

**Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City**

**Eighteenth Congress
First Regular Session**

House Bill No. 0293



Introduced by Representative Estrellita B. Suansing

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Saint John the Baptist is the patron saint of Brgy. Bibiclat, Aliaga, Nueva Ecija. The devotion to St. John the Baptist traces its roots during the Japanese occupation in World War II. It is said that when Japanese soldiers were to execute all the men in the barangay in retaliation for the death of their compatriots, the villagers prayed hard for their loved ones to be saved. When the men were to be executed, it rained so hard that the captives had to be herded into the church, where later, some of the Japanese soldiers were convinced that the rain was a sign of disapproval from heaven. The residents attributed this miracle to St. John the Baptist and have vowed to pay homage to the saint since then.

On the saint's feast day, celebrated every 24th of June, Bibiclat welcomes thousands of tourists, pilgrims and devotees. These people participate in the unique religious event called *Pagsasa Juan*, or more popularly known as the *Taong Putik Festival*. This event is covered by national news and wire media every year.

On August 29, 2013, Saint John the Baptist Church was declared a diocesan shrine; the declaration rite was led by Cabanatuan City Bishop Sofronio Bancud, together with parish priest Rev. Fr. Carlos Padilla and other members of the clergy.

Being declared a diocesan church means that Bibiclat's patron saint, St. John the Baptist, is a miraculous patron. With this declaration, it is estimated that more pilgrims and tourists will visit Bibiclat, Aliaga not only during the feast of St. John the Baptist and religious occasions, but also the whole year round.

This bill, therefore, aims to declare the Diocesan Shrine of St. John the Baptist Church (Taong Putik Dambana ni San Juan Bautista) in Brgy.

Bibiclat, Aliaga, Nueva Ecija as a pilgrimage site and tourist destination mandating the Department of Tourism and its attached agencies, in coordination with the Department of Public Works and Highways, and in consultation with the local government unit of Aliaga, to come up with a comprehensive development plan for the improvement of the Taong Putik Dambana ni San Juan Bautista, all areas attached to it, and all roads leading to and from it.

This bill was filed as HB No. 6759 and passed on Third and Final Reading during the 17th Congress. In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


ESTRELLITA B. SUANSING

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AN ACT

DECLARING THE DIOCESAN SHRINE OF SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH, ALSO KNOWN AS THE TAONG PUTIK DAMBANA NI SAN JUAN BAUTISTA, IN BARANGAY BIBICLAT, ALIAGA, PROVINCE OF NUEVA ECIJA A PILGRIMAGE SITE AND TOURIST DESTINATION, PROVIDING FOR ITS DEVELOPMENT AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

1 **SECTION 1.** The Diocesan Shrine of Saint John the Baptist Church, also
2 known as the Taong Putik Dambana ni San Juan Bautista, is hereby
3 declared a pilgrimage site and tourist destination. As such, its
4 development shall be prioritized by the Department of Tourism (DOT)
5 and other concerned agencies and shall be subject to the rules and
6 regulations governing the development of pilgrimage sites and tourist
7 destinations.

8 **SEC. 2.** The technical description of the Diocesan Shrine of Saint John
9 the Baptist Church, being declared a pilgrimage site and tourist
10 destination are as follows:

LINES		BEARINGS	DISTANCES
1	2	S 65° 38' W	16.41 m.
2	3	S 60° 52' W	34.75 m.
3	4	N 26° 08' W	14.76 m.
4	5	N 29° 01' W	50.91 m.
5	6	N 58° 10' E	56.24 m.
6	7	S 29° 08' E	25.66 m.
7	8	S 25° 54' E	20.26 m.
8	9	S 26° 16' E	24.24 m.

9 1 S 67° 37' W 3.62 m.

TIE LINE: N 43° 35' E, 3872.57 M.

FROM: BLLM NO. 1

ALIAGA CADASTRE TO COR. - 1

1 **SEC. 3.** Within one (1) year after the approval of this Act, the DOT, in
2 coordination with the Department of Public Works and Highways
3 and other concerned agencies of the government shall prepare a
4 tourism development plan involving the construction, installation
5 and maintenance of such appropriate facilities and infrastructure
6 that shall improve the overall feature of the area thereby ensuring the
7 accessibility and security of pilgrims and tourists: *Provided*, That
8 said development plan shall ensure the preservation and conservation
9 of the historic significance of the area.

10 **SEC. 4.** The DOT and its attached agencies shall take immediate
11 steps to implement the tourism development plan that will suit the
12 needs of the Diocesan Shrine of Saint John the Baptist Church and shall
13 incorporate the same in its overall development plans and programs
14 for national implementation.

15 **SEC. 5.** The Secretary of the DOT shall include in the Department's
16 program the implementation of this Act, the funding of which shall be
17 included in the annual General Appropriations Act and from internally
18 generated funds of the DOT.

19 **SEC. 6.** Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DOT,
20 in consultation with the local government unit of Aliaga, shall
21 promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the proper
22 implementation of this Act.

23 **SEC. 7.** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication
24 in the *Official Gazette* or in any newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,