

**Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Batasan Hills, Quezon City
Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session**



House Bill No. 1626

**Introduced by Honorable Representatives
LEILA NORMA EULALIA JOSEFA "LEILA" M. DE LIMA (Mamamayang
Liberal)
PERCIVAL V. CENDAÑA (Akbayan Partylist)
JOSE MANUEL TADEO "CHEL" I. DIOKNO (Akbayan Partylist)
DADAH KIRAM ISMULA (Akbayan Partylist)
ARLENE "KAKA" J. BAG-AO (Dinagat Islands)
CIELO KRISEL B. LAGMAN (Albay, 1st District)**

**AN ACT DECLARING JULY 12 AS THE NATIONAL WEST PHILIPPINE
SEA VICTORY DAY IN COMMEMORATION OF THE PHILIPPINES'
TRIUMPH BEFORE THE PERMANENT COURT OF ARBITRATION**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to formalize the annual commemoration of the landmark victory of the Philippines in the West Philippine Sea. It reaffirms the country's adherence to the generally accepted principles of international law and commitment to peace, justice, and international law, as the Constitution commands.¹

On July 12, 2016, the Philippines secured a decisive victory in a landmark decision of the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in The Hague, Netherlands. The PCA concluded that China's claims to historic rights over most of the South China Sea, represented by the so-called "nine-dash line," had no legal basis under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The ruling also

¹ Article II, Section 2, 1987 Constitution.

affirmed the Philippines' rights over its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and continental shelf in the West Philippine Sea.

Despite the decision of the PCA, Chinese vessels remain in the Panatag Shoal and other parts of the West Philippine Sea. They continue to harass and threaten Filipino fisherfolk and prevent them from exercising their traditional and legal fishing rights in the area. Unlawful Chinese activities in the West Philippine Sea are estimated to have caused at least Thirty-Three Billion Pesos of damage annually to marine ecosystems within the Philippines' continental shelf and exclusive economic zone since the filing of the arbitration case in 2013.²

Declaring July 12 as the West Philippine Sea Victory Day will keep the spirit of our nation's landmark triumph alive in the hearts and minds of the Filipino people. This commemoration will underscore the profound economic and ecological significance of the West Philippine Sea—an enduring symbol of our sovereignty, natural wealth, and commitment to the rule of law.

LEILA NORMA EULALIA JOSEFA "LEILA" M. DE LIMA
Mamamayang Liberal Representative

PERCIVAL V. CENDAÑA
Akbayan Representative

JOSE MANUEL TADEO
"CHEL" I. DIOKNO
Akbayan Representative

DADAH KIRAM ISMULA
Akbayan Representative

ARLENE "KAKA" J. BAG-AO
Dinagat Islands Representative

CIELO KRISEL B. LAGMAN
Albay, 1st District

² Institute for Maritime and Ocean Affairs, Cost of China Damage to PH Reefs: ₱33B a Year, <https://imoa.ph/cost-of-china-damage-to-ph-reefs-p33b-a-year/> (last accessed July 6, 2025)

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

1 **SEC. 1. National West Philippine Sea Victory Day.** – In order to
2 commemorate the Philippines’ triumph on the West Philippine Sea dispute before
3 the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in The Hague, Netherlands, July twelve
4 of every year is declared the *National West Philippine Sea Victory Day* which will
5 be observed annually as a special working holiday.

6 **Sec. 2. Lead Agency.** – The Department of Foreign Affairs, in coordination
7 with relevant government agencies, is designated as the lead agency in organizing
8 and coordinating activities for the National West Philippine Sea Victory Day. The
9 planned activities must highlight the importance of the historic PCA decision
10 upholding the Philippines’ sovereign rights in the West Philippine Sea, inspire and
11 instill a sense of patriotism and pride in every Filipino, constantly remind the
12 government to continually uphold our sovereign rights and territorial integrity,
13 and emphasize that the policies the government must pursue are consistent with

1 the PCA ruling. These activities may include but are not limited to educational
2 campaigns, seminars, forums, and cultural events to emphasize the historical,
3 economic and ecological significance of the said ruling. The campaign shall utilize
4 various media platforms, including but not limited to television, radio, print, and
5 online channels.

6 **Sec. 3. Appropriations.** – This Act will be implemented initially within the
7 framework of the budget of the DFA for the year it is enacted into law. As far as
8 practicable, the funds required will be drawn from its line budget appropriations
9 for policy formulation, development, conduct of personnel development, technical
10 research, publication and dissemination of studies on Philippine foreign policy.
11 Thereafter, the amounts as may be necessary for the implementation of this Act
12 will be included in the budget of the DFA in the annual General Appropriations
13 Act.

14 **Sec. 4. Separability Clause.** – If, for any reason, any part or provision of this
15 Act is held unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining parts or provisions not
16 affected will continue in full force and effect.

17 **Sec. 5. Repealing Clause.** - All laws, decrees, executive orders,
18 proclamations, rules and regulations, and other issuances, or part or parts thereof,
19 inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, are repealed, amended, or modified
20 accordingly.

21 **Sec. 6. Effectivity.** - This Act will take effect fifteen (15) days after its
22 publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,