

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 1944



Introduced by **Rep. LAWRENCE LEMUEL H. FORTUN**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Butuan City has a vibrant history and rich cultural heritage. Before its colonization, it was called the Kingdom of Butuan and was known for its metallurgic industry and sophisticated naval technology. Located in the northeastern part of the Agusan Valley and across the Agusan River, Butuan was a center of economic and cultural activities in the 4th Century as evidenced by artifacts from that period found in the area. Ancient historical accounts, including those of the Chinese anal Song Shih, indicate that Butuan had been engaged in trade relations not only with Vietnam, but also with China as early as the 10th Century.

Proof to its advanced maritime technology is the discovery of the Balangay Boat, otherwise known as the Butuan Boat. The boat is the first wooden watercraft excavated in Southeast Asia and is found only in Butuan where a flotilla of such ancient boats exists. The extant boats found in the excavation sites in Butuan date back to 320 A.D., 990 A.D., and 1250 A.D. The utilization of these boats to maintain trade relations with neighboring islands and neighboring empires prove robust trade and commercial activities in the 11th Century in the area. Further, numerous artifacts were excavated by archeologists such as gold jewelry, death masks, weighing scales, and porcelains that led to the conclusion that Butuan was then a center of trade and commerce.

During the colonial period, historical accounts show that on March 31, 1521, an Easter Sunday, Ferdinand Magellan ordered the celebration of a mass in Butuan. In remembrance of this important historical Christian event that is claimed to be the first in the country, the Bood Promontory, an eco-park located at the very site of the mass, was built. Also related to the rich cultural history of Butuan is the Banza Church Ruins. The ruins consist of a part of a bell tower of a church built by Spanish friars in 1625 and said to be the first Christian church in Mindanao.

Even far older than the foregoing are the Bequibel and Bitor shell middens in Brgy. Bonbon that prove human habitation and civilization in Butuan as early as the Neolithic Age or about 7,000 years ago. Artifacts recovered at the shell middens demonstrate past human presence, their culture, and activities in the area.

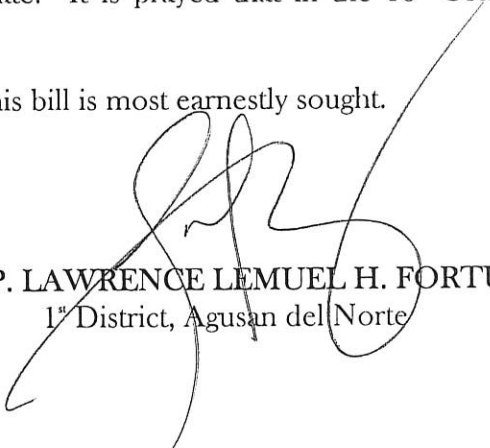
Section 15, Article XIV of the 1987 Constitution mandates that "the State shall conserve, promote, and popularize the nation's historical and cultural heritage and resources, as well as artistic creations." Consistent with this, the succeeding Section 16 provides that "All the country's artistic and historic wealth constitutes the cultural treasures of the nation and shall be under the protection of the State which may regulate its disposition..." Indubitably, this bill, which seeks to declare Butuan City as a heritage tourism zone, is in accordance with and effectuates the foregoing provisions of our Constitution.

Butuan City's cultural heritage needs to be preserved and made known to our people and peoples of the world. Truly, it is a center of learning and discovery for its rich heritage and colorful history. It is hoped that with the passage of this bill, the Department of Tourism and other appropriate agencies will be able to implement sustainable programs that will promote and

preserve Butuan's rich heritage as well as provide the city with necessary facilities and infrastructures to allow cultural tourism to flourish.

The measure was approved on Third and Final Reading by the House of Representatives in the 17th Congress and transmitted to the Senate. It is prayed that in the 18th Congress, this measure is finally enacted into law.

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



REP. LAWRENCE LEMUEL H. FORTUN
1st District, Agusan del Norte

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AN ACT
DECLARING THE CITY OF BUTUAN A HERITAGE TOURISM ZONE AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. The City of Butuan is hereby declared as a heritage tourism zone. As such, it shall be accorded priority development by the Department of Tourism (DOT) in coordination with the National Historical Institute, the National Museum, and other government agencies. It shall be subject to the rules and regulations governing the development of tourist zones.

The City of Butuan is rich with historical and cultural landmarks, rivers and mountain resources, indigenous communities, and other areas full of potentials for heritage, historical, and cultural tourism.

SECTION 2. The City of Butuan, situated in Region XIII, CARAGA, is bounded on the North, Municipality of Magallanes and Municipality of Remedios T. Romualdez, Agusan del Norte and Butuan Bay; on the West, Municipality of Buenavista, Agusan del Norte; on the East, Municipality of Sibagat, Agusan del Sur; on the South, Municipality of Las Nieves, Agusan del Norte.

The technical descriptions of the City of Butuan being declared as heritage tourism zone are as follows:

Beginning at the point marked "1" on the plan being S 43° 27' W, 920.67 m, from BLLM #1 CAD 668, Magallanes;

Thence	S 42° 54' E	2900.17 m.	to point 2;
Thence	N 89° 59' E	1877.92 m.	to point 3;
Thence	S 89° 59' E	2743.11 m.	to point 4;
Thence	due North,	878.37 m.	to point 5;
Thence	due North	1153.59 m.	to point 6;
Thence	due North	5600.02 m.	to point 7;
Thence	S 78° 14' E	10688.04 m.	to point 8;
Thence	N 89° 29' E	1000.00 m.	to point 9;
Thence	N 89° 29' E	1000.00 m.	to point 10;
Thence	N 89° 29' E	1000.00 m.	to point 11;
Thence	N 89° 29' E	500.00 m.	to point 12;
Thence	N 89° 29' E	500.00 m.	to point 13;
Thence	N 89° 29' E	500.00 m.	to point 14;
Thence	N 87° 42' E	1408.24 m.	to point 15;
Thence	S 86° 19' E	594.02 m.	to point 16;
Thence	N 89° 29' E	1000.00 m.	to point 17;
Thence	N 89° 29' E,	3188.03 m.	to point 18;

Thence	S 34° 45' W	2000.00 m.	to point 19;
Thence	S 34° 45' W	2000.00 m.	to point 20;
Thence	S 34° 45' W	1000.00 m.	to point 21;
Thence	S 34° 45' W	1000.00 m.	to point 22;
Thence	S 34° 45' W	1000.00 m.	to point 23;
Thence	S 34° 45' W	500.00 m.	to point 24;
Thence	S 34° 45' W	500.00 m.	to point 25;
Thence	S 34° 45' W	1000.00 m.	to point 26;
Thence	S 34° 45' W	1000.00 m.	to point 27;
Thence	S 34° 45' W	3472.10 m.	to point 28;
Thence	S 55° 42' W	6585.79 m.	to point 29;
Thence	S 38° 00' W	1460.99 m.	to point 30;
Thence	S 19° 06' E	8985.89 m.	to point 31;
Thence	S 15° 12' E	8769.37 m.	to point 32;
Thence	S 76° 17' W	4366.72 m.	to point 33;
Thence	S 89° 50' W	16070.73 m.	to point 34;
Thence	N 28° 51' W	1204.81 m.	to point 35;
Thence	N 52° 26' W	5489.15 m.	to point 36;
Thence	N 53° 37' W	2816.24 m.	to point 37;
Thence	N 06° 44' W	6622.50 m.	to point 38;
Thence	N 17° 56' E	1624.13 m.	to point 39;
Thence	N 16° 00' E	500.00 m.	to point 40;
Thence	N 16° 00' E	500.00 m.	to point 41;
Thence	N 16° 00' E	999.97 m.	to point 42;
Thence	N 16° 00' E	500.01 m.	to point 43;
Thence	N 16° 00' E	500.00 m.	to point 44;
Thence	N 16° 00' E	400.10 m.	to point 45;
Thence	N 16° 00' E	400.10 m.	to point 46;
Thence	N 16° 00' E	500.01 m.	to point 47;
Thence	N 16° 00' E	500.10 m.	to point 48;
Thence	N 15° 59' E	5023.49 m.	to point 49;
Thence	N 05° 15' W	4235.48 m.	to point 50;
Thence	N 58° 29' E	6100.91 m.	to point 51;
Thence	S 67° 06' E	1171.30 m.	to point 1;

The City of Butuan has an area of 829,702,477.50 sq.m. All points referred to are indicated on the plan and marked on the ground by municipal boundary monuments and all points not otherwise described are concrete cylindrical monuments of 15 x 15x 60cm.

SECTION 3. The DOT, in coordination with the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA), and other concerned agencies of the government, including the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP), the National Museum of the Philippines, and other government agencies, including the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), shall prepare the necessary tourism development plan, providing for their development and maintenance, including improvement and restoration of sites, where appropriate, in conformity with set standards, construction of hotels, resorts, restaurants, and other appropriate facilities and infrastructures: *Provided*, That the said development plan shall ensure the preservation of the cultural heritage and the historical significance of the area/s concerned.

SECTION 4. The DPWH shall coordinate with the DOT for the necessary construction and/or improvement of roads and other infrastructure projects upon promulgation of this Act, and incorporate the design, construction and funding of the same in its infrastructure programs.

SECTION 5. The Secretary of the DOT and the Secretary of the DPWH shall include shall include in their respective programs the implementation of this Act, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act or charged against the internally generated funds of the DOT.

SECTION 6. The DOT shall take immediate steps to implement the development plan and incorporate this in the Department’s overall tourism development program for the ensuing year.

The DOT shall likewise promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the proper implementation of this Act.

SECTION 7. All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations or parts thereof which are inconsistent with any of the provisions of this Act shall be deemed repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION. 8. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,