



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila



Nineteenth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **5818**

Introduced by Representative Arnan C. Panaligan

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to institutionalize the Tamaraw Conservation Program in order to prevent the extinction of the Tamaraws and the deterioration of its habitat and address critical issues and challenges affecting its protection, preservation and conservation.

This is a refiled bill, as a similar measure, sponsored by former Rep. Josephine Ramirez-Sato was filed in the Eighteenth Congress. It was approved by the House of Representatives and transmitted to the Senate but did not become a law.

The Island of Mindoro is one of the major biogeographical regions in the country that has social, economic, and ecological importance. The island comprising the provinces of Oriental and Occidental Mindoro is home to many endemic flora and fauna species with national and global significance including the Bubalus Mindorensis or Tamaraw. This critically endangered mammalian species belonging to the water bovine family are only to be found in the Island of Mindoro. These dwarf water buffalo are regarded as the largest endemic land mammal in the Philippines and plays a critical role in maintaining balance in the forest and grassland ecosystems of the Mindoro Island.

In 2000, the Tamaraw was officially listed as critically endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. In 2018, the population count recorded 523 Tamaraws left in the wild, and to date, metapopulations of tamaraw are found in Mt. Cavalite Wildlife Sanctuary, Aruyan-Malite Tamaraw Reservation and in Mts. Iglit-Baco Natural Park where today's 80 percent of its population may be found.

This bill institutionalizing the Tamaraw Conservation Program and its implementation mechanism intends to provide for a holistic and a multi-sectoral intervention and solution addressing the primary threats to the species particularly poaching, disease prevention from domestic cattle to tamaraws and management of invasive species affecting its habitat. Further, it

is aimed to address the inadequate habitat assessment, mapping of pests and diseases, and the lack of research facility and technology to help Tamaraw reproduction.

As a socio-cultural concern, this measure aims to enhance the interaction between the wildlife and Mindoro's indigenous people, the Mangyans, by strengthening the collaboration efforts in integrating conservation measures to the communities' cultural and development needs for the recovery of the tamaraws that are found in their respective ancestral domains.

Considering the great challenges that are faced by the Tamaraws and its habitat, I believe that it is only through the enactment of a law that will protect, preserve and rehabilitate the population of this critically endangered species that we can be assured that the concept of intergenerationality and our rights for healthful ecology, as enshrined in our Constitution, be upheld.

In view of the foregoing, the approval of this bill is urgently requested.



ARNAN C. PANALIGAN



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**AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE TAMARAW CONSERVATION PROGRAM,
CREATING ITS ADMINISTRATIVE AND IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM, AND
PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

SECTION 1. *Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Tamaraw Conservation and
Protection Act.”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to protect and advance
the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and
harmony of nature. It is also the policy of the State to conserve and protect the country's wildlife
resources and its habitats, enhance biodiversity, and ensure provision of ecosystem services.
Towards this end, the State shall institute measures with due regard to local and national interest,
Philippine commitments to international conventions, treaties and agreements for the protection
and conservation of biodiversity, and wildlife resources.

SECTION 3. *Creation of the Tamaraw Conservation Coordinating Council.* – The
Tamaraw Conservation Coordinating Council, hereinafter referred to as the Council, is hereby
created and shall be the body charged with the formulation of policies and management of
programs pertaining to the conservation of the Tamaraw (*Bubalus Mindorensis*) and its current
population in the country.

1 The Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) shall
2 serve as the Chairperson of the Council. The DENR Regional Executive Director for Region IV-
3 B may be designated as the permanent representative by the DENR Secretary and the Assistant
4 Regional Director for Technical Services shall serve as the Vice-Chairperson of the Council.

5
6 The Chairperson shall designate the following as members of the Council, the DENR
7 Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officers (PENROs) of Occidental Mindoro and
8 Oriental Mindoro; the DENR Community Environment and Natural Resources Officer (CENRO)
9 of Sablayan and San Jose in Occidental Mindoro, the CENRO of Roxas and Socorro in Oriental
10 Mindoro; and the Protected Area Superintendents (PASus) of Mts. Iglit-Baco Natural Park and
11 Mt. Calavite Wildlife Sanctuary.

12
13 The Chairperson shall invite representatives from the following to serve as members of
14 the Council:

- 15 a. One (1) each from the Provincial governments of Occidental Mindoro and Oriental
16 Mindoro;
- 17 b. One (1) each from concerned municipal government offices;
- 18 c. Members of the House of Representatives from the Congressional Districts of the
19 provinces of Occidental Mindoro and Oriental Mindoro;
- 20 d. One (1) each from the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples offices in
21 Occidental Mindoro and Oriental Mindoro;
- 22 e. One (1) each from the Indigenous Peoples tribal groups of Buhid, Tau-Buid, Iraya,
23 Bangon, and Alangan;
- 24 f. One (1) each from the academe in Occidental Mindoro and Oriental Mindoro;
- 25 g. Three (3) locally-based conservation non-government organizations (NGOs); and
- 26 h. One from the local Chamber of Commerce.

27 **SECTION 4. *Powers and Functions of the Council.*** – For the effective implementation
28 of the provisions of this Act, the Council is hereby vested with the following powers and
29 functions:

- 30 a. Oversee the implementation of the Tamaraw Conservation Management and Action
31 Plan (TCMAP) and the Tamaraw Conservation Program (TCP);

- b. Integrate and harmonize TCMAP objectives and activities in local development plans, management plans, and the annual work and financial plans of the offices and agencies represented in the Council;
- c. Monitor and review the implementation of TCMAP;
- d. Provide administrative support to the implementation of projects and interventions under the TCMAP;
- e. Create thematic or site-based groups, as needed;
- f. Coordinate with LGUs for issues affecting their areas of jurisdiction;
- g. the private sector and civic organizations for cooperation and assistance in the performance of its functions;
- h. Arrange, negotiate for, accept donations, grants, gifts, loans, and other funding from domestic and foreign sources to carry out the activities and objectives of the TCP; and
- i. Perform such other functions as may be necessary in carrying out the provisions of this Act.

SECTION. 5. *Tamaraw Conservation Technical Advisory Group.* – To ensure science-based interventions and decisions on the conservation of Tamaraws, the Council, through the Chairperson, shall create a Tamaraw Conservation Technical Advisory Group to be composed of representatives from the following:

- a. Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB);
- b. Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau;
- c. Philippine Veterinary Medical Association (PVMA);
- d. International Union for Conservation of Nature Asian Wild Cattle Specialist Group; and
- e. Other experts from the academe and conservation organizations.

SECTION. 6. *Organizational Structure of the Tamaraw Conservation Program Office.*
– The TCPO shall be under the supervision of the DENR Region IV-B Office and shall be headed by the PENRO of Occidental Mindoro. Within six (6) months from the effectivity of this Act, the DENR Regional Executive Director for Region IV-B, in coordination with the BMB, shall prepare the manpower requirements, including plantilla positions for the TCPO to be submitted to the Department of Budget and Management.

SECTION 7. *Establishment of the Tamaraw Conservation and Research Center.* – The Tamaraw Conservation and Research Center (TCRC) is hereby established to ensure that all conservation policies and activities undertaken by the TCPO are based on empirical data and findings from scientific studies and research. The TCRC shall:

- a. Serve as the national conservation research center for the Tamaraw in the areas of conservation genetics, reproductive sciences, and diseases management;
- b. Promote conservation and research for the endemic species of Mindoro Island; and
- c. Take over the operation of the existing Tamaraw Gene Pool Farm within Mts. Iglit-Baco Natural Park to pursue the envisioned plan to strengthen and expand Tamaraw meta-population management in the entire Mindoro Island.

The management and operation of the TCRC facility shall be lodged with the TCPO. All research activities shall be coordinated with the ERDB and BMB.

SECTION 8. *Tamaraw Conservation in Protected Areas.* – The concerned Protected Area Management Board shall monitor and manage the Tamaraw population within the protected areas, ensuring the introduction of adequate measures and interventions for its conservation. The PAMB, through the PASu, shall collaborate closely with the TCPO in carrying out Tamaraw conservation programs and activities within the protected areas.

SECTION 9. *Appropriations.* – The Secretary of the DENR shall immediately include in the Department's programs the implementation of this Act, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 10. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within six (6) months following the effectivity of this Act, the DENR shall, after consultation with concerned government agencies and other institutions, promulgate rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SECTION 11. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within six (6) months following the effectivity of this Act, the DENR and the local government units concerned shall promulgate the rules and regulations for the effective implementation this Act.

SECTION 12. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, other parts or provisions hereof not affected shall continue to be in full force and effect.

1 **SECTION 13. *Repealing Clause.*** – All other laws, ordinances, orders, rules, regulations
2 and other issuances or parts thereof which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed,
3 amended, or modified accordingly.

4 **SECTION 14. *Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
5 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

6 Approved,