

NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



23 MAY 23 A9:56

SENATE

S. No. 2227

RECEIVED BY:

Introduced by **SENATOR CYNTHIA A. VILLAR**

AN ACT
STRENGTHENING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9237, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE
MOUNT APO PROTECTED AREA ACT OF 2003, BY ESTABLISHING THE
WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AND RESCUE CENTER INSIDE THE MOUNT APO
NATURAL PARK (MANP) TO PRESERVE AND PROTECT THE POPULATION
OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREOF AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article II, Section 16 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution provides the state policy that - "The State shall protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature." In harmony with the said state policy, Republic Act No. 9147 or the "Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act" was enacted in 2001 requiring the preservation and safeguarding of wildlife resources and their habitats.

Republic Act No. 9237 designated Mount Apo Natural Park (MANP) as a protected area under the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS). Since its enactment in 2003, MANP has faced multiple challenges, prompting this proposal for the establishment of a Wildlife Conservation and Rescue Center within its premises. The center's core mission is to augment existing conservation initiatives, focusing particularly on local endangered species confined to the MANP's protected environment. This conforms with Section 2 of RA 9147, which emphasizes the

necessity to protect wildlife species and their habitats to promote ecological balance and enhance biological diversity.

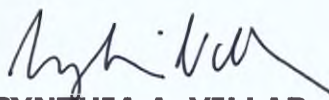
Recognized by UNESCO as one of the most botanically diverse mountains in Asia and the Pacific, Mount Apo is home to an array of rare, endemic, and endangered species of plants. It also serves as the Center for Biodiversity and Endemism in Mindanao, providing sanctuary to some of the most significant land-based biological diversity in terms of flora and fauna per unit area.

Despite these biodiversity attributes, the region's wildlife is under threat. Uncontrolled human activities such as illegal logging, illicit hunting or poaching, and the conversion of forest lands into other uses, coupled with the severe effects of climate change, jeopardize the existence of species, place undue stress on their habitats, and cause an overall decline in wildlife populations. Hence, it is critical to establish a Wildlife Conservation and Rescue Center within the MANP, an initiative aimed at mitigating species extinction and vulnerability.

Given these considerations, the approval of this measure is not only necessary but is a vital step towards ensuring the survival and sustainability of our unique ecosystems, and in preserving the integrity and richness of our natural heritage.

I see the wisdom of filing this Senate counterpart version of House Bill No. 7430 filed by Rep. Rudy S. Caoagdan, DPA of the 2nd District of North Cotabato.

Hence, I recommend the approval of this bill.


CYNTHIA A. VILLAR

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AN ACT

STRENGTHENING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9237, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE MOUNT APO PROTECTED AREA ACT OF 2003, BY ESTABLISHING THE WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AND RESCUE CENTER INSIDE THE MOUNT APO NATURAL PARK (MANP) TO PRESERVE AND PROTECT THE POPULATION OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREOF AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

1 Section 1. *Short Title.* - This act shall be known as the "Mount Apo Natural
2 Park (MANP) Wildlife Conservation and Rescue Center Act".

3 *Sec. 2. Declaration of Policy.* - It shall be the policy of the State to conserve
4 and protect the country's wildlife resources and their habitats for sustainability, to
5 promote ecological balance, enhance biological diversity, and ensure the provision of
6 ecosystem services for the wildlife population, and to preserve these resources for
7 future generations of the country.

8 *Sec. 3. Objectives.* - This Act aims to conserve rarely sighted local species in
9 the Mt. Apo Natural Park, including the *Sus Philippinensis* (Philippine Warty Pig) and
10 the *Rusa Marianna* (Philippine Brown Deer), which face severe threats of extinction,
11 intense pressure, and population decline. These threats primarily arise from
12 unregulated human activities, including illegal logging, hunting, poaching, and
13 conversion of forest land for agriculture and settlements, making these species

1 particularly vulnerable to extinction. Consequently, the establishment of the MANP
2 Wildlife Conservation and Rescue Center carries the following objectives:

- 3 a) To provide temporary and appropriate shelter for confiscated, donated and/or
4 abandoned wild animals in the area;
- 5 b) To provide isolation and quarantine facilities for confiscated, donated and/or
6 abandoned wild animals; and,
- 7 c) To provide adequate care and maintenance for confiscated, donated and/or
8 abandoned wild animals with ultimate objective of releasing/ putting back to
9 the natural habitats those which are fit to survive.

10 Sec. 4. *Definition of Terms.* - As used in this Act, the following shall be
11 construed as:

- 12 a) *Abandoned* — wild animals intentionally left by keeper/owner (human)
13 giving up responsibility for care and maintenance or left by "biological"
14 parents (for animals);
- 15 b) *Critically endangered species* — refers to a species or subspecies that is
16 facing extremely high risk of extinction in the wild in the immediate
17 future;
- 18 c) *Confiscated* — wild animals seized by the DENR personnel or turned
19 over by other apprehending authorities;
- 20 d) *Derivatives* — refers to a substance/ material extracted or taken from
21 wildlife such as but not limited to blood, saliva, oils, genes, urine; a
22 compound directly or indirectly produced from wildlife and/or products
23 produced from wildlife and wildlife products;
- 24 e) *Domesticated* — refers to any animal listed by the relevant authorities
25 easily propagated and altered or selected for desirable characteristics
26 and preferences for domestic use;
- 27 f) *Donated* — voluntary and unconditional giving up of ownership, and
28 free of charge turn-over of wild animals;

- 1 g) *Endangered species* — refers to species or subspecies that is not
2 critically endangered but whose survival in the wild is unlikely if causal
3 factors continue operating;
- 4 h) *Endemic species* — refers to species or subspecies which is naturally
5 occurring and found only within specific areas in the country;
- 6 i) *Habitat* — refers to place or environment where species or subspecies
7 naturally occur or has naturally established its population;
- 8 j) *Indigenous wildlife* — refers to species or subspecies of wildlife
9 naturally occurring or has naturally established population in the
10 country;
- 11 k) *Other wildlife species* — refers to all non-threatened species that have
12 the tendency to become threatened due to the destruction of habitat or
13 other similar causes as may be listed by the Secretary upon the
14 recommendation of the National Wildlife Management Committee;
- 15 l) *Protected Wildlife* — refers to all wildlife falling under any category of
16 threatened wildlife species and other wildlife species listed by the
17 DENR, DA, PCSD and BMG that is not in the threatened list but are
18 identified and listed by DENR, DA, PCSD and BMG as requiring legal
19 protection;
- 20 m) *Quarantine* — wild animals are kept in isolation to prevent spread or
21 transmission of diseases;
- 22 n) *Rehabilitation* — restoring the normal health of wild animals with
23 previous injury or illness;
- 24 o) *Vulnerable species* — refers to species or subspecies that is not
25 critically endangered nor endangered but is under threat from adverse
26 factor throughout their range and is likely to move to the endangered
27 category in the near future;

1 p) *Wildlife* — refers to wild forms and varieties of flora and fauna, in all
2 developmental stages, including those which are in captivity or are
3 being bred or propagated;

4 q) *Wildlife Rescue Center* — refers to government establishment or
5 designated repositories of abandoned, injured, donated, and
6 confiscated wildlife for treatment, care and rehabilitation.

7 *Sec. 5. The Wildlife and Rescue Center in MANP.* - The Center shall serve as
8 the central body responsible for managing daily operations. It shall consist of an
9 Administrator and three (3) technical personnel with expertise in the field of
10 veterinary medicine and other related disciplines.

11 *Sec. 6. Powers and Functions.* - The Center shall have the following powers
12 and functions:

13 a) To accommodate, protect, and preserve the wildlife species identified as
14 most vulnerable to the effects of human encroachment and man-made
15 disasters;

16 b) To contribute to Mt. APO's pursuit of UNESCO World Heritage Site status;

17 c) To foster partnerships with concerned national agencies, local
18 government units (LGUs), academic institutions, local inhabitants, and
19 other stakeholders for sustainable and inclusive participation;

20 d) To accept grants, subsidies, donations, or contributions from corporations,
21 trusts, foundations, associations, and other sources from private or
22 governmental offices, agencies, or corporations in the Philippines or
23 abroad;

24 e) To establish, maintain, operate, and provide a transparent reporting
25 system to the national government to ensure the achievement of the
26 objectives of this Act."

27 *Sec. 7. Protected Area Management Bureau (PAMB).* - The PAMB shall
28 oversee the operations of the Wildlife and Rescue Center in MANP. It shall serve as
29 the oversight and advisory board of the Center where all decisions that requires

1 policy approval and funding requirements needed shall be duly approved by the
2 PAMB subject to the applicable laws, rules and regulations.

3 *Sec. 8. Powers and Functions.* - The PAMB shall have the following powers
4 and functions overseeing the management and operations of the Center:

- 5 a) To approve proposals that shall sustain the operations of the Center,
6 subject to evidence from research and development;
- 7 b) To assist the Center in contributing to Mt. Apo's pursuit of UNESCO World
8 Heritage Site status;
- 9 c) To approve legal instruments in the form of memoranda and other
10 agreements entered into by the Center in partnership with the concerned
11 national agencies, local government units (LGUs), academic institutions,
12 local inhabitants, and other stakeholders for sustainable and inclusive
13 participation;
- 14 d) To approve grants, subsidies, donations, or contributions received from
15 corporations, trusts, foundations, associations, and other sources from
16 private or government offices, agencies, or corporations in the Philippines
17 or abroad; and
- 18 e) To approve the Center's establishment, operations, and maintenance for
19 the national government reporting requirements in order to achieve the
20 objectives of this Act

21 *Sec. 9. Partner Institutions.* - The Center shall establish coordination and
22 partnerships for research and development (R&D), innovations, technical expertise,
23 and other conservation-related breakthroughs with the following institutions:

- 24 a) State Colleges and Universities (SCUs);
- 25 b) Local Government Units;
- 26 c) Philippine Eagle Foundation (PEF); and
- 27 d) Other private institutions.

28 *Sec. 10. Exemption from Taxes and Duties.* - The Center shall be exempt
29 from the payment of customs duties and taxes on the importation of veterinary

1 supplies, other farm inputs, equipment and machinery, and research equipment,
2 including their spare parts, for the purpose of augmenting and upgrading local
3 stocks and breeders, subject to the following conditions:

4 a) That the equipment and machinery, including its spare parts, are not
5 manufactured domestically in sufficient quantity, of comparable quality,
6 and at reasonable prices; and

7 b) That they shall be used actually, directly, and exclusively by the
8 Center in the production, propagation, and rescue of wildlife animals."

9 *Sec. 11. Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within ninety (90) days from
10 the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of the DENR shall, in consultation with the
11 Protected Area Management Board of the MANP and other stakeholders, issue rules
12 and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

13 *Sec. 12. Appropriations.* - The Secretary of the DENR shall immediately
14 include in the Department's program the implementation of this Act, the funding of
15 which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

16 *Sec. 13. Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act is declared
17 unconstitutional or invalid, other parts or provisions hereof not affected thereby shall
18 continue to be in full force and effect.

19 *Sec. 14. Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and
20 regulations or parts thereof which are contrary to or inconsistent with this Act are
21 hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

22 *Sec. 15. Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
23 complete publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general
24 circulation.

Approved,