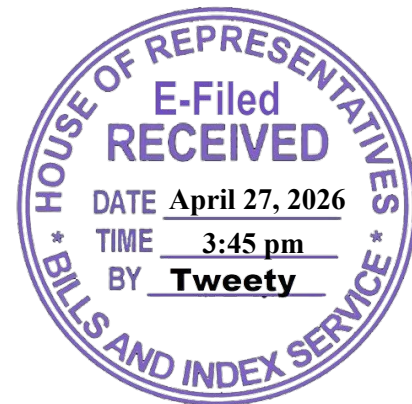


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8967



Introduced by: **REP. SALVADOR A. PLEYTO, SR.**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Santa Maria, Bulacan, has long been recognized as the Chicharon Capital of the Philippines. Its thriving chicharon industry dates back to the early 1900s (around the 1920s), when it began as a backyard industry using leftover portions from butchered hogs, particularly native black pigs.

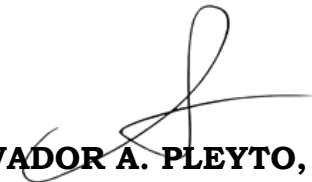
Over decades, this local craft evolved into a major economic driver, with dozens of chicharon makers producing the town's signature thick, crispy pork rind—often featuring a generous layer of fat—that has become a beloved Bulacan brand and a popular pasalubong nationwide.

The municipality's chicharon industry supports numerous livelihoods, contributes significantly to local revenue, and has transformed Santa Maria into a food tourism destination. Every February, Santa Maria holds the Chicharon Festival as part of its town fiesta honoring its patron La Purisima Concepcion, which features street dancing, cultural performances, and chicharon variety cooking contest centered on this iconic snack. This event draws visitors from Metro Manila and beyond, boosting the local economy and promoting Filipino culinary heritage.

Formally declaring Santa Maria as the Chicharon Capital of the Philippines will officially recognize the town's historical and cultural contribution to Philippine cuisine. It will strengthen its identity as a premier food tourism spot and encourage investment in the chicharon industry, related agri-processing, and tourism infrastructure. This will also promote the preservation of traditional chicharon-making techniques and highlight the role of local industries in national economic and cultural development.

This measure aligns with the State's policy to promote cultural heritage, support micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and foster tourism under the Philippine Development Plan and relevant laws on local government and cultural preservation. No substantial additional funding is required, as implementation can be integrated into existing municipal and provincial tourism and economic programs.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate approval of this bill is earnestly requested.



SALVADOR A. PLEYTO, SR.

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8967

Introduced by: **REP. SALVADOR A. PLEYTO, SR.**

AN ACT DECLARING THE MUNICIPALITY OF SANTA MARIA, BULACAN AS THE CHICHARON CAPITAL OF THE PHILIPPINES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "Santa Maria Chicharon Capital Act."

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to recognize and promote the unique cultural and economic contributions of local industries to the nation's heritage, tourism, and development. The State shall support municipalities with distinctive products that embody Filipino ingenuity and tradition.

SEC. 3. *Declaration* - The Municipality of Santa Maria, Province of Bulacan, is hereby declared as the Chicharon Capital of the Philippines. This declaration acknowledges its long-standing tradition of chicharon production, its economic significance, and its role in promoting Philippine culinary culture.

SEC. 4. *Implementation.* - The Department of Tourism (DOT), in coordination with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the Provincial Government of Bulacan, and the Municipal Government of Santa Maria, shall:

- a. Integrate the declaration into national and local tourism promotion campaigns;
- b. Support the annual Chicharon Festival and related cultural events;

c. Provide technical and marketing assistance to local chicharon producers to enhance product quality, innovation, and market reach while preserving traditional methods; and

d. Develop tourism circuits and infrastructure that highlight Santa Maria's chicharon heritage.

SEC. 5. Appropriations - The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act or sourced from the budgets of the concerned agencies. The local government of Santa Maria may also allocate funds from its own resources.

SEC. 6. 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. 7. Repealing Clause. - All laws, decrees, orders, rules, and regulations, or parts thereof, inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

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

Approved,