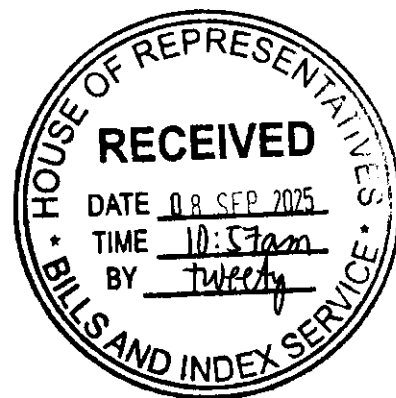




Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4393



Introduced by Representative Carlos Andes Loria

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to declare the Cagsawa Ruins, located in the Municipality of Daraga, Province of Albay, as a National Heritage Park, creating for the purpose the Cagsawa Ruins Heritage Park Council, and appropriating funds for its conservation and development.

The Cagsawa Ruins in Daraga, Albay, stand as one of the most recognizable and symbolic heritage landmarks of the Philippines. The bell tower of the Cagsawa Church, partially buried by the catastrophic eruption of Mayon Volcano in 1814, serves as a solemn reminder of tragedy, resilience, and the enduring spirit of the Filipino people. Over time, the site has become a popular destination for both local and international tourists, admired for its historic significance and the panoramic backdrop of Mayon Volcano.

Despite its prominence, however, the Cagsawa Ruins have not been given the full level of preservation, development, and institutional support that it deserves. The current state of the area, marked by limited facilities, unstructured vendor stalls, and underdeveloped surroundings, diminishes its dignity as a heritage site and restricts its potential to contribute meaningfully to cultural tourism and local economic growth.

The importance of Cagsawa has long been recognized. In 1930, it was proclaimed as part of the Mayon Forest Reserve (Proclamation No. 341), later converted into a National Park in 1938 (Proclamation No. 292). On November 21, 2000, its status was reclassified as a Natural Park through Proclamation No.

413 issued by President Joseph Estrada. Most notably, on December 23, 2015, the National Museum of the Philippines conferred upon the Cagsawa Ruins the designation of a National Cultural Treasure, underscoring its exceptional cultural, historical, and artistic value.

At the local level, the Municipality of Daraga enacted Ordinance No. 020-2025, entitled *“Declaring Cagsawa Ruins as Premier Tourism Landmark in the Municipality of Daraga, Appropriating Funds Therefore, and For Other Purposes.”* This proposed measure will complement and reinforce such local initiatives by providing a stronger national framework for preservation, funding, and institutional governance.

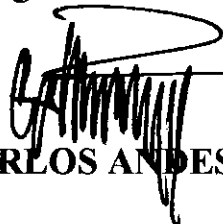
The bill mandates the preparation of a comprehensive development plan for the Cagsawa Ruins that will provide a clear framework for its conservation and revitalization. This plan will cover the preservation and structural reinforcement of the ruins, the establishment of a museum or interpretation center, the improvement of landscaping and surrounding grounds, and the provision of visitor amenities and facilities. It will also include the creation of cultural and tourism programs such as guided tours, storytelling sessions, exhibitions, and festivals that highlight the rich history and heritage of Cagsawa. Moreover, the plan emphasizes the active participation of the local community by supporting livelihood initiatives and training programs for residents to serve as guides, artisans, and cultural workers, thereby ensuring that development of the site directly benefits the people of Daraga and the broader province of Albay.

This includes support for the Cagsawa Festival, an annual celebration held every February to commemorate the tragic 1814 eruption. The festival highlights the historical significance and scenic beauty of the Ruins, bringing together the local community and tourists through cultural performances, exhibitions, and livelihood opportunities.

To ensure effective implementation, the bill also provides for the creation of the Cagsawa Ruins Heritage Park Council, composed of key government agencies, the local government, and community representatives. This Council shall serve as the policy-making and implementing body, ensuring a participatory and multi-sectoral approach to management.

The revitalization of the Cagsawa Ruins will not only preserve an irreplaceable part of our history but also generate employment, strengthen local enterprises, boost tourism revenues, and elevate Albay as a premier cultural and heritage destination. Moreover, this measure positions the Philippines to pursue recognition from international institutions such as UNESCO, further increasing the prestige of this heritage site.

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



CARLOS ANDES LORIA



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4393

Introduced by Representative Carlos Andes Loria

AN ACT

**DECLARING THE CAGSAWA RUINS, LOCATED IN THE
MUNICIPALITY OF DARAGA, PROVINCE OF ALBAY, A NATIONAL
HERITAGE PARK, CREATING FOR THE PURPOSE THE CAGSAWA
RUINS NATIONAL HERITAGE PARK COUNCIL, AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR ITS CONSERVATION AND
DEVELOPMENT**

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act may be cited as the “*Cagsawa Ruins
Act.*”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to protect,
preserve, and promote the nation’s cultural heritage, its properties and history,
and the identity and resilience of local communities. Towards this end, the State
shall recognize sites of historical and cultural significance and support their
conservation, promotion and development as part of the nation’s cultural

1 patrimony such as the Cagsawa Ruins, which is a solemn reminder of the tragic
2 eruption of Mayon Volcano in 1814 and a symbol of Bicolano resilience.

3 SEC. 3. ***Cagsawa Ruins Heritage Park.*** – The Cagsawa Ruins, located in
4 the Municipality of Daraga, Province of Albay, is declared a national heritage
5 park, to be known as the Cagsawa Ruins Heritage Park, hereinafter referred to as
6 the “Park.”

7 The Department of Tourism and National Historical Commission of the
8 Philippines, in coordination with the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone
9 Authority, Provincial Government of Albay and Municipality of Daraga, shall
10 prioritize the conservation, development and promotion of the Park.

11 SEC. 4. ***Council.*** – The Cagsawa Ruins Heritage Park Council, hereinafter
12 referred to the “Council,” is created as the policy-making and implementing body
13 responsible for the conservation, development and promotion of the Park. The
14 Council shall protect the cultural and historical integrity of the Cagsawa Ruins,
15 enhance visitor experience and ensure sustainable tourism practices within the
16 Park.

17 The Council shall be composed of:

- 18 a. Secretary of Tourism, as Chairperson;
19 b. Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources;
20 c. Chairperson of the National Historical Commission of the Philippines;
21 d. Secretary of Public Works and Highways;

- e. Chief Operating Officer of the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority;
- f. Governor of the Province of Albay;
- g. Municipal Mayor of the Municipality of Daraga;
- h. Representative of the Second Legislative District of Albay; and
- i. One (1) Representative each from the local civil society organization and tourism cooperative, as members.

The Council shall ensure multi-sectoral participation in the planning, management, and sustainable development of the Park.

SEC. 5. *Development Plan.* – Within six (6) months after the approval of this Act, the Council shall formulate a comprehensive tourism and heritage development plan that includes, among others, the following:

- a. Conservation and structural reinforcement of the ruins;
- b. Establishment of a Cagsawa Interpretation Center and Museum;
- c. Landscaping and site development, including cultural gardens, walkways, and viewing decks;
- d. Construction of visitor facilities, eco-friendly restrooms, vendor stalls, and parking areas;
- e. Development of cultural and tourism programs, including guided tours, festivals, and heritage markets; and
- f. Training and involvement of local residents as guides, artisans, and cultural workers.

1 The development plan shall ensure the conservation of the cultural heritage
2 and the historical significance of Cagsawa Ruins.

3 **SEC. 6. *Appropriations.*** – The amount necessary for the initial
4 implementation of this Act shall be charged against the funds of the Department
5 of Tourism and Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority.
6 Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of
7 this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act of the
8 concerned government agency.

9 The Provincial Government of Albay and Municipality of Daraga may
10 contribute funds for the conservation, development and promotion of Cagsawa
11 Ruins and the Park as may be approved by their *Sanggunian*.

12 **SEC. 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – Within ninety (90) days
13 from the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of Tourism shall, in coordination
14 with the Secretaries of Environment and Natural Resources and Public Works
15 and Highways, Chief Operating Officer of the Tourism Infrastructure and
16 Enterprise Zone Authority, Governor of the Province of Albay and Municipal
17 Mayor of the Municipality of Daraga, issue the necessary rules and regulations
18 for the effective implementation of this Act.

19 **SEC. 8. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, executive orders, issuances, rules
20 and regulations, or parts hereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are
21 repealed or modified accordingly.

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

3 Approved,