

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City



EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 677

Introduced by Representative Micaela S. Violago

EXPLANATORY NOTE

A hiking ground that is recently gaining the interest of climbers and tourists, local as well as foreign, is Mount (Mt.) 387 (Mt. Batong-Amat) located at Brgy. Puncan, Carranglan, Nueva Ecija. The name Mt. 387 was given to Batong-Amat because the area covers about 387.9 hectares of the 65,000 hectares' Talavera Watershed Forest Reserve watershed when it was adopted by the *Kalinga sa Kalikasan ng Puncan* to preserve the mountain. It is actually a part of the Caraballo Mountain Range. At the summit, one can see a cluster of hills which is quite similar to the Chocolate Hills of Bohol; for this reason, Mt. 387 was also dubbed as the "Bohol of the North". It may not resemble the shape of the ones found in Bohol but its color and vegetation is almost identical.

The summit is named Batong Amat Peace Park (Ghost Rock Peace Park), since the area was the resting place of many soldiers (Filipino, American, Japanese led by General Yamashita) who perished during World War II. In fact, there are a number of foxholes along the trail and it is likewise common to see spent bullets and casings in the area. According to local guides, there are times when Japanese men (who supposedly participated in the war) go back to Puncan and revisit the area. This is also one of the reasons why the area became famous for treasure hunting activities in the past. This is no surprise since the mountain actually guards the entrance to the Cagayan Valley, which ultimately leads to the famed Dalton Pass. On the summit, you can see the mountain range of Sierra Madre, including Mt. Balungao, Mt. Amorong, Mt. Cuyapo, a part of Lupao and even the TPLEX are visible.


The locals have actually enlisted the help of climbers / hikers in the reforestation activities. During the rainy season, each hiker is made to plant at least 2 seedlings (one may buy additional seedlings if preferred) at the designated reforestation areas along the trail. Seedlings are available for sale at the jumpoff point. During the dry season, hikers are required to help in tree nurturing by bringing at least a liter of water to nourish the planted seedlings. Simple, but is actually ingenious. This program is also referred as "*Kalinga sa Kalikasan ng Puncan*".

This bill, therefore, aims to declare Mt. 387 or Mt. Batong-Amat in the Municipality of Carranglan, Nueva Ecija as a 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 Carranglan, to come up with a comprehensive development plan for the improvement of Mt. 387, all areas attached to it, and all roads leading to and from it.

To be declared a tourist destination would bring in more employment opportunities for the town residents and shall greatly contribute in the town's socio-economic growth.

This bill was approved on Third Reading at the House of Representatives in the 17th Congress on May 20, 2019.

Support and approval for this proposed legislation are hereby earnestly sought.


MICAELA S. VIOLAGO

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**AN ACT DECLARING MOUNT 387 OR MOUNT BATONG-AMAT, IN THE
MUNICIPALITY OF CARRANGLAN, NUEVA ECIJA AS A 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:*

SECTION 1. Mount (Mt.) 387 or Mt. Batong-Amat, in the Municipality of Carranglan, Province of Nueva Ecija is hereby declared a tourist destination. As such, it shall be accorded with priority development by the Department of Tourism (DOT) and other concerned agencies subject to the rules and regulations governing the development of tourist destinations.

SECTION 2. The DOT, in coordination with the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and other concerned agencies of the government shall, immediately after the effectivity of this Act, prepare a development plan involving the construction, installation and maintenance of such appropriate facilities and infrastructure that shall improve the overall feature of the area thereby ensuring the accessibility and security of the tourists, *Provided*, That the said development plan shall ensure the preservation and conservation of the historical significance of the area.

SECTION 3. The DOT and its attached agencies shall take immediate steps in implementing the tourism development plan that will suit the needs of Mt. 387 in the Municipality of Carranglan and shall incorporate the same in its overall development plans and programs for national implementation.

SECTION 4. The DOT, in consultation with the local government unit of Carranglan, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the proper implementation of this Act.

SECTION 5. The Secretary of the DOT shall include in the Department's program the implementation of this Act, the funding of which shall be charged against the internally generated funds of the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA) and/or the appropriations in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved,