

**SENATE**  
**P.S. Res. No. 495**

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Introduced by Senator Maria Lourdes Nancy S. Binay

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**RESOLUTION**  
**DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM TO CONDUCT AN**  
**INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE REPORTED PLANS OF THE**  
**BUREAU OF CORRECTIONS TO BUILD A NEW HEADQUARTERS AT THE**  
**MASUNGI GEORESERVE**

1       **WHEREAS**, Ecotourism and Conservation site Masungi Georeserve raised an  
2 alarm over an area inspection conducted by Bureau of Corrections (BuCor)  
3 personnel, for the alleged relocation site of the New Bilibid Prison within the  
4 geopark's vicinity<sup>1</sup>;

5  
6       **WHEREAS**, according to news reports, acting BuCor Director General,  
7 Gregorio Catapang Jr. said in an official statement, that the BuCor is the owner of  
8 the two hundred seventy (270) hectare land in Tanay, Rizal being contested by the  
9 Masungi Georeserve Foundation, and it will utilize the property for its headquarters,  
10 including residential sites for its personnel<sup>2</sup>;

11  
12       **WHEREAS**, the Masungi Georeserve is a conservation area and a rustic rock  
13 garden tucked in the rainforests of Rizal. Masungi's name is derived from the word  
14 "masungki" which translates to "spiked" - an apt description for the sprawling  
15 limestone landscape found within<sup>3</sup>;

16  
17       **WHEREAS**, in 2019, the Masungi Georeserve has received an international  
18 recognition for its sustainable tourism practices at the annual World Tourism  
19 Organization (UNWTO) Awards<sup>4</sup>;

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<sup>1</sup> Philstar News Website, Masungi Georeserve alarmed over BuCor inspection for Bilibid plans, <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/climate-and-environment/2023/02/17/2245626/masungi-georeserve-alarmed-over-bucor-inspection-bilibid-plans>

<sup>2</sup> Manila Bulletin News Website, BuCor affirms ownership of land in Tanay, Rizal contested by Masungi Georeserve Foundation, <https://mb.com.ph/2023/02/17/bucor-affirms-ownership-of-land-in-tanay-rizalcontested-by-masungi-georeserve-foundation/>

<sup>3</sup> Masungi Georeserve Website, About Masungi Georeserve, <https://www.masungigeoreserve.com/>

<sup>4</sup> Philippine News Agency Website, PH's Masungi Georeserve receives UNWTO recognition, <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1080377>

1           **WHEREAS**, Ann Dumaliang, co-founder of Masungi Georeserve, said the site  
2 being eyed as a relocation site is home to the fragile limestone formations and  
3 included in conservation efforts under the Masungi Geopark Project between the  
4 Masungi Georeserve Foundation and the Department of Environment and Natural  
5 Resources (DENR), through a valid and binding memorandum of agreement signed  
6 by then Environment Secretary Gina Lopez in 2017<sup>5</sup>;

7  
8           **WHEREAS**, scientists from the National Museum of the Philippines had  
9 previously noted that developing the relocation site will have expensive  
10 consequences for the environment<sup>6</sup>;

11  
12           **WHEREAS**, the acting BuCor chief added that a transfer certificate of title for  
13 the two hundred seventy (270) hectare land in the villages of Kuyumbay, Layban,  
14 San Andres and Tinucan in Tanay town was issued in favor of the BuCor on Sept.  
15 28, 2022 and that the parcel of land was originally registered under the Republic of  
16 the Philippines and covered by the Original Certificate of Title 3556<sup>7</sup>;

17  
18           **WHEREAS**, also, he said that Presidential Proclamation 1158 issued on Sept.  
19 8, 2006, by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo allocated two hundred seventy (270)  
20 hectares of the land as the new site of the New Bilibid Prison, as recommended by  
21 the Department of Environment and Natural Resources<sup>8</sup>;

22  
23           **WHEREAS**, on the other hand, the Masungi Georeserve Foundation contends  
24 that the disputed two hundred seventy (270) hectares of land called "Lot 10" has  
25 already been subject to a "joint venture project" as early as 2002 between the DENR  
26 and Blue Star Construction and Development, the company funding Masungi, and a  
27 memorandum was signed in 2009 by then environmental secretary Lito Atienza  
28 urging the DENR regional director to look for an alternative for the relocation of the  
29 New Bilibid Prison<sup>9</sup>;

30  
31           **WHEREAS**, the Masungi georeserve is a symbol of sustainable development  
32 and at the forefront of efforts to conserve, restore, and improve the environment in  
33 the face of climate change, which must be protected by the government and private  
34 sector at all cost;

35  
36           **WHEREAS**, while the initiatives of the Bucor to have a new headquarters and  
37 housing for its personnel is reasonable, it is important to weigh the possible  
38 consequences of building its headquarters in an Ecotourism site like the Masungi  
39 Georeserve, which may affect the environment and tourism in the country;

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<sup>5</sup> BuCor eyes new HQ at Masungi Georeserve. <https://ptvnews.ph/bucor-eyes-new-hq-at-masungi-georeserve>

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

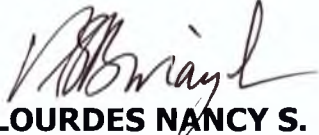
<sup>7</sup> Manila Times News Website, BuCor to push through with Tanay  
project <https://www.manilatimes.net/2023/02/18/news/national/bucor-to-push-through-with-tanay-project/1879185>,

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Inquirer News Website, BuCor eyes new HQ at Masungi Georeserve, relocation site for NBP  
elsewhere, <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1731268/bucor-plans-to-build-headquarters-in-masungi-not-relocation-of-new-bilibid-prison#ixzz7toLRirJK>

1           **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED,**  
2   that the Senate of the Philippines directs the Senate Committee on Tourism to  
3   inquire, in aid of legislation, on the reported plans of the Bureau of Corrections to  
4   build a new headquarters at the Masungi Georeserve.

Adopted,

  
**MARIA LOURDES NANCY S. BINAY**