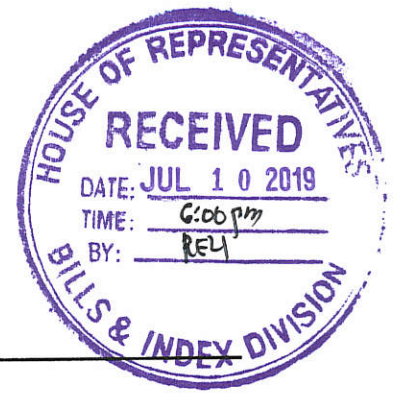


Republic of the Philippines  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS  
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 1943



Introduced by Rep. LAWRENCE LEMUEL H. FORTUN

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

The Philippines is an archipelagic country and seafaring is in the blood of the Filipinos. As a testament to, and symbol of, the country's rich ancient maritime history, this bill seeks to proclaim the Balangay, otherwise known as the Butuan Boat, as the National Boat of the Philippines.

The Balangay was the first-ever wooden watercraft to be excavated in Southeast Asia demonstrating early Filipino boat-building genius and seamanship expertise during the pre-colonial times. Found only in the Philippines where a flotilla of such ancient boats exists, the Butuan Boat was used by our ancestors to maintain trade relations with neighboring islands around the country and empires around Southeast Asia. The extensive utilization of the boat for this purpose confirms the active involvement of our forefathers in robust commercial activities in Asia as early as the 10th and 11th centuries.

The technology used in building this boat is unique to the Balangay. The vessel is a plank boat adjoined by carved-out planks edged through pins and dowels. It is a finely built boat designed for long-distance navigation made without the use of blueprints and was taught to be made from one generation to another using an ancient technique that has been preserved and is still employed by boat makers of Sibu Island. The boat was first mentioned in the 16th Century in the Chronicles of Pigafetta, and is known as the oldest watercraft found in the Philippines.

As demonstrated by our ancestors, building a Balangay and sailing it in the high seas entail solidarity and harmony among boat builders and seafarers. It is for this reason that it is now used by the Philippine Government as a term to refer to the smallest political unit, now popularly known as the **barangay**. The Balangay is a symbol of the Filipino community's character of unity, cooperation, determination, and resilience.

As official recognition of the significance of the Balangay boats and the sites where these boats were found to our history and progress, on March 9, 1987, then President Corazon C. Aquino, issued Presidential Proclamation No. 86, entitled "*DECLARING THE BALANGAYS IN THE VICINITIES OF BUTUAN CITY, NATIONAL CULTURAL TREASURES; AND THE SITES WHERE THESE BALANGAYS ARE FOUND, ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTIONS 3 (c) AND 3 (j), RESPECTIVELY, OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 4846, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "CULTURAL PROPERTIES PRESERVATION AND PROTECTION ACT"*".

The Balangay deserves its rightful place, not only in the museums, but also more importantly, in the consciousness of every Filipino. Declaring it as the country's national boat will ensure that future generations of Filipinos will recognize the invaluable contribution of our forefathers in shaping our maritime tradition and passing on the values of solidarity, harmony, determination, and bravery. In support of this worthy cause, a similar bill filed in the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress was approved by the House members last January 2019. It is hoped that this bill will earn the same support from the members of the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress so that it may regain full momentum and be finally ushered into a law.

The Balangay is a source of true national pride that should not be forgotten. It is time to formally include it in our roster of national symbols.

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 considerations, approval of this bill is most earnestly sought.

REP. LAWRENCE LEMUEL H. FORTUN  
1<sup>st</sup> District of Agusan del Norte

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**AN ACT**  
**DECLARING THE BALANGAY, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE BUTUAN BOAT, AS**  
**THE NATIONAL BOAT OF THE PHILIPPINES**

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

**Section 1.** It is the policy of the State to promote and inculcate nationalism, appreciation and pride in the cultural and historical heritage of the nation. Furthermore, the State shall instill and foster nationalism, appreciation and pride in the country's national symbols that embody the ideals and traditions of the nation.

**Section 2.** The Balangay, otherwise known as the Butuan Boat, including all similar boats that may be discovered later elsewhere in the country, is hereby declared as the National Boat of the Philippines.

**Section 3.** All laws, decrees, orders, and rules and regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

**Section 4.** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved.