

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

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 6886



Introduced by **Representative Manuel Luis T. Lopez**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

On October 16, 2017, an open letter to Pres. Rodrigo Roa Duterte and members of the Quezon City Council was published in the Philippine Star. This letter was a result of the proposed construction of a casino by Bloomberry Resorts Corporation in the Vertis North development in Quezon City.

The open letter mentioned that the proposed construction of a Casino in Quezon City poses more adverse effects than benefits. To begin, the immediate vicinity of Vertis North consists of the National Office of the Bureau of Internal Revenue ("BIR"), the Court of Tax Appeals, Philippine Science High School, and the University of the Philippines ("UP"). A lot of residential areas are also found in the immediate vicinity such as PHILAM Homes in West Avenue and houses in the Scout area in Timog Avenue. This is not to mention the Twin Hearts of Jesus and Mary parish and the main compound of the Iglesia Ni Cristo ("INC") among other religious institutions. All of those that were mentioned only pertain to those within the main vicinity. There are a lot more schools, churches, and residential areas near the proposed place of construction of the casino.

Clearly, the lack of necessary legal regulations and framework allowed such a situation to arise. There is no legislative prohibition which establishes a uniform zoning or distance requirement for casinos vis-à-vis residential areas, educational institutions, or places of worship. Thus, there is a need for Congress to address this predicament by crafting legislation that would give a definite location for the establishment of casinos and other similar institutions.

In view of the foregoing, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


HON. MANUEL LUIS T. LOPEZ
Representative
1st District, City of Manila

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HOUSE BILL NO. _____

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AN ACT
PROHIBITING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CASINOS AND ELECTRONIC GAMING FACILITIES WITHIN A THIRTY (30) KILOMETER RADIUS FROM RESIDENTIAL AREAS, EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, AND PLACES OF WORSHIP AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

1 **SECTION 1. Short Title.** - This Act shall be known as the "Casino Vicinity Regulation Act
2 of 2017."
3

4 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** - The 1987 Constitution provides that "the State shall
5 promote a just and dynamic social order that will ensure the prosperity and independence of the
6 nation and free the people from poverty through policies that provide adequate social services,
7 promote full employment, a rising standard of living, and an improved quality of life for all."
8

9 Further, the Constitution states that "The Congress shall give highest priority to the
10 enactment of measures that protect and enhance the right of all the people to human dignity,
11 reduce social, economic, and political inequalities, and remove cultural inequities by equitably
12 diffusing wealth and political power for the common good. To this end, the State shall regulate
13 the acquisition, ownership, use, and disposition of property and its increments."
14

15 Consistent with these principles, it is the duty of the State to ensure that the proliferation
16 of casinos and gambling establishments be regulated to ensure the safety and welfare of the
17 people.
18

19 **SEC. 3. Definition of Terms.** - As used in this Act, the following terms are defined as
20 follows:

- 21 a. *Casino/s-* refers to a gaming/gambling establishment which conducts games of
22 chance or a combination thereof within its premises.
23
24 b. *Electronic Games or E-GAMES* - refers to online based casino gaming terminals
25 duly regulated by the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation
26 ("PAGCOR").

- 1
2 c. *Casino Structure*- refers to the building structure and physical premises where the
3 casino operations will be located.
4
5 d. *Residential Area*- refers to any given place, which is inhabited by at least four
6 thousand (4000) people or individuals who utilize the area as their permanent
7 residence.
8
9 e. *Educational Institutions*- refers to all schools, colleges, and universities duly
10 accredited by the Department of Education ("DEPED"), Commission on Higher
11 Education ("CHED"), and the Technical Education and Skills Development
12 Authority ("TESDA") providing educational services to its students.
13
14 f. *Places of Worship*- refers to the building or structure where individuals, groups,
15 or congregations go to perform/fulfill their religious duties and obligations,
16 including but not limited to: churches, mosques, chapels etc.
17
18 g. *ECOZONES or "Special Economic Zones" (SEZ)*- shall refer to selected areas with
19 highly developed or which have the potential to be developed into agri-industrial,
20 industrial, tourist, recreational, commercial, banking, investment and financial
21 centers whose metes and bounds are fixed or delimited by Presidential
22 Proclamations. An ECOZONE may contain any or all of the following: industrial
23 estates (IEs), export processing zones (EPZ), free trade zones and tourist /
24 recreational centers as defined in the Implementing Rules and Regulations of
25 Republic Act No. 7916.
26

27 **SEC. 4. Coverage.** – This Act shall apply to all casinos, casino structures and E-Games
28 establishments whether operating in SEZs or not.
29

30 **SEC. 5. Prohibition.** – It is expressly prohibited for all casinos, E-Games, and similar
31 establishments from setting up or creating their casino structures or buildings within a radius of
32 thirty (30) kilometers from any residential area, educational institution, or place of worship.
33

34 Further, all Local Government Units ("LGUs") are hereby prohibited from issuing any
35 exemption as to the distance of casinos, E-Games, and similar establishments from any residential
36 area, educational institution, or place of worship within their jurisdiction.
37

38 **SEC. 6. Directive to all Local Government Units.** – All LGUs are hereby directed to amend
39 or enact the necessary zoning ordinances, rules, and regulations to carry out the provisions of
40 this Act. The minimum distance requirement of thirty (30) kilometers for all casinos and E-Games
41 shall be ratified by all LGUs and it may increase the distance upon its own discretion but in no
42 way can it reduce the thirty (30) kilometer distance prohibition.
43

44 **SEC. 7. Penalties.** – A fine of One Hundred Million Pesos (P100,000,000) and
45 imprisonment of not less than five (5) years but not more than ten (10) years shall be imposed
46 on the directors or officers of the casino or E-Games establishment if they fail to comply with the
47 distance prohibition requirement provided in this Act. In addition, all licenses and permits to
48 operate the business shall be revoked and the said business entities and their directors and
49 officers shall be perpetually disqualified from engaging in casino or E-games operations.
50

51 Government Officials, whether elected or appointed, who fail to shut down establishments
52 in violation of this Act or who fail to ensure that all casinos and E-games are compliant with the
53 distance prohibition requirement shall be solidarily liable with the directors and officers of the
54 businesses. In addition, the Government Official shall be imposed a fine of Twenty Million Pesos

1 (P20,000,000) and the accessory penalty of perpetual disqualification from public office.
2

3 **SEC. 8. *Transitory Provision.*** – The provisions of this Act shall not be applicable to all
4 existing casinos, casino structures, and E-Games establishments.
5

6 **SEC. 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations and Standard Forms.*** - Within sixty (60)
7 days from the promulgation of this Act, the necessary rules and regulations for the proper
8 implementation of its provisions shall be formulated by the Department of Finance (“DOF”),
9 Department of Trade and Industry (“DTI”), and PAGCOR in coordination with all the stakeholders,
10 LGUs, casino and E-Games operators and other sectors affected.
11

12 **SEC. 10. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, ordinances, executive orders, administrative
13 orders, rules, regulations, decrees, and other issuances or parts thereof, which are inconsistent
14 with the provisions of this Act are hereby revoked, repealed, or modified accordingly.
15

16 **SEC. 11. *Separability Clause.*** - If any provision of this Act is held unconstitutional or
17 invalid, the other provisions not affected thereby shall continue in operation and remain in full
18 force and effect.
19

20 **SEC. 12. *Effectivity Clause.*** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
21 publication in a newspaper of general circulation or the Official Gazette.
22

23 Approved,