

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 5637



Introduced by **HON. LUIS RAYMUND “LRAY” F. VILLAFUERTE, JR.**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The dispute in the West Philippine Sea has been a long-standing issue that caught international attention. Over the years, China has been extending its maritime self-proclaimed territories to within 50 nautical miles within the Philippine Islands along the coasts of Luzon and Palawan.

This proposed measure seeks to complement Administrative Order No. 29, Series of 2012, and to further reinforce the claim of the Philippines to the disputed islands found on the western side of the Philippine Archipelago through the proper designation of the name “West Philippine Sea” or Kanlurang Dagat ng Pilipinas”.

We have sovereign rights over our Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) for the purpose of exploring and exploiting, conserving and managing the natural resources. The EEZ is up to 200 nautical miles measured from the archipelagic baselines according to Article 47 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).¹ Moreover, based on the UNCLOS, the Philippines is granted a territorial sea of up to 12 nautical miles, and a contiguous zone of up to 24 nautical miles.²

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


LUIS RAYMUND “LRAY” F. VILLAFUERTE, JR.

¹ https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/part5.htm

² https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/part2.htm

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AN ACT
INSTITUTIONALIZING THE MANDATORY USE OF THE NAMES "WEST PHILIPPINE SEA" OR "KANLURANG DAGAT NG PILIPINAS" TO REFER TO THE MARINE AREAS ON THE WESTERN SIDE OF THE PHILIPPINES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. In the exercise of the Philippine's inherent right to designate the names of its maritime areas, and consistent with the 2016 Award of the Arbitral Tribunal of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in *The Republic of the Philippines v. The People's Republic of China*, the maritime area, including the air space, seabed, and subsoil, on the western side of the Philippine archipelago is hereby named as the "West Philippine Sea" or the "Kanlurang Dagat ng Pilipinas." The West Philippine Sea or Kanlurang Dagat ng Pilipinas includes the Luzon Sea and the waters around, within, and adjacent to the Kalayaan Island Group and Bajo de Masinloc, also known as Scarborough Shoal, among others.

SECTION 2. Pursuant to this Act, the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA) shall produce and publish charts and maps of the Philippines reflecting the West Philippine Sea or the Kanlurang Dagat ng Pilipinas.

SECTION 3. The Philippine Government, through the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) in consultation with NAMRIA and other relevant government agencies, shall deposit a copy of this Act and other relevant documents with the Secretary-General of the United Nations and notify accordingly all relevant International and intergovernmental organizations, such as the United Nations Statistical Commission,

the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN), and the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO), among others.

SECTION 4. All departments, subdivisions, agencies, and instrumentalities of the Government are hereby directed to use and employ the name West Philippine Sea or Kanlurang Dagat ng Pilipinas in all communications, messages, and public documents, and to popularize the use of such name with the general public, both domestically and internationally. All departments, subdivisions, agencies, and instrumentalities of the Government are enjoined to use the official Philippine maps produced by NAMRIA in accordance with this Act: Provided that, the Department of Education and the Commission on Higher Education shall cause the distribution of said official Philippine maps to all schools, colleges, and universities, both public and private, as reference material for teaching geography and other related disciplines.

SECTION 5. All private institutions, organizations, and establishments, whether organized under Philippine law or foreign law, operating within the Philippines or transiting in Philippine territory are hereby directed to use the name West Philippine Sea or Kanlurang Dagat ng Pilipinas in all communications, announcements, and messages, both domestically and internationally.

SECTION 6. Should any part or provision of this Act be held unconstitutional or invalid, the other parts or provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SECTION 7. All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, issuances, or any part thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

Section 8. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its complete publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,