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.

[Signature]
ESTRELLITA B. SUANSING
Republic of the Philippines  
House of Representatives  
Quezon City  

Eighteenth Congress  
First Regular Session  

House Bill No. 0293  

Introduced by Representative Estrellita B. Suansing  

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 ECIZA 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 known as the Taong Putik Dambana ni San Juan Bautista, is hereby declared a pilgrimage site and tourist destination. As such, its development shall be prioritized by the Department of Tourism (DOT) and other concerned agencies and shall be subject to the rules and regulations governing the development of pilgrimage sites and tourist destinations.  

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LINES</th>
<th>BEARINGS</th>
<th>DISTANCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>S 65° 38' W</td>
<td>16.41 m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>S 60° 52' W</td>
<td>34.75 m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>N 26° 08' W</td>
<td>14.76 m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>N 29° 01' W</td>
<td>50.91 m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>N 58° 10' E</td>
<td>56.24 m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>S 29° 08' E</td>
<td>25.66 m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>S 25° 54' E</td>
<td>20.26 m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>S 26° 16' E</td>
<td>24.24 m.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SEC. 3. Within one (1) year after the approval of this Act, the DOT, in coordination with the Department of Public Works and Highways and other concerned agencies of the government shall prepare a tourism 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 pilgrims and tourists: Provided, That said development plan shall ensure the preservation and conservation of the historic significance of the area.

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

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

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

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

Approved,