan as an ecotourism destination in all its national, regional and local promotion programs. DOT, in consultation with the province of Davao Del Sur and the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA) shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SECTION 5. Appropriations. – The funding of this act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act and internally generated funds of DOT, the year following its enactment into law and thereafter.

SECTION 6. Repealing Clause. – All laws, rules, regulations, proclamations, executive orders, proclamations and administrative regulations, or any part or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 7. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a national newspaper of general circulation.

Approved.