

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 6210



Introduced by
REPRESENTATIVE MIKAELA ANGELA B. SUANSING

AN ACT
DECLARING THE IMMEDIATE ENVIRONS OF THE DIOCESAN SHRINE OF SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH, ALSO KNOWN AS “TAONG PUTIK DAMBANA NI SAN JUAN BAUTISTA”, LOCATED IN BARANGAY BIBICLAT, MUNICIPALITY OF ALIAGA, PROVINCE OF NUEVA ECIJA, AS A TOURISM DESTINATION

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Saint John the Baptist is the patron saint of Barangay Bibiclat, Aliaga, Nueva Ecija. The devotion to St. John the Baptist traces its roots during the Japanese occupation in World War II. It is said that when Japanese soldiers were to execute all the men in the barangay in retaliation for the death of their compatriots, the villagers prayed hard for their loved ones to be saved. When the men were to be executed, it rained so hard that the captives had to be herded into the church, where later, some of the Japanese soldiers were convinced that the rain was a sign of disapproval from heaven. The resident attributed this miracle to St. John the Baptist and have vowed to pay homage to the saint since then.

On the saint's feast day, celebrated every 24th of June, Barangay Bibiclat welcomes thousands of tourists, pilgrims, and devotees. These people participate in the unique religious event called *Pagsasa Juan*, or more popularly known as the *Taong Putik Festival*. This event is covered by national news and wire media every year.

On August 29, 2013, Saint John the Baptist Church was declared a diocesan shrine; the declaration rite was led by Cabanatuan City Bishop Sofronio Bancud, together with parish priest Rev. Fr. Carlos Padilla and other members of the clergy. Being declared a diocesan church means that Barangay Bibiclat's patron saint, Saint John the Baptist, is a miraculous patron. With this declaration, more pilgrims and tourists have come to the barangay not only during the feast of Saint John the Baptist but the year round.

With the influx of tourists and pilgrims to the area, there is now a need to ensure that the area surrounding the church remains safe, secure, and accessible and that the environs are preserved and conserved at the same time. This bill, therefore, aims to declare the immediate

environs of the Diocesan Shrine of Saint John the Baptist Church, also known as the “Taong Putik Dambana ni San Juan Bautista”, in Barangay Bibiclat, Municipality of Aliaga, Province of Nueva Ecija a tourist destination.

The bill mandates the municipal government of Aliaga, the Department of Tourism, and concerned agencies of the government, prepare a tourism development plan that shall include the construction, installation and maintenance of such appropriate infrastructure and facilities to improve the overall features of the immediate environs surrounding the Diocesan Shrine of Saint John the Baptist Church while ensuring the preservation and conservation of the historical significance of the church.

This bill was approved on Third and Final Reading during the 19th Congress. In view of the foregoing, the immediate approval of this bill is earnestly sought.



MIKAELA ANGELA B. SUANSING

1st District of Nueva Ecija

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DECLARING THE IMMEDIATE ENVIRONS OF THE DIOCESAN SHRINE OF SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH, ALSO KNOWN AS “TAONG PUTIK DAMBANA NI SAN JUAN BAUTISTA”, LOCATED IN BARANGAY BIBICLAT, MUNICIPALITY OF ALIAGA, PROVINCE OF NUEVA ECIJA, AS A TOURISM DESTINATION

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

SECTION 1. The immediate environs of the Diocesan Shrine of Saint John the Baptist Church, also known as “Taong Putik Dambana ni San Juan Bautista”, located in Barangay Bibiclat, Municipality of Aliaga, Province of Nueva Ecija, are hereby declared as tourism destination. Pursuant thereto, its development shall be prioritized and supported by the Department of Tourism (DOT), subject to the rules and regulations governing the development of tourism destinations.

SEC. 2. Within one (1) year after the approval of this Act, the municipal government of Aliaga shall, in coordination with the DOT and concerned agencies of the government, prepare a tourism development plan that shall include the construction, installation and maintenance of such appropriate infrastructure and facilities to improve the overall features of the immediate environs surrounding the Diocesan Shrine of Saint John the Baptist Church, thereby ensuring its accessibility and the security of tourists: *Provided*, That said development plan shall ensure the preservation and conservation of the historical significance of the church: *Provided, further*, That the implementation of the tourism development plan shall be included in the budget of the municipal government of Aliaga.

SEC. 3. The DOT shall assist the municipal government of Aliaga in the implementation of the tourism development plan by providing technical assistance in tourism capacity building. It shall also include the environs of the Diocesan Shrine of Saint John the Baptist Church in its national and regional promotion programs.

SEC. 4. The funding for the implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual budget of the municipal government of Aliaga. The DOT may augment such allocation with internally-generated funds.

SEC. 5. Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the municipal government of Aliaga shall, in consultation with the DOT and concerned agencies of the government, promulgate rules and regulations to implement this Act.

SEC. 6. If any provision of this Act shall be declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 7. All laws, rules, regulations, presidential decrees, and other issuances inconsistent with any of the provisions of this Act are hereby deemed repealed or amended accordingly.

SEC. 8. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,