

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **6551**



Introduced by Honorable EULOGIO "LEO" R. RODRIGUEZ

EXPLANATORY NOTE

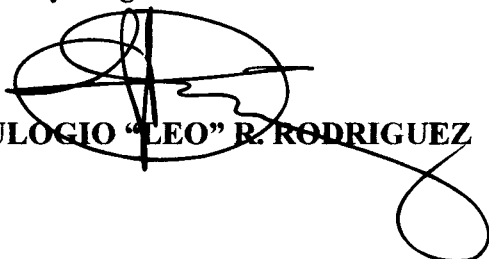
In recognition of the biggest abaca producer in the country, Republic Act No. 11700 declared the Province of Catanduanes as the Abaca Capital of the Philippines. The law recognizes the significance of the world-renowned Manila Hemp industry as a vital socioeconomic driver for rural development. According to the Department of Agriculture, the Philippine Fiber Industry Development Authority (PhilFIDA) reported that the Philippines accounted for eighty-six percent (86%) of the global abaca production in 2023. From 2014 to 2023, the industry generated an average of USD 139.2 million in annual export revenue while providing livelihood opportunities to over 1.5 million Filipinos in the countryside.

To celebrate the contributions of abaca in the Province of Catanduanes, the Abaca Festival is observed annually during the last week of May, culminating on the last Friday of the month. This bill seeks to declare the culmination day a special non-working holiday in the Province of Catanduanes. This measure formalizing the recognition of the Abaca Festival, underscores the vital role of abaca in national economic growth, encourages broader participation, ensures the preservation of cultural heritage, and promotes the livelihood impact of Abaca.

The Abaca Festival showcases the province's rich heritage and abaca industry through parades, cultural performances, trade fairs, exhibits, and other events that promote tourism, preserve traditions, and stimulate local economic activity. More importantly, beyond these festival activities, the Abaca Festival pays tribute to the farmers, farm workers, and artisans who serve as the backbone of the industry that brought the Philippines to the global stage.

Notably, the House of Representatives had already approved this bill seeking to declare the Abaca Festival a holiday in the Province of Catanduanes on Third and Final Reading during the 19th Congress. However, due to lack of material time, the House of Representatives and the Senate were unable to reconcile and concur on a unified version of the said measure. In this view, in support of the abaca industry in the Province of Catanduanes, this representation has filed the same bill in the 20th Congress.

Hence, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


EULOGIO "LEO" R. RODRIGUEZ

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **6551**

Introduced by Honorable EULOGIO “LEO” R. RODRIGUEZ

AN ACT
DECLARING THE LAST FRIDAY OF MAY OF EVERY YEAR A SPECIAL NON-
WORKING HOLIDAY IN THE PROVINCE OF CATANDUANES IN CELEBRATION
OF THE ABACA FESTIVAL

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

SECTION 1. The last Friday of May of every year is hereby declared a special non-working holiday in the Province of Catanduanes, in celebration of the “Abaca Festival.”

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

Approved,