

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 5734



Introduced by

HON. YEDDA MARIE K. ROMUALDEZ
HON. FERDINAND MARTIN G. ROMUALDEZ
and
HON. JUDE A. ACIDRE

AN ACT
DECLARING THE METROPOLITAN CATHEDRAL OF OUR LORD'S
TRANSFIGURATION IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF PALO, PROVINCE OF LEYTE,
AS A PROTECTED CULTURAL HERITAGE SITE, PROVIDING FOR ITS
PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Metropolitan Cathedral of Our Lord's Transfiguration, also known as the Palo Metropolitan Cathedral or Palo Cathedral, is a church built in 1956 by the Jesuits, then subsequently administered by Augustinians, and later by the Franciscans. It is not only a religious landmark but also a significant historical edifice – during the World War II, it served as a hospital for the wounded; during the Super Typhoon Yolanda, while it was heavily damaged, it still became the refuge of several survivors and the last resting place of those who perished; in 2015, Pope Francis visited the cathedral after its repairs and rehabilitations; and, also in 2015, it was declared as one of the pilgrim churches of the archdiocese by Archbishop John F. Du.

In order to preserve not only the infrastructure but also the history the Cathedral carries and embodies, this bill seeks to declare the Palo Cathedral as a protected cultural heritage site and mandates the Department of Tourism, in cooperation with other concerned agencies, to develop and implement a tourism development plan.

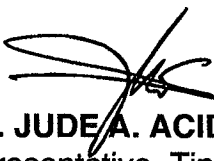
In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is earnestly sought.



Rep. YEDDA MARIE K. ROMUALDEZ
Representative, Tingog Sinirangan



Rep. FERDINAND MARTIN G. ROMUALDEZ
Representative, First District of Leyte



Rep. JUDE A. ACIDRE
Representative, Tingog Sinirangan

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

Section 1. *Palo Cathedral as a Protected Cultural Heritage Site.* The Metropolitan Cathedral of Our Lord's Transfiguration, also known as the Palo Metropolitan Cathedral or Palo Cathedral, is hereby declared a protected cultural heritage site. As such, its development shall be prioritized by the Department of Tourism (DOT) and other concerned agencies, subject to the rules and regulations governing the development of pilgrimage sites and tourist destinations.

Section 2. *Tourism Development Plan.* Within one (1) year after the approval of this Act, the DOT, in coordination with the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and other concerned agencies of the government, shall prepare a tourism development plan involving the construction, installation, and maintenance of such appropriate facilities and infrastructure that shall improve the overall feature of the area, thereby ensuring the accessibility and security of pilgrims and tourists;

Provided, That the said development plan shall ensure the preservation and conservation of the historic significance of the area.

The DOT and its concerned attached agencies shall take immediate steps to implement the tourism development plan that will suit the needs of the Palo Cathedral, and shall incorporate the same in the National Tourism Development Plan.

Section 3. *Appropriations.* The Secretary of the DOT shall include in the Department's program the implementation of this Act, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

Section 4. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DOT, in consultation with the local government unit of Palo, Leyte, shall promulgate rules and regulations for the proper implementation of this Act.

Section 5. *Effectivity Clause.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in any newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,