



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **111**



Introduced by Representative MARCELINO C. LIBANAN

**“AN ACT
ESTABLISHING THE SAMAR ISLAND REGION
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Samar Island is unequivocally the third largest island – out of the more than 7,000 islands – in the Philippines, with an area of 13,428.8 square kilometers. To the north, separated by the San Bernardino Strait, is the biggest island in the archipelago, Luzon. To the south is its sister island of Leyte, both islands being linked by the San Juanico Bridge.

Its terrain is composed of rugged mountains, dense forests, and extensive river systems. Samar has an extensive coastline of 800.6 kilometers of beautiful beaches, bays, and coves. Composed of three provinces – Northern Samar, Eastern Samar, and (Western) Samar – it is also the seventh most-populous island in the country with a total population of 1,909,537, or a population density of 140/km².

The region is very significant to our Philippine History. Magellan first landed in Homonhon, an island southeast of mainland Samar. A native of Palapag, Northern Samar by the name of Sumuroy led a revolt against the forced labor of the Spaniards in 1649, a rebellion that served as an historical inspiration for the Philippine Revolution more than 300 years later. Samareños, under General Vicente Lukban, continued to fight the subsequent American colonizers even after Luzon had surrendered.

In spite of its rich natural resources inland and in the waters surrounding it, Samar has been neglected by the national government, resulting in poverty and stunted economic development. Northern Samar and Western Samar count among the 10 poorest provinces in the country.

Access to services provided by national government agencies is severely limited within the island. Samareños have to travel to Tacloban, the center of Region VIII, in neighboring Leyte to process their documents and clearances

This has to change. To fully harness the potentials of the Island of Samar and its people, it must stand alone as an administrative region of the country - and, by extension, of the national government. Creating the Samar Island Region will enable the island and its populace to finally throw off the shackles of centuries of neglect and establish the path for self-reliance and genuine development.

Further, the undersigned filed HB No. 10727 in the 19th Congress and was referred to the Committee on Local Government.

For the above reasons, the early approval of this bill is earnestly sought.



MARCELINO C. LIBANAN

Representative

4Ps Partylist





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REP. MARCELINO C. LIBANAN

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* This Act shall be known as the “Samar Island Region Act of 2024”.

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* It is declared a policy of the State that its territorial and political subdivisions shall enjoy genuine and meaningful local autonomy to enable them to attain their fullest development as self-reliant communities and make them more effective partners in the attainment of national goals. Toward this end, the State shall provide for a more responsive and accountable local government structure instituted through a system of decentralization whereby local government units shall be given more powers, authority, responsibilities, and resources. The process of decentralization shall proceed from the national government to the local government units.

SEC. 3. *Creation of Samar Island Region.* The Samar Island Region is hereby composed of provinces, including cities, municipalities and barangays located in the provinces of Northern Samar, Samar, and Eastern Samar.

SEC. 4. *Samar Island Region Technical Working Group.* A Samar Island Technical Working Group (TWG) is hereby constituted composed of representatives from the Office of the President, the Department of Budget and Management, the Department of the Interior and Local Government, the representatives of the Office of the Governor of the provinces of Northern Samar, Samar and Eastern Samar, and all the elected District Representatives of the said provinces. The TWG shall formulate strategic plans to put in place the institutional arrangements for the Samar Island Region; recommend to the Office of the President the preferred location of the Regional Center; arrange the requirements for the organizational development, staffing, and budgeting of regional line and regulatory agencies, as well as the imperatives for development planning and investment programming.

SEC. 5. *Department of the Interior of Local Government as Samar Island Region Secretariat.* Notwithstanding the activities of the Samar Island Region TWG, and to ensure the smooth transition of basic services, the DILG is hereby designated as the Secretariat of the TWG until the latter has completed its task. The plans and recommendations of the TWG shall be approved by the President.

SEC. 6. *Role of Government Agencies.* All departments, bureaus, offices, agencies, and instrumentalities of the national government, including government-owned or controlled corporations and government financial institutions, are hereby directed to extend full assistance to the Samar Island Region-TWG in support of its functions and activities.

SEC. 7. *Appropriations.* The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriations of the Department of the Interior and Local Government. Thereafter, such amount shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 8. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SEC. 9. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,