

NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Second Regular Session)



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

House Bill No. 10226

**Introduced by REPRESENTATIVES LANI MERCADO-REVILLA,
BRYAN B. REVILLA AND RAMON JOLO REVILLA III**

**AN ACT ESTABLISHING A LIGHTHOUSE IN THE AYUNGIN SHOAL AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Armed Forces of the Philippines has identified 54 Chinese vessels in four maritime features and islands within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone (EEZ), as of 11 March 2024.¹ Among these vessels, seven belonged to the China Coast Guard (CCG), 18 were attributed to China's maritime militia, and 29 were fishing vessels and small boats. Notably, in the Ayungin Shoal, one CCG vessel and six Chinese fishing vessels were observed.

The persistent presence of Chinese vessels in the West Philippine Sea underscores the necessity for us to assert our territorial rights. China's persistent efforts to pressure the Philippines into ceding control of the Ayungin Shoal are evident. The Department of Foreign Affairs has stressed that the Philippines maintains its sovereign rights and jurisdiction over its EEZ and continental shelf, including the vicinity of the Ayungin Shoal, without conceding through any agreement.²

In response to China's aggressiveness, retired Supreme Court Associate Justice Antonio Carpio has proposed a proactive measure: "[W]hat we should do is

¹ Untalan, S. (2024, March 12). 54 chinese vessels spotted in wps — afp. *GMA News Online*. Retrieved March 19, 2024, from <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/nation/900267/54-chinese-vessels-spotted-in-wps-afp/story/>.

² Abarca, C. (2024, March 6). Another diplomatic protest filed vs china over latest incidents in ayungin. *Inquirer.Net*. Retrieved March 19, 2024, from <https://globalnation.inquirer.net/227130/another-diplomatic-protest-filed-vs-china-over-latest-incidents-in-ayungin>.

to put up a civilian lighthouse on Ayungin Shoal, send resupply ships there, send construction materials, and if China stops it, then we go to the Tribunal. This is a civilian activity, it's now covered. We have the exclusive right to put up any structure that we want within our exclusive economic zone and the lighthouse is good for navigations. Good for everybody.”³

We could not agree more with Justice Carpio. Relying on diplomatic protests alone may be inadequate. It is imperative that we also enhance our presence in the Ayungin Shoal, and constructing a lighthouse there is a vital step forward.

With this in mind, we strongly urge the swift passage of this bill, aimed at establishing a lighthouse in the Ayungin Shoal.

Mabuhay ang Pilipinas!


REP. LANI MERCADO-REVILLA
2nd District of Cavite


REP. BRYAN B. REVILLA
AGIMAT Partylist


REP. RAMON JOLO REVILLA III
1st District of Cavite

³ Rocamora, J. A. L. (2023, August 10). Build civilian structure on ayungin shoal - ex-sc justice. *Philippine News Agency*. Retrieved March 19, 2024, from <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1207570>.

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

SECTION 1. *Purpose of the Lighthouse.* – The primary purpose of the lighthouse is to monitor and safeguard Philippine sovereign rights and resources in the Ayungin Shoal and adjacent waters. Additionally, it will serve as a navigational aid for boats and ships passing through the area, thereby mitigating the potential for maritime accidents.

SEC 2. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act, the following terms are defined as follows:

- (a) “Ayungin Shoal” refers to a low-tide elevation within the exclusive economic zone and continental shelf of the Philippines.
- (b) “Lighthouse” refers to a tower or structure equipped with a beacon light to guide and warn boats and ships at sea.

SEC 3. *Construction and Maintenance of the Lighthouse.* – The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) shall be responsible for the planning, design, and construction of the lighthouse in the Ayungin Shoal.

SEC 4. *Maintenance of the Lighthouse.* – The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) shall be responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the lighthouse in the Ayungin Shoal. This includes but is not limited to regular inspections, repairs, and ensuring that the beacon light remains operational at all times.

SEC 5. Cooperation with Relevant Offices. – The DPWH and the PCG shall coordinate closely with relevant government offices, including the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA), Department of National Defense (DND), Department of Transportation (DOTr), and Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to ensure the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC 6. Reporting and Accountability. – The DPWH shall provide regular updates to the House of Representatives and the Senate of the Philippines on the progress of the lighthouse construction project. These updates shall include the submission of a comprehensive report detailing the expenditures, timeline, and significant accomplishments in the construction process.

Similarly, the PCG shall update Congress annually regarding the maintenance and upkeep of the lighthouse.

SEC 7. Appropriations. – The amount necessary for the construction of the lighthouse shall be sourced from the current year's appropriations of the DPWH. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued maintenance of the lighthouse shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act pertaining to the PCG.

SEC 8. Separability Clause. – Any portion or provisions of this Act that may be declared unconstitutional or invalid shall not have the effect of nullifying other portions and provisions hereof as long as such remaining portions or provisions can still subsist and be given effect in their entirety.

SEC 9. Repealing Clause. – All laws, executive orders, proclamations, and administrative regulations, or any parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are revoked, repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC 10. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,