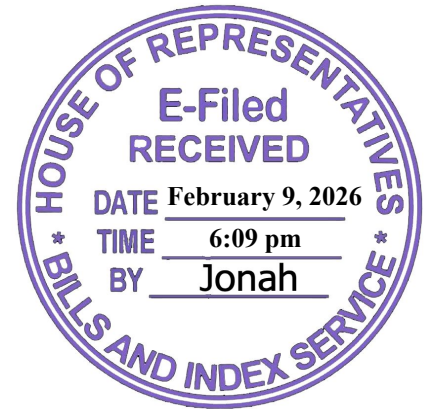




Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 7692



Introduced by Representatives **MARCELINO C. LIBANAN** and
CHRISTOPHER SHEEN P. GONZALES

AN ACT
DECLARING MAHARLIKA FALLS LOCATED IN BARANGAY SAN
RAFAEL, MUNICIPALITY OF TAFT, PROVINCE OF EASTERN
SAMAR A TOURIST DESTINATION, PROVIDING FOR ITS
DEVELOPMENT, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Maharlika Falls, located in Barangay San Rafael in the Municipality of Taft, Eastern Samar, is a naturally formed multi-layer waterfall situated within a largely preserved forest area. It forms part of the local watershed system that supports nearby rivers, ecosystems, and communities, underscoring its ecological importance and role in environmental sustainability.

The falls are closely linked to the historical and geographical identity of Taft, a municipality whose early names reflected the central role of water in shaping settlement patterns and daily life. Maharlika Falls embodies this long standing relationship between the people and their natural environment.

With its scenic features and relative accessibility, Maharlika Falls has strong potential as an ecotourism destination. Declaring it as a tourist destination can promote sustainable tourism, generate livelihood opportunities for local residents, and encourage the protection and responsible management of surrounding forest and water resources.

In view of its environmental significance, historical relevance, and economic potential, the declaration of Maharlika Falls as a tourist destination is warranted

to support conservation efforts and local development in the Municipality of Taft,
Eastern Samar.



MARCELINO C. LIBANAN

Representative

4Ps Partylist



CHRISTOPHER SHEEN P. GONZALES

Representative

Lone District of Eastern Samar



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

SECTION 1. Title. - This Act shall be known as the Maharlika Falls Tourist Destination Act.

SEC. 2. Declaration of Tourist Destination. - Maharlika Falls, located in Barangay San Rafael, Municipality of Taft, Province of Eastern Samar, is hereby declared a tourist destination. As such, it shall be accorded priority by the Department of Tourism and shall be subject to the rules and regulations governing the development and promotion of tourist destinations.

SEC. 3. Tourism Development Plan. - The Department of Tourism, in coordination with the local government of the Municipality of Taft and other concerned agencies, shall prepare a tourism development plan for Maharlika Falls. The plan shall ensure the promotion of the site as a tourist destination while maintaining the protection, preservation, and conservation of its natural environment. All programs and activities shall be consistent with the principles of sustainable and ecotourism as provided under existing laws and policies.

SEC. 4. Implementation. - The Department of Tourism shall take immediate steps to implement the tourism development plan and shall include Maharlika Falls in its national, regional, and local tourism promotion programs.

SEC. 5. *Appropriations.* - The Secretary of the Department of Tourism shall include in the Department's programs the implementation of this Act. Such funds as may be necessary for the purpose shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act and may be sourced from other available funds of the Department.

SEC. 6. *Rules and Regulations.* - Within sixty days from the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of the Department of Tourism, in consultation with the local government of the Municipality of Taft, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for its proper implementation.

SEC. 7. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 8. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 9. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,