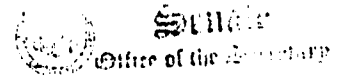


EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Second Regular Session)



SENATE
S. B. No. 2235

21 MAY 25 P3:27

RECEIVED

Introduced by Senator Francis "Tol" N. Tolentino

**AN ACT RENAMING THE BENHAM RISE AS
"PHILIPPINE RISE" OR "TALAMPAS NG PILIPINAS," NAMING THE
UNDERSEA FEATURES THEREIN, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

On May 6, 2017, President Rodrigo Duterte issued Executive Order No. 25 renaming Benham Rise to "Philippine Rise". The Executive Order also mandated the use of Philippine Rise in official maps, charts and all official documents.

The Philippine Rise is a 13-million-hectare underwater plateau, about 2,000 to 5,000 meters deep, located near Aurora.¹ It is bounded to the North and East by the West Philippine Basin, and to the West and South by the Philippine Island of Luzon.² Although largely unexplored, it is said to be larger than Luzon with potentially rich deposits of natural gas and other resources such as heavy metals.³

Article II Sec. 7 of the 1987 Constitution lays down the foreign policy of the Philippines: "The State shall pursue an independent foreign policy. In its relations with other states the paramount consideration shall be national sovereignty, territorial integrity, national interest, and the right to self-determination."

In line with the constitutional mandate, the Philippines submitted its claim for an extended continental shelf in the Philippine Rise Region to the United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (UNCLCS) in 2009. After a series of intensive deliberations, the UNCLCS, on April 2012, confirmed the Philippine Rise as part

¹ K. Francisco, "FAST FACTS: What you should know about Benham Rise", March 18, 2017, Rappler News, retrieved from <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/iq/fast-facts-benham-rise>.

² Benham Rise Executive Summary: ECS Submission of the Republic of the Philippines retrieved from https://www.un.org/Depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/phl22_09/phl_esummary.pdf.

³ M. Palatino, "The China Benham Rise Controversy: A Wake Up Call for the Philippines?", April 11, 2017, The Diplomat, retrieved from <https://thediplomat.com/2017/04/the-china-benham-rise-controversy-a-wake-up-call-for-the-philippines>.

Philippines' extended continental shelf. Notably, the Philippines is the sole claimant of the Philippine Rise.⁴

The Philippine Rise region is subject to the jurisdiction and sovereign rights of the Philippines pursuant to Article 77 of the United Nations Convention on the Laws of the Sea (UNCLOS), which provides that a coastal state has sovereign rights over its continental shelf for the purpose of exploring it and exploiting its natural resources. Under international law, no other state may exploit or undertake exploration activities in the Philippine Rise without express consent of the Philippines.

However, China has named five undersea features in the Philippine Rise despite UNCLCS' confirmation that it is part of the Philippine's continental shelf. In 2014, China submitted the names to the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO), an intergovernmental organization which aims to ensure the world's waters are surveyed and charted. IHO approved one name in 2016 and approved the remaining four in 2017.⁵

This bill seeks to complement Executive Order No. 25, and to solidify the sovereign will of the people by renaming, through legislative fiat, the Benham Rise as "Philippine Rise" or "Talampas ng Pilipinas". Amid competing maritime claims in the West Philippine Sea, exacerbated by China's aggressive posturing, the exercise of sovereign rights by the Philippine Government is paramount to protect our national interest.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

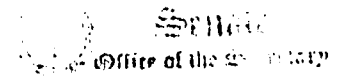


FRANCIS "TOL" N. TOLENTINO

⁴ The Philippine Rise: Fast Facts, Foreign Service Institute, Department of Foreign Affairs, retrieved from <http://www.philchm.ph/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/The-Philippine-Rise-Fast-Facts.pdf>.

⁵ <https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2018/02/13/china-names-five-undersea-features-benham-rise.html>

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**AN ACT RENAMING THE BENHAM RISE AS
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UNDERSEA FEATURES THEREIN, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

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

3

4 Section 1. In the exercise of the Philippine's inherent right to designate the
5 names of its submarine areas, the undersea region found on the east of Luzon,
6 which is formerly known as "Benham Rise," is hereby named as "Philippine Rise" or
7 "*Talampas ng Pilipinas.*"

8

9 SEC. 2. The twenty-two (22) undersea features found in Philippine Rise or
10 *Talampas ng Pilipinas* shall be known as follows:

11

| | Name | Coordinates |
|---|---------------|---|
| 1 | Akle Seamount | POLYGON ((126.33848 18.47302, 126.33018 18.46093, 126.33279 18.44551, 126.34868 18.43958, 126.352 18.42345, 126.3252 18.40447, 126.31144 18.39238, 126.3131 18.38004, 126.32615 18.37672, 126.33729 18.38787, 126.36007 18.40376, 126.37928 18.37459, |

| | | |
|---|------------------|--|
| | | 126.40015 18.36249, 126.42885 18.35537, 126.43976 18.36913, 126.45732 18.36913, 126.47772 18.36889, 126.49147 18.37411, 126.49574 18.39475, 126.46348 18.41538, 126.44759 18.43317, 126.45328 18.45215, 126.43312 18.46733, 126.4215 18.46235, 126.40181 18.47919, 126.40134 18.49959, 126.41154 18.5124, 126.40561 18.52307, 126.37952 18.51809, 126.36315 18.52568, 126.35133 18.51777, 126.34963 18.50599, 126.30978 18.51287, 126.29721 18.50149, 126.30504 18.48299, 126.31974 18.48773, 126.33848 18.47302)) |
| 2 | Amugis Hill | POLYGON ((124.59511 15.87461, 124.59427 15.86748, 124.59662 15.86059, 124.60073 15.85655, 124.61239 15.86319, 124.61493 15.8667, 124.61451 15.87679, 124.61282 15.88228, 124.60828 15.88295, 124.60158 15.87956, 124.59511 15.87461)) |
| 3 | Antipolo Hill | POLYGON ((124.46231 15.97932, 124.45644 15.97597, 124.44597 15.96745, 124.43983 15.96158, 124.43661 15.94957, 124.4408 15.92947, 124.45616 15.92514, 124.47069 15.92954, 124.47243 15.93491, 124.47355 15.94308, 124.46706 15.95781, 124.47083 15.96514, 124.46426 15.97143, 124.46231 15.97932)) |
| 4 | Anubing Seamount | POLYGON ((124.24981 16.39809, 124.246 16.39794, 124.23956 16.39267, 124.23092 16.37041, 124.21906 16.35327, 124.21364 16.34741, 124.21686 16.34448, 124.23282 16.34653, 124.24366 16.32998, 124.26182 16.31563, 124.29185 16.31285, 124.32143 16.31739, 124.33051 16.33657, 124.33725 16.35635, 124.33095 16.36821, 124.28936 16.37744, 124.25684 16.38461, 124.24981 16.39809)) |

| | | |
|---|-------------------|--|
| 5 | Bayog Saddle | POLYGON ((124.1578 16.70452, 124.11307 16.68175, 124.08358 16.60326, 124.09029 16.53393, 124.09822 16.50302, 124.1395 16.46195, 124.18057 16.40379, 124.19135 16.41965, 124.18464 16.50831, 124.20945 16.56707, 124.24239 16.62034, 124.23344 16.63702, 124.20497 16.67524, 124.17854 16.70005, 124.1578 16.70452)) |
| 6 | Bicol Saddle | POLYGON ((123.50595 15.67579, 123.47556 15.52431, 123.55037 15.55002, 123.6219 15.51075, 123.65697 15.54021, 123.75235 15.54208, 123.78648 15.46166, 123.89401 15.58182, 123.81593 15.61267, 123.73177 15.61221, 123.71728 15.58789, 123.67333 15.5715306, 123.63265 15.58743, 123.59946 15.58322, 123.5513 15.61782, 123.50595 15.67579)) |
| 7 | Bicol Slope | POLYGON ((122.74621 15.3576, 122.71738 14.86041, 122.95517 14.75233, 123.78381 14.7127, 124.0288 14.41727, 124.5476 13.90927, 124.57642 13.66068, 124.27379 13.4301, 124.36746 13.17791, 124.89707 13.05181, 125.24654 13.25357, 125.23213 13.65348, 125.02317 14.03537, 124.77097 14.52175, 124.48275 14.93967, 124.27379 15.12702, 123.84145 15.44046, 123.56404 15.56656, 123.09568 15.53413, 122.74621 15.3576)) |
| 8 | East Luzon Trough | POLYGON ((122.50232 15.67898, 122.82273 15.48532, 123.28853 15.54916, 123.16887 15.78853, 123.00043 15.82548, 122.91165 15.94017, 123.25093 16.93462, 123.52632 17.32731, 123.69195 17.3984, 123.85118 17.7518, 123.5683 17.82659, 123.45799 17.50203, 123.11414 17.04287, 122.93655 17.01346, 122.50232 15.67898)) |

| | | |
|----|-------------------|---|
| 9 | Ipil Hill | POLYGON ((125.49385 16.87911, 125.48602528398 16.8117410016766, 125.512537747291 16.7517619863167, 125.564258782275 16.743069375395, 125.599898487054 16.7926172576488, 125.630757255826 16.8599849922922, 125.627714842004 16.914313810553, 125.609025728522 16.9564729735233, 125.567301196098 16.9803776535581, 125.535573166234 16.9686426288137, 125.520795727667 16.9073597218156, 125.49385 16.87911)) |
| 10 | Isabela Ridge | POLYGON ((123.40526 17.67204, 123.4113 17.60116, 123.41006 17.52553, 123.36441 17.4898, 123.37364 17.44946, 123.41544 17.47347, 123.45683 17.53449, 123.47109 17.61005, 123.50286 17.6815, 123.5519 17.79038, 123.53016 17.80854, 123.49935 17.80902, 123.47762 17.78737, 123.40526 17.67204)) |
| 11 | Kalantas Seamount | POINT (124.39312 16.76329) |
| 12 | Malabatino Hill | POLYGON ((124.90724 16.69051, 124.89447 16.68993, 124.89005 16.67883, 124.89145 16.67192, 124.88913 16.6696, 124.88837 16.66321, 124.89383 16.66083, 124.90591 16.66135, 124.90963 16.66565, 124.9141 16.67779, 124.90724 16.69051)) |
| 13 | Mangkono Seamount | POLYGON ((127.29233 16.9857, 127.28132 16.95893, 127.29319 16.92741, 127.33486 16.91273, 127.36746 16.92525, 127.3802 16.96778, 127.3992 16.99153, 127.4264 16.99801, 127.4223 17.01247, 127.39315 17.02953, 127.35904 17.02457, 127.34609 17.01183, 127.31284 17.00233, 127.29233 16.9857)) |
| 14 | Molave Rise | POLYGON ((126.36253 16.08516, 126.35749 15.87181, 126.60443 15.99276, 126.5154 15.74246, 126.66323 |

| | | |
|----|---------------------|--|
| | | 15.53919, 126.85474 15.41488, 127.06472 15.52239, 127.27135 15.58623, 127.49477 15.62655, 127.77364 15.66182, 128.23224 15.64838, 128.17681 15.79118, 127.93826 15.87013, 128.05586 15.89701, 127.9937 16.05156, 127.69468 16.11203, 127.55525 16.23467, 127.1168 16.55048, 126.83122 16.47825, 126.74555 16.33882, 126.51876 16.07172, 126.36253 16.08516)) |
| 15 | Molave Gap | POLYGON ((126.33945 16.05579, 126.3529 16.01117, 126.3529 15.9861, 126.32722 15.9586, 126.30338 15.9103, 126.30094 15.87607, 126.38285 15.88157, 126.37674 15.90358, 126.38224 15.92008, 126.36207 15.9482, 126.37307 15.9751, 126.39447 15.99955, 126.40241 16.01728, 126.40669 16.03623, 126.40853 16.06374, 126.33945 16.05579)) |
| 16 | Narig Seamount | POLYGON ((124.68663 16.57244, 124.69638 16.47406, 124.72402 16.44642, 124.77646 16.44276, 124.82687 16.49805, 124.84598 16.56512, 124.78012 16.64358, 124.73703 16.64276, 124.72728 16.60008, 124.68663 16.57244)) |
| 17 | Narra Spur | POLYGON ((125.47458 17.54664, 126.05975 17.03722, 126.20716 17.71323, 126.55493 18.30067, 126.90694 18.40245, 127.03417 18.56361, 127.12323 18.82232, 126.96207 18.82656, 126.54645 18.68236, 126.05024 18.61026, 126.12658 18.41093, 126.05461 18.21519, 125.90091 18.02896, 125.47458 17.54664)) |
| 18 | Palanan Seamount | POLYGON ((123.08189 17.38776, 123.03401 17.34207, 123.00414 17.2507, 122.98613 17.19008, 122.97251 17.14483, 123.02215 17.11804, 123.07794 17.11584, 123.14427 17.12902, 123.16052 17.18305, 123.14339 |

| | | |
|----|----------------|--|
| | | 17.26959, 123.11044 17.35657, 123.08189 17.38776)) |
| 19 | Palosapis Hill | POLYGON ((124.9481 16.46351, 124.94441 16.44899, 124.93985 16.44825, 124.93998 16.4448, 124.94687 16.4357, 124.95191 16.4304, 124.94945 16.42253, 124.95511 16.4117, 124.95819 16.41096, 124.96963 16.41071, 124.98034 16.41354, 124.99339 16.42671, 124.99659 16.43557, 124.99191 16.44382, 124.98994 16.45243, 124.98366 16.45871, 124.97431 16.46363, 124.96459 16.46462, 124.9481 16.46351)) |
| 20 | Pili Ridge | POLYGON ((124.97196 16.12906, 124.96104 16.1295, 124.95143 16.11858, 124.93659 16.064, 124.98942 16.03692, 125.04095 15.99893, 125.08069 15.97317, 125.11606 15.97361, 125.11999 16.0081, 125.08462 16.04915, 125.06846 16.07535, 125.04051 16.095, 125.02567 16.11596, 125.00907 16.1129, 124.98637 16.12164, 124.97196 16.12906)) |
| 21 | Toog Seamount | POLYGON ((125.84045 17.84893, 125.75722 17.77524, 125.67664 17.70632, 125.67452 17.66709, 125.69149 17.65013, 125.76306 17.63475, 125.82773 17.58651, 125.89347 17.56001, 125.92899 17.55364, 126.0101 17.60878, 126.03024 17.66179, 126.02388 17.75244, 126.02123 17.80811, 125.97829 17.83408, 125.92262 17.85794, 125.88499 17.86271, 125.84045 17.84893)) |
| 22 | Yakal Seamount | POINT (126.28086 18.23918) |

1
2
3
4

SEC. 2. Pursuant to this Act, all official maps and charts of the Philippines to be produced and published by the National Mapping and Resource Information

1 Authority (NAMRIA) shall refer to the abovementioned undersea region as Philippine
2 Rise or *Talampas ng Pilipinas*.

3
4 SEC. 3. The Philippine Government, through the Department of Foreign Affairs
5 (DFA) in consultation with NAMRIA and other relevant government agencies, shall
6 deposit a copy of this Act and other relevant documents with the Secretary-General
7 of the United Nations and notify accordingly all relevant international and
8 intergovernmental organizations, such as the United Nations Statistical Commission,
9 the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations
10 Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations
11 Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN), and the International
12 Hydrographic Organization (IHO), among others.

13
14 SEC. 4. All departments, subdivisions, agencies, and instrumentalities of the
15 Government are hereby directed to use and employ the name Philippine Rise or
16 *Talampas ng Pilipinas* in all communications, messages, and public documents, and
17 to popularize the use of such name with the general public, both domestically and
18 internationally.

19
20 All departments, subdivisions, agencies, and instrumentalities of the
21 Government are enjoined to use the official Philippine maps produced and published
22 by NAMRIA in accordance with this Act: *Provided that*, the Department of Education
23 and the Commission on Higher Education shall cause the distribution of said official
24 Philippine maps to all schools, colleges, and universities, both public and private, as
25 reference material for teaching geography and other related disciplines.

26
27 SEC. 5. All private institutions, organizations, and establishments organized
28 under the laws of the Philippines or operating within the Philippines are hereby
29 directed to employ the name Philippine Rise or *Talampas ng Pilipinas* and the names
30 adopted in this Act for its undersea features in all communications, announcements,
31 and messages, both domestically and internationally.

32

1 SEC. 6. Should any part or provision of this Act be held unconstitutional or
2 invalid, the other parts or provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in full
3 force and effect.

4
5 SEC. 7. All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, issuances, or
6 any part thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed,
7 amended, or modified accordingly.

8
9 SEC. 8. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its complete
10 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

11
12
13
14
15

Approved,