



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 9325

Introduced by Representative John Geesnell “Baba” Yap

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to declare Sitio Puntod and the surrounding coastal barangays in the Municipality of Alburquerque, Province of Bohol, as a Heritage Zone to preserve, promote, and support the sustainable development of traditional salt-making practices in the area.

Sitio Puntod in Barangay Santa Fe, and the surrounding coastal barangays in Alburquerque, Bohol, host a long-standing, place-based tradition of artisanal salt-making. This living practice has shaped local identity and contributed to household livelihoods. *Asin Tibuok*, or the rare Filipino artisanal sea salt, is mainly processed in Asinan in Sitio Puntod, along the shorelines of Barangay Santa Filomena.

The *Asin Tibuok* is unique because it is made specifically by Boholanos using the traditional process of soaking coconut husks in seawater for months, burning the husks to ash, filtering, boiling in earthenware jars for hours in traditional *kamalig* or salt-making huts, to finally create solidified salt. Aside from Asinan, there are other places within the municipality where *Asin Tibuok*-making is being practiced.

However, land-use change, limited economic incentives for younger generations, and climate variability have increasingly threatened this intricate, labor-intensive tradition. Without legal recognition and targeted support, the community risks losing both the intangible skills and the associated cultural landscape that sustain local resilience.

Cognizant of the value of the artisanal salt-making tradition, the *Sangguniang Bayan* of Alburquerque issued Ordinance No. 18, series of 2021, declaring Puntod and all sites in the coastal barangays of Alburquerque as cultural heritage sites. Subsequently, in December 2025, the practice of making *Asin Tibuok* was officially inscribed on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

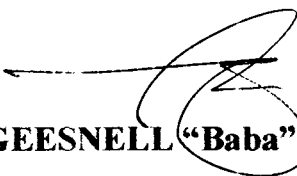
Declaring the area a Heritage Zone provides a legal and institutional framework necessary to preserve tangible and intangible elements of the salt-making tradition. It also aligns local protection with national heritage policy, ensuring coordinated action among cultural agencies and local governments.

The bill is grounded in the State's constitutional and statutory duty to protect cultural heritage and draws on existing heritage-zone laws. It requires a comprehensive Management Plan prepared by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) in coordination with the National Historical Commission (NHC), the National Museum, and local authorities. The Management Plan will set conservation guidelines, community participation mechanisms, and monitoring arrangements.

The bill aims to balance conservation with sustainable economic development and equitable benefit sharing. Key provisions include recognition of local salt-makers' rights to continue traditional practices, priority access to technical assistance, capacity building, livelihood grants, and incentives for registered producers and community enterprises. In addition, it includes penalties for unauthorized alteration or exploitation of protected cultural properties and practices.

If passed, this measure will secure the continuity of an endangered living tradition, strengthen local livelihood, and provide a replicable model for safeguarding similar coastal cultural practices.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


JOHN GEESNELL “Baba” YAP



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AN ACT
DECLARING SITIO PUNTOD AND THE SURROUNDING COASTAL
AREAS IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF ALBURQUERQUE, PROVINCE
OF BOHOL, A HERITAGE ZONE TO PRESERVE, PROMOTE, AND
SUPPORT THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF TRADITIONAL
SALT-MAKING PRACTICES IN THE AREA, AND APPROPRIATING
FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. Sitio Puntod and the surrounding coastal barangays in the Municipality of Alburquerque, Province of Bohol is hereby declared a Heritage Zone, as defined and provided for under Republic Act (RA) No. 10066, otherwise known as the “*National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009*,” as amended, to preserve, promote, and support the sustainable development of traditional salt-making practices in the area.

As used in this Act, “*traditional salt-making*” refers to the place-based, intergenerational techniques, tools, built features, seasonal practices, and associated oral knowledge and rituals used to produce *Asin Tibuok* or rock salt in Sitio Puntod and surrounding coastal barangays.

The Heritage Zone shall include the living cultural practices and properties intrinsic to traditional salt-making, including tools and built features such as salt pans, drying beds, storage structures, and such other immovable, movable, or intangible properties as may be designated for inclusion therein by the NCCA and its affiliated cultural agencies, in coordination with the Municipality of Alburquerque, Province of Bohol, and other concerned agencies and government entities.

SEC. 2. The objectives of this Act are to:

- (a) Protect and conserve traditional salt-making techniques and associated cultural landscapes;
- (b) Support community-based transmission of skills and knowledge;
- (c) Promote sustainable cultural tourism and livelihood opportunities linked to salt-making; and
- (d) Provide technical and financial assistance for conservation, documentation, and promotion.

SEC. 3. Within sixty (6) days from the effectivity of this Act, the NCCA shall prepare a detailed map and inventory of the Heritage Zone. The map and inventory shall:

- (a) Identify specific *barangay* boundaries, public and private lands, and the location of salt-making features;
- (b) List immovable, movable, and intangible cultural properties proposed for protection; and
- (c) Publish and post the map and inventory in areas easily accessible to the public.

The NCCA shall conduct at least two (2) public consultations to be held in the Municipality of Alburquerque, one of which is in Sitio Puntod. Affected parties shall have sixty (60) days from publication to file written objections or claims. The NCCA shall resolve objections within thirty (30) days through an administrative process described in the Management Plan under Section 4 of this Act.

SEC. 4. The NCCA shall, in coordination with the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP), the National Museum, the Provincial Government of Bohol, and the Municipal Government of Alburquerque, prepare and implement a Management Plan for the Heritage Zone, including an inventory,

conservation guidelines, community participation mechanisms, and a monitoring framework within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act.

The NCCA shall likewise coordinate with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), and other relevant agencies to ensure that activities under this Act comply with environmental, coastal zone management, and resource-use laws.

SEC. 5. The preservation, protection, study, and promotion of the cultural and historical integrity of the geographical area represented by the Heritage Zone shall receive priority development attention, assistance, and funding from the NCCA and its affiliated cultural agencies, and from the Department of Tourism (DOT) and its attached agencies, subject to existing appropriate government rules and regulations.

SEC. 6. The rights of local salt-makers and residents to continue traditional practices shall be recognized. The local government shall provide priority access to technical assistance, capacity building, and livelihood grants to community members engaged in salt-making. For this purpose, the local government shall create and maintain a registry of local salt-makers or producers within the Heritage Zone, to serve as reference for granting the benefits provided under this Act.

SEC. 7. The national and local governments shall provide tax incentives, grants, and market-access support for registered traditional salt-makers or producers and community enterprises operating within the Heritage Zone, subject to existing laws and regulations.

The NCCA, in coordination with the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Municipal Government of Albuquerque, shall define eligibility criteria and procedures for tax incentives, grants, and market support for registered traditional salt producers. Incentives shall be conditional on compliance with conservation guidelines and participation in community capacity-building programs.

SEC.8. Unauthorized alteration, destruction, or commercial exploitation of protected cultural properties and practices within the Heritage Zone shall be penalized in accordance with RA 10066 and its implementing rules and regulations.

Existing permits, projects, or investments within the Heritage Zone shall be reviewed under the Management Plan. Ongoing lawful activities may continue subject to reasonable conditions to ensure conservation and community benefits.

SEC. 9. This Act shall be implemented in accordance with RA 10066, as amended by RA 11961 and its implementing rules and regulations, and in

compliance with international obligations under the “*United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization’s 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.*”

SEC. 10. The Chairperson of the NCCA shall, in coordination with the Secretary of the Interior and Local Government, the Secretary of Tourism, the Chairperson of the NHCP, Director-General of the National Museum of the Philippines, provincial and municipal governments, and community representatives, promulgate the necessary rules and regulations within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act.

SEC. 11. The funds necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year’s appropriations of the NCCA. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 12. If any provision or part of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the parts or provisions not affected shall remain in full force or effect.

SEC. 13. All laws, decrees, executive orders, proclamations, rules and regulations, and other issuances or parts thereof that are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby amended, modified, or repealed accordingly.

SEC. 14. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,