

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4579



INTRODUCED BY HON. DANILO A. DOMINGO

EXPLANATORY NOTE

With the developments in the Municipality of Bulakan, especially with the construction therein of one of the largest airport in Southeast Asia, the historical and cultural heritage of the municipality is threatened with deterioration and destruction. The State should therefore endeavor to create a balanced atmosphere where the historic past coexists in harmony with modern society.

Sections 15 and 16, Article XIV of the 1987 Constitution mandates the State to conserve, promote, and popularize the nation's historical and cultural heritage and resources, as well as artistic creations. It further provides that all the country's artistic and historic wealth constitutes the cultural treasure of the nation and shall be under the protection of the State, which may regulate its disposition.

The Department of Tourism (DOT) has committed to aiding the revival of Bulacan's tourism in culinary, farm, and ecological tourism. However, there is still more room to grow in terms of cultural tourism not only in preserving culture and history, but also in strengthening identity, creating new job opportunities, and promoting competitiveness in a crowded marketplace.

This bill proposes to create a heritage zone within the Municipality of Bulakan in the First Congressional District of the Province of Bulacan for the preservation and protection of its historical sites and cultural heritage. Not only will the passage of this bill contribute to the cultural awareness and relevance of the sites, but it will also push for developments that are in line with the modernization of the Municipality. With the establishment of the airport in Bulakan, the Bulakan Heritage Zone will create more opportunities to further strengthen the appreciation of the people of its own culture and history, while encouraging tourism in the area.

The Municipality of Bulakan is a 444-year-old town and the first and former provincial capital of the Province of Bulacan. Since the municipality's establishment, it has borne witness to many significant events in the country's history, was home to national heroes who fought for our independence, and has been a cradle of native arts and culture. It is where prominent Filipino general Gregorio del Pilar covertly distributed the pamphlets made by Marcelo H. del Pilar, his uncle and notable member of the Propaganda Movement in the Spanish Era. It is the home of Pedro Serrano Laktaw, the first Filipino

lexicographer whose works convinced the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino to build one of its Bantayog-Wika in Bulakan as a monument to preserve and enrich Tagalog language.

Aside from the prominent personalities and historical figures who hailed from the Municipality of Bulakan, the town itself boasts of its rich culture through its structures and historic sites. Several establishments in the Municipality of Bulakan are already recognized historical shrines, houses, and markers. Among its heritage sites are: the Parish Church of Nuestra Señora de la Asuncion of Bulakan, which prides itself of being the oldest Roman Catholic church in the Municipality of Bulakan, having been erected almost 400 years ago; the Marcelo H. Del Pilar National Shrine, which is a memorial to Marcelo H. Del Pilar, whose remains were buried in the same area; the General Gregorio del Pilar Historical Landmark in Barrio San Jose where General Gregorio del Pilar was born; and several other ancestral houses, such as Tahanang-Angkan ng Enriquez, Tahanang-Angkan ng Pascual, Tahanang-Angkan ng Rodrigo, Tahanang-Angkan ng Meneses, and Tahanang-Angkan ni Sen. Soc Rodrigo, where the spirit of the municipality's tremendous history and culture live on.

This measure represents a continuation of legislative efforts to establish heritage protection for the Municipality of Bulakan. The previous version of this bill was successfully approved on Third Reading during the Nineteenth Congress. The Committee on Basic Education and Culture, together with the Committee on Appropriations, conducted deliberations and unanimously recommended the bill's approval.

The current filing in the Twentieth Congress reflects the sustained commitment to enact this important legislation in relation to historical and cultural preservation amidst modernization. Thus, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



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AN ACT DECLARING THE IMMEDIATE ENVIRONS WITHIN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BULAKAN, PROVINCE OF BULACAN THAT COVER CULTURAL PROPERTIES, NATIONAL HISTORICAL LANDMARKS, SHRINES, MONUMENTS, SITES, AND OTHER BUILT HERITAGE PROPERTIES WITH NOTABLE HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE AS HERITAGE ZONE, PROVIDING FOR THEIR RESTORATION, REHABILITATION, CONSERVATION, AND DEVELOPMENT, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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 “Bulakan Heritage Zone Act”.

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. – Article XIV, Section 14 of the Philippine Constitution provides that the State shall foster the preservation, enrichment, and dynamic evolution of a Filipino national culture based on the principle of unity in diversity in a climate of free artistic and intellectual expression. Article XIV, Section 15 further provides that the State shall conserve, promote, and popularize the nation’s historical and cultural heritage and resources, as well as artistic creations.

To this end, the State shall endeavor to designate heritage zones to protect the historical and cultural integrity of a geographical area, and the traditions of local communities.

SEC. 3. Bulakan Heritage Zone. – As defined and provided for by Article II, Section 3(q) and Article IV, Sections 12 and 13 of Republic Act No. 10066, otherwise known as the “National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009”, there is hereby established a heritage zone within the Municipality of Bulakan, Province of Bulacan which shall cover its immediate environs with cultural properties declared as National Cultural Treasures and Important Cultural Properties, as well as National Historical Landmarks, Shrines, Monuments, Sites, and other built heritage properties with notable historical and cultural significance.

The Municipal Government of Bulakan shall, in coordination with the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP), National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), and other concerned stakeholders, conduct a public hearing to consult the affected owners of affected sites and structures, designated representatives of the community, cultural heritage organizations, religious organizations, and heritage preservation professionals (i.e.: architects, historians, archaeologists, anthropologists, and sociologists), in order to determine and identify the specific sites and structures to be

declared as part of the Bulakan Heritage Zone: Provided, That the sites and structures identified to be part of the Bulakan Heritage Zone during the public hearing shall be included in the formulation of this Act's implementing rules and regulations.

The Bulakan Heritage Zone shall be accorded priority development by the Department of Tourism (DOT) and other concerned national government agencies and local government units (LGUs), and shall be subject to existing laws and rules and regulations governing the development of national heritage zones.

SEC. 4. Development Plan of the Bulakan Heritage Zone. – Within the period of one (1) year from the effectivity of this Act, the DOT shall, in partnership with the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD), the Municipal Government of Bulakan, NHCP, NCCA, and other concerned government agencies, prepare the development plan involving the restoration, rehabilitation, conservation and maintenance of such appropriate facilities: Provided, That said development shall ensure the preservation of the cultural heritage and the historical significance of the identified areas: Provided, further, That the NHCP and NCCA shall approve only those methods and materials that strictly adhere to the accepted international standards of conservation in undertaking conservation and restoration works, as provided for in Section 15 of Republic Act No. 10066: Provided, finally, That the Municipal Government of Bulakan shall pass a municipal ordinance to operationalize appropriately the management of its Heritage Zone, including all the cultural properties designated as intrinsic thereto, in accordance with the development plan and in line with the objectives and provisions of Republic Act No. 10066 and in this Act.

A comprehensive Conservation Management Plan is likewise created to serve as a guide for the conduct of a thorough cultural mapping and for the development of the site. The Municipal Government shall, assisted by the NHCP, designate a site manager who shall head the implementation of the plan.

SEC. 5. Coordination with National Government Agencies and LGUs. – The DOT, together with the TIEZA and DPWH shall, in coordination with the Municipal Government of Bulakan, NHCP, and the NCCA, set forth, incorporate in the infrastructure program, and implement the necessary construction and/or improvement of roads and other infrastructure upon the promulgation of this Act.

SEC. 6. Exemption from Real Property Tax. – Private properties designated as Important Cultural Property or National Cultural Treasure as declared by the NHCP or the NCCA shall be exempted from the Real Property Tax: Provided, That the owners of these private properties shall be responsible for the restoration, rehabilitation, conservation, and maintenance of their respective properties: Provided, further, That in the event the owner inappropriately or unnecessarily introduces intervention, damage, and degradation so severe as to diminish or destroy the heritage significance, the owner shall be fined with the corresponding back taxes.

SEC. 7. Appropriations. – The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be included in the respective budgets of the concerned departments and agencies in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 8. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – Within sixty (60) days from the approval of this Act, the NHCP shall, in consultation with the Municipal Government of

Bulakan, NCCA, DOT, TIEZA, DPWH, and other official regulatory agencies and concerned stakeholders, promulgate the rules and regulations implementing the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 9. Separability Clause. – If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 10. Repealing Clause. – All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees, rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with any provision of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

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

Approved,