



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
House of Representatives
CONSTITUTION HILLS, QUEZON CITY

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 5566



**AN ACT DECLARING THE CITY OF GENERAL SANTOS AS THE
TUNA CAPITAL OF THE PHILIPPINES**

Introduced by Representative SHIRLYN L. BAÑAS-NOGRALES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

General Santos City, located at the southernmost tip of Mindanao, has long been recognized as the epicenter of the country's tuna industry. Blessed with access to the abundant fishing grounds of the Sarangani Bay and the Celebes Sea, the City serves as the central hub for large-scale tuna fishing, processing, and export.

Recent figures from the Department of Agriculture and the Philippine Statistics Authority underscore this role. From 2023 to 2024, national tuna production rose from 409,797 metric tons to 494,047 metric tons, representing a 20.56% increase. The value of tuna exports likewise surged by 31%, from USD 391.81 million in 2023 to USD 514.47 million in 2024.

Moreover, General Santos City is the host to six (6) of the seven (7) tuna canneries in the Philippines and over a hundred purse seine and hand-line operators supplying high-grade tuna to local processors and international markets such as Japan, the United States, and the European Union.

At the local level, the General Santos Fish Port Complex (GSFPC) continues to dominate the nation's fish port activity. In July 2025, it recorded over 32,800 metric tons of fish unloading – more than half of the total from all major ports nationwide. Similarly, in April 2024, out of 60,256.88 metric tons unloaded across all PFDA regional fish ports, nearly 28,000 metric tons came from GSFPC alone. Also, the tuna industry supports approximately 200,000 workers across the supply/value chain.

Historical data from the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) show that between 2008 and 2014, nearly 89% of the total landed fish in General Santos were tuna or tuna-like species, predominantly skipjack, yellowfin, and frigate/bullet tuna. This reflects the City's sustained dominance in the tuna industry and its role as a key driver of local employment, economic growth, and national exports.

Beyond economics, General Santos City has become a national leader in sustainable fishing, maritime safety, and industry innovation. It hosts the annual National Tuna Congress, now on its 25th year, which serves as a platform for international cooperation and policy dialogue on responsible fisheries and sustainable marine resource management. The city also celebrates the Tuna Festival, an annual cultural event that honors the resilience of its fishing

communities and affirms its identity as the country's premier tuna hub – advancing national goals for food security and sustainable growth.

Despite widespread recognition, there is still no law formally declaring General Santos City as the “Tuna Capital of the Philippines”. Thus, this measure seeks to institutionalize that title, acknowledging the City's crucial role in fisheries development, food security, and maritime trade.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this measure is earnestly sought.



SHIRLYN L. BAÑAS-NOGRALES
Lone District of General Santos City



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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 “*Tuna Capital of the Philippines Act.*”

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to recognize and promote the vital contribution of the tuna industry to national development, food security, employment generation, and export growth. The State shall likewise acknowledge the indispensable role of General Santos City as the center of the Philippine tuna industry and as a model of sustainable fisheries management, maritime excellence, and economic productivity.

SECTION 3. Declaration of General Santos City as the Tuna Capital of the Philippines. – In recognition of its outstanding and enduring contributions to the country’s tuna industry, General Santos City is hereby declared as the Tuna Capital of the Philippines.

Section 4. Role of Government Agencies. –The Department of Agriculture (DA), through the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), in coordination with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of Tourism (DOT), and the Local Government of General Santos City, shall implement programs that promote the City’s tuna industry, enhance its competitiveness and sustainability, and strengthen its role as the nation’s premier tuna hub.

SECTION 5. Commemoration and Promotion. – The National Government, through the concerned agencies, shall include in its official calendar of activities the annual celebration of the General Santos City Tuna Festival every first week of September, coinciding with the National Tuna Congress, as a national event highlighting the City’s enduring significance in the country’s tuna industry and its contributions to national fisheries, maritime heritage, and cultural identity.

SECTION 6. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,