

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 7975



Introduced by Hon. Jerry P. Treñas

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Arevalo was founded in 1567, making it the first Spanish settlement in Panay as it served as the capitol for the whole Western Visayas. Because of this, Arevalo became the first municipality in the Western Visayas where the evangelical missions of the Church were initiated.

Incidentally, located in Arevalo Plaza is the Parish of the Most Holy Name of Jesus which houses the third-oldest image of Sto. Niño in the Philippines. When it was brought to the Archipelago in 1581, the image of the Sto. Niño was a gift to the flourishing parochial colony on its inauguration as the "*capital*" of the Island of Panay and Western Visayas.

Additionally, the Arevalo Parish Convent and the Corona monument at the Arevalo Plaza are cultural landmarks. The Arevalo Parish Convent had made a thoughtful effort in preserving and maintaining the Spanish-colonial grotesque building. On the other hand, the Corona monument was built by the women of Arevalo *circa* 1858 and dedicated it to Queen Isabella II of Spain (1833-1868) to express their gratitude for her decision that favored the Bishop, the native secular clergy, and a native son of Arevalo.

Lastly, Arevalo was also a former Spanish Naval Station and a shipyard used for expeditions in the Moluccas and Mindanao. Due to the trading route for the Spices, it may be considered as one of the first cultural and historical identity references for the Archipelago. It significantly paved the way for the initial identity of the Archipelago during the great quest for spices in the 15th Century world history.

With the rich culture and heritage references preserved in such locations, it is, therefore, imperative upon us to continue to further preserve such sites not solely for the sake our cultural identity, but also for posterity's reference, as well.

Therefore, the inclusion of the Arevalo Plaza in the list of declared Cultural Heritage Tourism Zone in Republic Act No. 10555 is earnestly sought.


JERRY P. TREÑAS

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**AN ACT AMENDING
SECTION 1 AND 2 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10555
TO INCLUDE AREVALO PLAZA AND FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE**

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

SECTION 1. Section 1 of Republic Act No. 10555 is hereby amended as follows:

“This Act shall be known as "An Act Declaring the Jaro Cathedral, Molo Church, the Iloilo City Central Business District, Fort San Pedro, Jaro Plaza Complex, Molo Plaza Complex, Plaza Libertad Complex, and Arevalo Plaza, all Located in the City of Iloilo, as Cultural Heritage Tourism Zone”.

The Jaro Cathedral, Molo Church, the Iloilo City Central Business District, Fort San Pedro, Jaro Plaza Complex, Molo Plaza Complex, Plaza Libertad Complex, and Arevalo Plaza, all located in the City of Iloilo, are hereby declared as heritage and tourist spots. As such, they shall be accorded priority development by the Department of Tourism (DOT).”

SEC. 2. Section 2 is hereby amended as follows:

“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.

Towards this end, the Jaro Cathedral, Molo Church, the Iloilo City Central Business District, Fort San Pedro, Jaro Plaza Complex, Molo Plaza Complex, Plaza Libertad Complex, and Arevalo Plaza, all located in the City of Iloilo, shall be declared as cultural heritage tourism zone, shall be accorded priority development by the DOT and shall be subject to the rules and regulations governing the development of tourism zones.

SEC. 3. The other pertinent provisions of Republic Act No. 10555, and other laws, rules and regulations which are inconsistent with this amendatory law are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SEC. 4. This law shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its complete publication in the *Official Gazette* or two newspapers of general circulation, whichever comes earlier.

Approved,