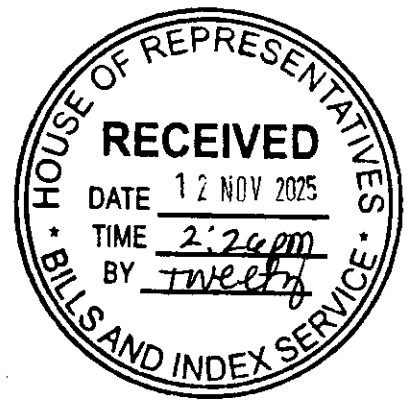


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 5918



INTRODUCED BY **HONORABLE MA. ISABEL L. SAGARBARRIA**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Dumaguete City, fondly known as the “City of Gentle People,” has long stood as a haven for artists, intellectuals, and visionaries. More than its serene coastal charm and academic tradition, Dumaguete’s true distinction lies in its enduring contribution to Philippine literature and creative thought.

For over six decades, the city has been home to the Silliman National Writers Workshop, founded in 1962 by National Artists for Literature Edilberto K. Tiempo and Edith L. Tiempo. The workshop, the oldest of its kind in Asia, has nurtured and mentored generations of writers who have gone on to shape the course of Philippine letters. Among its distinguished alumni are National Artists, Palanca Awardees, and acclaimed voices whose works have defined Filipino literature across genres and generations.

In 2025, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) conferred upon Dumaguete City the prestigious designation of Creative City of Literature, the first and only Philippine city to be so honored. This recognition affirms what the literary community has long known, that Dumaguete is a living center of creativity, where literature is not only written but lived, celebrated, and passed on from one generation to the next.

Dumaguete’s literary landscape is sustained by its vibrant community of universities, publishers, bookshops, and cultural advocates who work tirelessly to cultivate the written word, with numerous campus-based and community-led initiatives keeping the spirit of literary creation alive. Its academic institutions, particularly Silliman University, have played a central role in shaping the national literary consciousness.

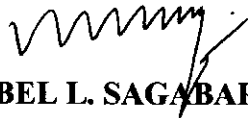
Declaring Dumaguete City as the Literary Capital of the Philippines serves not only as a symbolic recognition of its contributions but also as a commitment to nurture a culture that values reading, writing, and the creative arts. This declaration aims to inspire other communities across the nation to develop their own creative identities and to recognize literature as a vital force in nation-building.

Moreover, this measure will help ensure that the city’s literary heritage continues to flourish by encouraging institutional support for literary education, festivals,

publishing, translation, and cultural tourism. It provides a framework for cooperation among the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), the National Library of the Philippines (NLP), the Department of Education (DepEd), and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), together with the local government and private sector partners, to sustain and promote Dumaguete's literary legacy.

In honoring Dumaguete City as the Literary Capital of the Philippines, we honor not only a place but a spirit, a testament to the power of words to shape hearts, bridge communities, and define our collective identity as a people.

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



MA. ISABEL L. SAGA-BARRIA
Representative, 2nd District of Negros Oriental

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **5918**

Introduced by **HONORABLE MA. ISABEL L. SAGARBARRIA**

AN ACT
DECLARING DUMAGUETE CITY AS THE LITERARY CAPITAL OF THE
PHILIPPINES IN RECOGNITION OF ITS DESIGNATION AS A UNESCO
CREATIVE CITY OF LITERATURE AND ITS HISTORIC CONTRIBUTION
TO PHILIPPINE LITERATURE

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

Section 1. Title. This Act shall be known as the “Dumaguete City Literary Capital of the Philippines Act”

Section 2. Declaration of Policy. It is hereby declared the policy of the State to preserve, promote, and enrich Philippine literature as a vital element of national identity and social progress. In line with this, the State recognizes Dumaguete City for its outstanding and sustained contribution to the development of Philippine literature and creative writing, culminating in its designation as a UNESCO Creative City of Literature in 2025.

Section 3. Recognition. Dumaguete City, in the Province of Negros Oriental, is hereby declared as the Literary Capital of the Philippines.

Section 4. Objectives. In declaring Dumaguete City as the Literary Capital, the government shall:

- a) Promote Dumaguete’s role as a national center for creative writing and cultural exchange;
- b) Encourage public and private institutions to support literary education, publishing, and festivals;
- c) Integrate Dumaguete’s literary heritage into the tourism, education, and cultural policies of the State;
- d) Strengthen national collaboration with the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), National Library of the Philippines (NLP), and UNESCO Creative Cities Network.

Section 5. *Implementing Agencies.* The NCCA, in coordination with the Department of Education (DepEd), the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), and the Dumaguete City Government, shall formulate programs to implement this act.

Section 6. *Funding.* The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be charged against the appropriations of the concerned agencies under the current General Appropriations Act (GAA). Thereafter, such amounts as may be necessary for its continued implementation shall be included in the annual GAA.

Section 7. *Separability Clause.* If any provision of this Act is held unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 8. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, and rules inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

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

Approved,