



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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
SECOND REGULAR SESSION



HOUSE BILL NO. 10587

Introduced by Representatives

ZIAUR-RAHMAN "ZIA" ALONTO ADIONG, RAMON
RODRIGO GUTIEREZ, FRANCISCO PAOLO ORTEGA, JEFFERSON
KHONGHUN, AND ERNESTO DIONISIO JR.

AN ACT

INSTITUTIONALIZING THE WEST PHILIPPINE SEA EDUCATION AND
AWARENESS PROGRAM, MANDATING THE INTEGRATION OF WEST
PHILIPPINE SEA EDUCATION IN BASIC AND HIGHER EDUCATION CURRICULA,
PROMOTING NATIONAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE PHILIPPINES' MARITIME
RIGHTS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines is an archipelagic and maritime nation. Its security, economy, food supply, environment, and national identity are inseparable from the seas that surround and connect its islands. The Constitution accordingly directs the State to safeguard national sovereignty and territorial integrity, protect the nation's marine wealth, and inculcate patriotism, nationalism, and respect for the rights and duties of citizenship through education.

Republic Act No. 12064, or the "Philippine Maritime Zones Act," declares the maritime zones under Philippine jurisdiction and collectively identifies the maritime zones on the western side of the Philippine archipelago—including the Luzon Sea and the territorial seas of Bajo de Masinloc and the maritime features of the Kalayaan Island Group—as the West Philippine Sea. The legal framework is further informed by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the 2016 South China Sea Arbitral Award, relevant decisions of the Supreme Court, and other Philippine laws and official policies.

Despite the West Philippine Sea's importance to national sovereignty, marine biodiversity, fisheries, energy security, and the livelihood of coastal communities, public understanding remains uneven and vulnerable to misinformation. A coherent and evidence-based education program is therefore necessary to ensure that Filipinos understand the country's maritime rights, the applicable rules of international and domestic law, and the responsibilities that accompany the protection and sustainable use of the marine environment.

This measure institutionalizes a comprehensive West Philippine Sea Education and Awareness Program and requires the integration of age-appropriate West Philippine Sea education in basic and higher education curricula. It directs the Department of Education and the Commission on Higher Education to develop standardized and regularly updated learning materials in coordination with the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority, the National Security Council, the Department of Foreign Affairs, the National Maritime Council, the Philippine Coast Guard, and other relevant agencies.

The bill also provides for educator capacity-building, accessible printed and digital learning resources, a nationwide information and awareness campaign, and research on maritime security and governance, marine biodiversity and conservation, Philippine maritime claims and entitlements, and the socioeconomic conditions of coastal communities. Research outputs shall be made available to policymakers and the public, subject to existing laws on national security, confidentiality, and access to information.

By equipping students and the broader public with accurate, evidence-based, and constitutionally grounded information, the proposed law will strengthen national unity, responsible public discourse, informed policymaking, and the peaceful defense of the Philippines' maritime rights and interests.

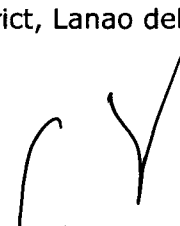
In view of the foregoing, the immediate approval of this bill is earnestly sought.



REP. ZIAUR-RAHMAN "ZIA" ALONTO ADIONG
1st District, Lanao del Sur



REP. RAMON RODRIGO GUTIEREZ
1-Rider Partylist



REP. FRANCISCO PAOLO ORTEGA
Deputy Speaker
1st District, La Union



REP. JEFFERSON KHONGHUN
Deputy Speaker
1st District, Zambales



REP. ERNESTO DIONISIO JR.
1st District, Manila



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RIGHTS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

SECTION 1. Short Title. - This Act shall be known as the "West Philippine Sea Education Act."

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to uphold national sovereignty and territorial integrity; protect the nation's maritime rights, entitlements, and marine wealth; promote the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with international law; and foster patriotism, informed citizenship, and responsible stewardship of the marine environment. Toward this end, the State shall institutionalize accurate, evidence-based, and age-appropriate education and public awareness on the West Philippine Sea.

SECTION 3. Definition of Terms. - For purposes of this Act:

- (a) West Philippine Sea.** refers to the maritime zones on the western side of the Philippine archipelago, including the Luzon Sea and the territorial seas

of Bajo de Masinloc and the maritime features of the Kalayaan Island Group, as collectively designated under Republic Act No. 12064, otherwise known as the "Philippine Maritime Zones Act";

(b) West Philippine Sea Education. refers to instruction and learning activities concerning the geographical, historical, legal, diplomatic, environmental, economic, security, and social dimensions of the West Philippine Sea, including the Philippines' maritime rights and entitlements under the Constitution, Philippine law, and international law; and

(c) Program. refers to the West Philippine Sea Education and Awareness Program established under this Act.

SECTION 4. West Philippine Sea Education and Awareness Program. - A comprehensive West Philippine Sea Education and Awareness Program is hereby established. The Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) shall jointly lead the Program, in coordination with relevant government agencies, educational institutions, and qualified experts. The Program shall:

- (a)** integrate accurate and evidence-based West Philippine Sea education into basic and higher education;
- (b)** develop standardized, age-appropriate, inclusive, and regularly updated teaching and learning resources;
- (c)** strengthen the capacity of teachers, faculty members, and school administrators to teach West Philippine Sea issues effectively;
- (d)** promote public understanding of Philippine maritime rights, entitlements, responsibilities, and policies;
- (e)** encourage research and informed policy discourse on maritime security, governance, environmental protection, and coastal communities; and
- (f)** counter misinformation through accessible, verified, and nonpartisan public information.

SECTION 5. Integration into Basic Education. - The DepEd shall integrate West Philippine Sea education into the curricula of all public and private basic education institutions. Instruction shall be age-appropriate and may be incorporated into Araling Panlipunan, Science, Values Education, Technology and Livelihood Education, and other relevant learning areas. The DepEd shall determine the appropriate grade levels, learning competencies, pedagogical approaches, and assessment methods.

SECTION 6. Integration into Higher Education. - The CHED shall prescribe the integration of West Philippine Sea education into relevant general education courses and academic programs in public and private higher education institutions, consistent with academic freedom and institutional autonomy. Priority fields shall include law, political science, international relations, history, geography, maritime studies, fisheries, marine biology, environmental science, economics, public administration, communication, and teacher education.

SECTION 7. Standards and Core Content. - Instruction under this Act shall be anchored on internationally recognized facts; the Constitution; Philippine laws, including Republic Act Nos. 9522, 12064, and 12065; relevant decisions of the Supreme

Court; the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea; the 2016 South China Sea Arbitral Award; official government maps, charts, and policies; and other authoritative learning materials. Core content shall include, as appropriate:

- (a) the geography, maritime features, and natural resources of the West Philippine Sea;
- (b) the Philippines' maritime zones, baselines, sovereignty, sovereign rights, and jurisdiction;
- (c) the historical and legal bases of Philippine rights and entitlements;
- (d) the principles of peaceful dispute settlement, diplomacy, maritime security, and rules-based international order;
- (e) marine biodiversity, fisheries, climate resilience, conservation, and environmental protection;
- (f) the livelihood, safety, and welfare of fisherfolk and coastal communities; and
- (g) media and information literacy relating to maritime issues.

SECTION 8. Development of Teaching and Learning Materials. - The DepEd and CHED shall develop, approve, and periodically update teaching and learning materials in coordination with the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA), the National Security Council (NSC), the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), the National Maritime Council (NMC), the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), the National Task Force for the West Philippine Sea, and other relevant agencies and experts. Materials shall be available in accessible printed and digital formats and, when practicable, in Filipino and major Philippine languages.

SECTION 9. Capacity-Building for Educators. - The DepEd and CHED shall establish continuing capacity-building programs for teachers, faculty members, curriculum developers, librarians, and school administrators. Such programs shall cover substantive maritime knowledge, effective pedagogy, the responsible use of maps and source materials, media and information literacy, and the impartial treatment of complex legal and diplomatic issues.

SECTION 10. Nationwide Information and Awareness Campaign. - The DepEd and CHED, in coordination with the Philippine Information Agency, the Presidential Communications Office, the NMC, the DFA, the PCG, local government units, and other relevant institutions, shall undertake a sustained nationwide information and awareness campaign on the West Philippine Sea. The campaign may include public lectures, exhibitions, educational broadcasts, online resources, community forums, youth activities, and observances during Maritime and Archipelagic Nation Awareness Month.

SECTION 11. Research and Knowledge Development. - State universities and colleges, higher education institutions, and public research institutions are encouraged to conduct multidisciplinary research on the West Philippine Sea, including:

- (a) maritime security, governance, diplomacy, and international law;
- (b) marine biodiversity, fisheries, environmental degradation, conservation, and climate resilience;
- (c) Philippine maritime claims, rights, entitlements, and historical records;

- (d) the socioeconomic impact of maritime developments on fisherfolk and coastal communities; and
- (e) public awareness, strategic communication, and the prevention of maritime misinformation.

Research outputs funded wholly or partly by the government shall, whenever practicable, be made accessible to policymakers, educators, and the public, subject to existing laws and regulations on national security, confidentiality, intellectual property, data privacy, and access to information.

SECTION 12. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Congressional Oversight. - The DepEd and CHED shall establish measurable indicators for the implementation of this Act and shall jointly submit to the appropriate committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives an annual report on curriculum integration, educator training, materials development, public awareness activities, research outputs, expenditures, implementation gaps, and recommended legislative or administrative action.

SECTION 13. Appropriations. - The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the DepEd, CHED, and other concerned agencies. Thereafter, such amounts as may be necessary for its continued implementation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act, subject to applicable budgeting, accounting, and auditing laws, rules, and regulations.

SECTION 14. Implementing Rules and Regulations. - Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DepEd and CHED, in consultation with the NAMRIA, NSC, DFA, NMC, PCG, Department of National Defense, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Armed Forces of the Philippines, other relevant agencies, educational institutions, teachers, faculty members, and maritime law and policy experts, shall promulgate the rules and regulations necessary for its effective implementation.

SECTION 15. Separability Clause. - If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 16. Repealing Clause. - All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, and other issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SECTION 17. Effectivity. - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,