



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **1381**



Introduced by **REPRESENTATIVES EDDIEBONG G. PLAZA** and
ALFEL M. BASCUG

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The 21-karat Hindu or Buddhist deity statuette, better known as the Golden Tara, was discovered in 1917 by a Manobo woman named Bilay Campos along the muddy banks of the Wawa River in Esperanza, Agusan del Sur. This artifact reflects the pre-colonial culture of the Agusanon river communities, and their historic trade links and early connections beyond the region.

While the iconographic attributes of the Golden Tara remain a subject of debate, what is certain is that it was found along the riverbanks of Agusan del Sur—likely carried by the floodwaters from the upland areas of the province.

To honor this significant cultural relic and promote local tourism, the small community from Esperanza, Agusan del Sur has erected a historical marker at its discovery site. This effort seeks to establish their legitimate claim to the well-known Golden Tara, which is currently housed at the Grainger Hall of Gems at the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, United States of America. It is hoped that Golden Tara will one day find her home again in the Province of Agusan del Sur.

In view of this matter, approval of this bill which had already reached the Senate during the 19th Congress, is earnestly sought.

ALFEL M. BASCUG
1ST District, Agusan del Sur

EDDIEBONG G. PLAZA
2nd District, Agusan del Sur



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**AN ACT DECLARING THE PROVINCE OF AGUSAN DEL SUR AS THE
HOME OF THE GOLDEN TARA**

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

SECTION 1. It is the policy of the State to promote and promote historical and cultural artifacts.

The Province of Agusan del Sur is hereby declared as the Home of the Golden Tara, a 21-karat gold statuette of a female Hindu deity that dates back to the 9th-10th centuries and was found in 1917 on the banks of the Wawa River in the Municipality of Esperanza, Province of Agusan del Sur. Presently on display in the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, United States of America, it is considered a testament to the rich cultural heritage of Agusan del Sur and to its fine crafting that already existed during pre-colonial times.

SECTION 2. The Department of Tourism (DOT) shall feature the Golden Tara and the rich cultural heritage of Agusan del Sur in the Department's overall tourism promotion program.

SECTION 3. This Act shall be effective fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in at least two newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,