



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Constitution Hills, Batasan Complex, Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 778



Introduced by Representatives **EDDIEBONG G. PLAZA** and **ALFEL M. BASCUG**

Explanatory Note

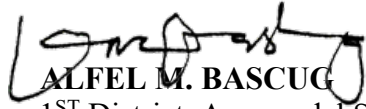
In this rapidly changing world, culture aids social communities in maintaining and promoting their identity and character. People's culture and sense of identity often suffer as a result of globalization. In order to give individuals long-term stability and a feeling of identity, it is essential to conserve cultural symbols like artifacts and objects.

The best way to depict the identity of cultural community is through cultural artifacts and objects. They are pieces of material culture that are anchored to the past and stir up recollections. The 21-karat Hindu or Buddhist deity statuette, better known as the Golden Tara, was found in 1917 by a Manobo woman named Bilay Campos on a muddy bank of the Wawa River in Esperanza, Agusan del Sur. It is a testament to the elaborate and complex culture and society of pre-colonial Agusan del Sur.

There was speculation that the Golden Image was created as a trade item for the Buddhist Empire of Sri Vijaya. The image demonstrates the craftsmanship of early Agurnon and their trade links with the early Southeast Asian empire, indicating its historic and cultural value. The Golden Tara's iconographic attributes may have been a subject of debate as to whether it belongs to the Hindu and Buddhist pantheon, but it is certain that it is discovered in Agusan del Sur. The image was believed to have come from the upriver areas of the province and was carried away downstream by a flood to where it was found, at the riverbank of Esperanza.

Locals from Esperanza created a historical marker where the significant cultural relic was found. In order to increase local tourism in the region, the local community has taken the effort to establish their legitimate claim to the well-known Golden Tara. Recognizing the efforts of the local community, this bill was filed in the 18th Congress. The bill was approved by the House of Representative and was duly transmitted to the Senate.

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



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**AN ACT DECLARING THE PROVINCE OF AGUSAN DEL SUR AS THE
HOME OF THE GOLDEN TARA**

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

SECTION 1. It is the policy of the State to promote and promote historical and cultural artifacts.

SECTION 2. The Province of Agusan del Sur is hereby declared as the Home of the Golden Tara.

SECTION 3. The Golden Tara shall refer to the 21-karat gold statuette of a female Hindu deity which was found in 1917 on the banks of the Wawa River in the Municipality of Esperanza, Province of Agusan del Sur.

SECTION 4. The Province of Agusan del Sur in coordination with the Department of Tourism (DOT), shall take immediate steps to incorporate this Act in the Department's overall tourism development program for the ensuing year. They shall likewise promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the proper implementation of this Act.

SECTION 5. This Act shall be effective fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in at least two newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,