



LEAGUE OF PROVINCES OF THE PHILIPPINES

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February 1, 2017

HON. PEDRO B. ACHARON JR.

Chairperson
Committee on Local Government
House of Representatives
Batasan Complex, Quezon City

Dear Cong. Acharon,

Greetings from the League of Provinces!

The League of Provinces of the Philippines (LPP) formally registers the approval to the passage of the House Bill No. 4633, entitled: ***“AN ACT RENAMING THE PROVINCE OF COMPOSTELA VALLEY INTO DAVAO DE ORO PROVINCE, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE PERTINENT PORTIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8470”***. Introduced by Reps. Ma. Carmen S. Zamora and Ruwel Peter S. Gonzaga.

In support to the above proposed legislative measure, may we respectfully forward to your good office the herein attached position paper/comments of the Province Compostella Valley for your information and consideration.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely Yours,


SANDRA T. PAREDES
Executive Director



Republic of the Philippines
Province of Compostela Valley
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
4th Floor, Capitol Building, Cabidanan, Nabunturan,
Compostela Valley Province

Members of the Committees

Committee on Local Government
House of Representatives
Batasang Pambansa, Quezon City

Thru: **Rep. Pedro Acharon**
Chair
Committee on Local Government
House of Representatives

Mr. Chair

Recently, the two representatives of Compostela Valley namely Rep. Maricar Zamora (1st District) and Rep. Ruwel Peter Gonzaga (2nd District) filed House Bill No. 4633 or “AN ACT RENAMING THE PROVINCE OF COMPOSTELA VALLEY INTO DAVAO DE ORO PROVINCE, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE PERTINENT PORTIONS. The mentioned House bill is in positive response with the resolution passed and endorsed by the Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Compostela Valley led by Vice Gov. Manuel “Waykurat” Zamora. Resolution No. 295-2016 sponsored by SP Member Joseph T. Jauod and Marie Jude Fuentes-Lopez officially requested the Rep. Zamora and Rep. Gonzaga to fill a bill asking for the name change.

The proposal slowly gained ground and traction as representatives from other districts within Davao Region expressed their support over this bill namely Rep. Antonio Floirendo (Davao del Norte, 2nd District), Rep. Corazon Malanyaon (Davao Oriental, 1st District), Rep. John Mayo Almario (Davao Oriental, 2nd District), Rep. Mercedes Cagas (Davao Del Sur) and Rep. Lorna Bautista-Sandigan (Davao Occidental). The business sector, media outlets and a considerable number of constituents already extended their approval over this plan. As Chief Executive of the Province of Compostela Valley, I am with them in pursuing for this change of name, for compelling reasons, both principled and consequential.

(1) **Affinity to the “Davao Identity”**. The Province of Compostela Valley before becoming a separate and distinct political subdivision has long identified itself with Davao. Appealing to history, when the Americans came to Mindanao and established tribal wards to co-opt the locals, the inhabitants of what is now Compostela Valley had been classified along with the Davao tribal ward. Chroniclers and ethnographers refer to them as “Dabawenyos”. There is even a common practice among Mandaya and Mansaka residents to refer themselves as “Dabawenyos” than identifying with their actual names (both endonym and exonym).

The establishment of the Third Republic gave birth to what is to be known as the undivided “Davao Province”. The father of President Rodrigo Duterte, Vicente Duterte was once governor of the Davao Province. In 1960, Davao Province was then divided into three political entities- Davao del Norte, Davao del Sur and Davao Oriental. Compostela Valley with its location at the northernmost part of the Davao Region was part of Davao del Norte. With the belief that the large size of Davao del Norte, then the 8th largest province in the country, hinders full development and equitable distribution of social services, the movement to create a separate province started in the 1980’s. The originally proposed name for Compostela Valley is Davao del Norte. The mother province, by virtue of Republic Act 6430 signed on June 17, 1972, would be known as the Davao Province. However, the House of Representatives’ Reference and Research Bureau which was concerned in the research and legal work on the creation of the province found out that the mother province continues to be officially referred as Davao del Norte in most legal documents. To avoid further technical and legal issues the province was named as Compostela Valley, referring to the fertile plain located at the heart of the province.

In the 12th Congress (2001-2004), then Rep. Manuel “Waykurat” Zamora and Rep. Prospero Amatong filed House Bill 1081 asking the change of name from Compostela Valley to Davao de Oro. De Oro means “of/with gold”. The name was deemed appropriate especially that one of the primary industries of ComVal is on gold mining. It is interesting to note that ten out of its eleven municipalities have gold deposits. Currently, Compostela Valley is part of the Davao Region (Region XI).

Basing on historical facts, it can be observed that Davao plays a major role on the origin and conception of what is now the Province of Compostela Valley. The name Davao is already prominent from the time of its classification as “Davao tribal ward” since the American occupation, to its amalgamation to the undivided Davao Province, to the unsuccessful attempt to name it Davao del Norte and the recent pursuit to have it named “Davao de Oro”. These events suggest that Davao has always been the collective identity espoused by the people of Compostela Valley. Hence, this bill.

It is also worthy to note that among the five provinces of Davao Region, only Compostela Valley does not have Davao on its name. The other four provinces carry Davao namely Davao del Norte, Davao del Sur, Davao Oriental, Davao Occidental. The renaming of the Province of Compostela Valley into the Province of Davao de Oro would affirm its place in the Davao Region. As Davao Region prepares itself to be a unified regional entity, under a federal government pursued by Davao’s very own, President Rodrigo Duterte, having ComVal named Davao De Oro would be necessary and appropriate.

(2) **Aiming for Inclusivity.** As mentioned elsewhere, the name “Compostela Valley” was derived from the fertile plain located at the center of the province. While it is true that the valley is a prominent feature in the province, to name the province referring to one geographical place is lacking and wanting.

Only six municipalities are located on the valley- Mawab, Nabunturan, Monkayo, Montevista, New Bataan and Compostela. Three towns are in coastal areas namely Maco, Mabini and Pantukan. Laak and Maragusan are not located in the valley.

To be more inclusive, we refer the entire province into a single landmark is insufficient and not inclusive.

Moreover, there is a general perception, rightly or wrongly, that the name Compostela Valley does not extend any justice to the Municipality of Compostela. The identity of the municipality is crowded by the name of the province who shares its name. We cannot categorically say that it does affect the municipality in a more direct and tangible manner. However, by principle, it is already unfortunate that a component municipality is not given due recognition because it shares the same name of a larger and comparatively well-known political entity.

(3) **Leveraging on the name “Davao”.** On a more pragmatic sense, we wish to see our province renamed as Davao de Oro as a strategic move to draw more benefits for the province. Davao Region is always considered a bustling region with competitive business environment and a relatively stable security. Due to this, Davao Region receives high investments yearly. There is a general feeling among the people of Compostela Valley that its name can play as a possible barrier to accrue these benefits. The name “Davao de Oro” would make it easy for the province to be identified, as the name Davao is already well-renowned.

The province also wants to leverage from the popularity of President Rodrigo Duterte who served as Davao City Mayor for many years. Business leaders and public officials notice that since President Duterte assumed office, economic activities in Davao City spurred. It is a common knowledge that if a place achieves growth, it also paves opportunities for its neighboring localities. Compostela Valley hopes that if its name is eventually changed to “Davao de Oro”, it would be easier for it to enjoy these benefits.

The change of name also opens opportunity for re-branding. The name Compostela Valley, with all of its good qualities and characteristics, has its associations with the issues of insurgency and calamity (e.g. Typhoon Pablo). In the study conducted by Dacalos (2010), non-distinctive brands, economic problems and in some cases, negative history would definitely affect the way these places are being positioned. In her study, she posits that renaming allows opportunity for the place to reinvent itself. The eventual renaming of the province should be accompanied by sound planning.

It is worthy to note that there are several prominent places in the world that eventually changed its name. The country Thailand changed its name from “Siam” to signify their “freedom”, as the only place in Southeast Asia that was never conquered by any colonizer. The municipality of Magallon in Negros Occidental was changed to the Municipality of Moises Padilla, to give honor to one mayoral candidate in the 1950’s that dared to challenge prominent families in the province. Moises Padilla is an iconic figure in Magallon. Hence, the

change of name. The City of Koronadal changed its name from Marbel, to represent the two distinct features of the city. Koron means “grass” and nadal means “plain”.

Critics of the proposal insinuate that there are greater priorities than the change of name. As we concur to this opinion, we also say that we are capable of handling this change of name at the same time, not interrupting the delivery of services. This is not a disgrace to the province’s founders because as stated elsewhere, Cong. Sarmiento and Cong. Amatong, the pioneers of the province also want to identify the province with the larger Davao entity. It is even disgraceful to not consider the change of name in the name of tradition. We believe that the arguments we forwarded in support with this shift of name are sturdy enough, in both principle and pragmatism.

We assure that the change that we pushing and supporting will pass through democratic processes. As we have received positive responses on this, we continue to conduct consultations to get more inputs. We remain committed in following all democratic processes in the face of this change.

Rest assured that the change we propose is always done in the name of the people’s welfare, as they are exactly the reason why this province was created to begin with.

Respectfully Yours,

Sgd. Jayvee Tyron L. Uy
Governor