

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **8583**



Introduced by **KABATAAN PARTY-LIST Representative Raoul Dannel A. Manuel,**
ACT TEACHERS PARTY-LIST Representative France L. Castro,
and **GABRIELA WOMEN'S PARTY Representative Arlene D. Brosas**

AN ACT
DECLARING JULY 12 AS THE WEST PHILIPPINE SEA DAY

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Constitution of the Philippines, particularly Article II, Section 2, recognizes the country's pursuit of an independent foreign policy, the promotion of just and dynamic social order, and the adherence to the rule of law. It further emphasizes the protection of the nation's marine wealth, in accordance with international law.

In 2016, the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) issued a landmark ruling on July 12, affirming the Philippines' sovereign rights in the West Philippine Sea. The ruling invalidated China's excessive maritime claims, including its encroachment on the Philippines' exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and the Spratly Islands.

This House Bill seeks to commemorate July 12 as the "West Philippine Sea Day" in remembrance of the 2016 Hague ruling. The bill aims to raise awareness among Filipinos about the significance of the ruling and its implications for the country's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and marine resources.

The salient points of this House Bill include the following:

1. Designation of July 12 as the West Philippine Sea Day: This bill seeks to officially recognize July 12 as the West Philippine Sea Day, to commemorate the historic Hague ruling and its impact on the country's territorial claims and marine resources.

2. Promotion of public awareness and education: The bill calls for the implementation of educational campaigns, seminars, and forums to inform the Filipino people, especially the youth, about the significance of the Hague ruling. These activities aim to foster a sense of patriotism and vigilance in protecting the West Philippine Sea.

3. Advocacy for peaceful resolution: The bill emphasizes the importance of resolving disputes in the West Philippine Sea through peaceful means and the rule of law. It encourages diplomatic efforts to assert the country's rights and promote cooperation among neighboring countries.

4. Emphasis on the Economic and Ecological Importance of the West Philippine Sea: The bill underscores the need to safeguard the economic and ecological importance of the West Philippine Sea, as well as the rights and welfare of Filipino fishermen who rely on the West Philippine Sea for their livelihood. It calls for the provision of support and assistance to ensure their safety and sustainable access to marine resources.

In view of the foregoing, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought. By commemorating the West Philippine Sea Day, we can reinforce the significance of the 2016 Hague ruling and promote the protection of our nation's sovereign rights and marine wealth.

Approved,



Rep. RAOUL DANNIEL A. MANUEL
Kabataan Party-List



Rep. FRANCE L. CASTRO
ACT Teachers Party-List



Rep. ARLENE D. BROSAS
Gabriela Women's Party

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. - This Act shall be known as the "West Philippine Sea Day Act."

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy.- It is the policy of the State to promote national pride, unity, and awareness of the historical and legal significance of the Philippines' victory in the Hague Ruling on the conflict in the West Philippine Sea. The State recognizes the importance of commemorating this victory to assert the country's sovereign rights and territorial integrity.

SECTION 3. West Philippine Sea Day. - The 12th of July shall be declared as the West Philippine Sea Day in commemoration of the Philippines' victory in the Hague Ruling on the conflict in the West Philippine Sea. This day shall be observed annually as a special working holiday.

SECTION 4. Commemorative Activities. - The Department of Foreign Affairs, in coordination with relevant government agencies, shall be responsible for organizing and coordinating commemorative activities on the West Philippine Sea Day. These activities may include but are not limited to educational campaigns, seminars, forums, exhibitions, and cultural events that highlight the significance of the Hague Ruling, raise awareness

about the country's rights in the West Philippine Sea, and emphasize the economic and ecological importance of the West Philippine Sea.

SECTION 5. Inclusion in Educational Curricula. - The Department of Education shall ensure the inclusion of lessons and materials in the formal educational curricula that promote a deeper understanding of the West Philippine Sea issue, the Hague Ruling, and the country's territorial sovereignty, as well as the cultural and historical significance of the West Philippine Sea. This shall be implemented in both public and private educational institutions at all levels.

SECTION 6. Public Awareness Campaign. - The government, through appropriate agencies, shall conduct a nationwide public awareness campaign to inform the Filipino people about the West Philippine Sea issue, the Hague Ruling, and the importance of safeguarding the country's sovereign rights and territorial integrity, as well as the economic and ecological importance of the West Philippine Sea, especially to fishing communities along the coastline. The campaign shall utilize various media platforms, including but not limited to television, radio, print, and online channels.

SEC. 7. Appropriations. – The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be charged against the agencies' current budget and shall thereafter be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 8. Implementing Rules and Regulations. - The Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs, in consultation with civil society groups and organizations, shall promulgate the necessary Implementing Rules and Regulations within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act.

SECTION 9. Separability Clause. - Any provision or portion of this Act that may be declared unconstitutional shall not have the effect of nullifying other parts thereof.

SECTION 10. Repealing Clause. - All laws, acts, decrees, executive orders, issuances, and rules and regulations or parts thereof which are contrary to, and inconsistent with any provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SECTION 11. Effectivity Clause. - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,

