



Consulate general of the republic of the philippines Honolulu

EXTREMELY URGENT

22 March 2017

The Honorable Representative Ken Ito, Chair
The Honorable Representative James Tokioka, Vice Chair
Members of the Veterans, Military, & International Affairs, & Culture and the Arts (F:808-586-6271)
Hawaii State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Ito, Vice Chair Tokioka, and Members of the Committee:

HCR 177 - REQUESTING THE HAWAII SISTER-STATE COMMITTEE TO EVALUATE THE SISTER-STATE APPLICATION AND, UPON APPROVAL, PROCEED WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SISTER-PROVINCE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STATE OF HAWAII AND THE PROVINCE OF AKLAN OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES.

I would like to express my strong support for the establishment of a Sister-Province relationship between the State of Hawaii and the Province of Aklan, Philippines.

I also note that the Office of Aklan Governor Florencio Miraflores, in support of this proposal, had submitted documents, duly endorsed by the Philippine Consulate General, to the Hawaii Sister State Committee of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT), relative to the application for a Sister-Province Relationship with the State of Hawaii.

Through this Sister Province relationship, we hope to pursue our mutual economic, cultural, environmental and educational relationship.

1. ECONOMIC

The province of Aklan is home of the world-famous Boracay beach, which has received awards and accolades from numerous international travel publications and beaches. Aklan is also the home of the "Mother of All Philippine Festivals", the Ati-Atihan Festival, which continues to draw visitors not just from the other islands of the Philippines, but from across the globe, every January.

The province of Aklan, like the State of Hawaii, depends highly on tourism as one of its drivers of economic growth. Agriculture, fishing and weaving and manufacture of textile from pineapple fiber (piña) which is used to make Philippine national attire, are also top industries of Aklan.

2. EDUCATIONAL

A State/Province relationship will help reinforce or strengthen educational exchanges among students and faculty between Hawaii and Aklan. We are pleased to report to the Committee that in February 2017, the Aklan State University (ASU) and the University of Hawaii (UH) in Hilo forged a Memorandum of Understanding on International Exchange Programs.

We look forward to more exchanges and programs promoting education and academic advances in the future for both faculty and students of Hawaii and Aklan institutions of learning, which a Sister State Province could help arrange and facilitate.



Consulate general of the republic of the philippines Honolulu

3. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

One of the many Filipino community groups that fully supports this initiative, being natives of the Aklan province, is the Aklan Cultural Society of Hawaii Foundation (ACSH), an almost thirty-year old organization created to perpetuate the culture of the Aklan/Panay region. The ACSH had conveyed to the Philippine Consulate General its resolute support to the Sister-Province Relationship and will undertake projects and activities to sustain, promote and foster said relationship.

4. DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Aklan is located in the Western Visayas region, situated in the northwest portion of Panay Island and bordering the provinces of Antique and Capiz. As an island like Hawaii, it is prone to natural disasters such as typhoons and hurricanes. Through the establishment of a State/Province relationship, Hawaii and Aklan may share best practices in disaster preparedness and mitigation and sustainable development.

5. ECOLOGICAL AND COASTAL MANAGEMENT

The Aklan Province could share with Hawaii its best practices on ecological and coastal management through the 220-hectare mangrove forest called "Bakhawan EcoPark" located in Kalibo, the provincial capital. The Bakhawan EcoPark, known as the "Philippines' most successful mangrove reforestation project", is a product of the provincial government's reforestation project in 1990 when it transformed the muddy shoreline of Barangay New Buswang into a mangrove reforestation to prevent flood and storm surges in the community.

6. RENEWABLE ENERGY

We note the State of Hawaii's bold energy agenda, through its clean and renewable energy plans. Aklan and Hawaii could explore opportunities for possible partnerships on renewable energy, as well as share best practices. Aklan is home to several wind energy farms / wind turbines located in the towns of Nabas and Malay.

The above are just a few of the advantages we could have if the Sister-Province relationship between Hawaii and Aklan is realized.

I am in full support of the HCR177 and I am highly positive that this will bear a fruitful and mutually-beneficial relationship.

Thank you very much and I respectfully request that you consider supporting this initiative.

Sincerely,

GINA A. JAMORALIN
Consul General



Republic of the Philippines
AKLAN STATE UNIVERSITY
Banga, Aklan

March 23, 2017

A LETTER OF SUPPORT/TESTIMONY FOR HCR 177

On behalf of the Aklan State University, a state higher education institution in the Province of Aklan, we strongly support **HCR 177** *“Requesting the Hawaii Sister-State Committee to Evaluate the Sister-State Application and Upon Approval, Proceed with the Establishment of a Sister-Province Relationship Between the State of Hawaii and the Province of Aklan of the Republic of the Philippines”*.

In the pursuit internationalization of higher education in the Philippines along research and faculty and student exchange, the Aklan State University has signed a **memorandum of understanding (MOU)** with the University of Hawaii. The agreement was approved by the Board of Regents of the Aklan State University presided by the Chair of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Co-Chair President of the University, Senator of the Philippines representing the Chair of Higher and Technical Education, Congressman representing the House Committee on Higher and Technical Education, 3 Regional Directors of the Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Science and Technology (DOST) and the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA); faculty and student representatives, alumni and the private sector representatives.

We strongly endorse the passage of HCR 177 in order to further strengthen this relationship between the Province of Aklan of the Republic of the Philippines and the State of Hawaii. Herewith is the Memorandum of Understanding which embody our stipulations – these stipulations can further be facilitated when a sister state – province relationship will be established.

We reiterate our strong endorsement of the passage of HCR 177 and support the establishment of sister province relationship.

Very truly yours,

DANILO E. ABAYON, PhD
University President



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

LUIS P. SALAVERIA
DIRECTOR

MARY ALICE EVANS
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

No. 1 Capitol District Building, 250 South Hotel Street, 5th Floor, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2359, Honolulu, Hawaii 96804
Web site: www.hawaii.gov/dbedt

Telephone: (808) 586-2355
Fax: (808) 586-2377

Statement of
LUIS P. SALAVERIA
Director
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS, MILITARY, & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS,
& CULTURE AND THE ARTS**

Thursday, March 23, 2017
9:50 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 429

in consideration of
HCR 177
**REQUESTING THE HAWAII SISTER-STATE COMMITTEE TO EVALUATE THE
SISTER-STATE APPLICATION AND, UPON APPROVAL, PROCEED WITH THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF A SISTER-PROVINCE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE
STATE OF HAWAII AND THE PROVINCE OF AKLAN OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE
PHILIPPINES.**

Chair Ito, Vice Chair Tokioka, and Members of Committee.

The Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) supports the intent of HCR 177, which requests the Hawaii Sister-State Committee to evaluate the application for the establishment of a sister-state relationship with the Province of Aklan of the Republic of the Philippines.

DBEDT is pleased to report that the Hawaii Sister-State Committee has received the application for sister-state relationship submitted by the Aklan Cultural Society of Hawaii and is in the process of reviewing the document.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



LATE

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Veterans, Military, & International Affairs & Culture and the Arts
March 23rd, 2017 at 9:50 am

By
Donald O. Straney
Chancellor, University of Hawai'i at Hilo

HCR 177 - REQUESTING THE HAWAII SISTER-STATE COMMITTEE TO EVALUATE THE SISTER-STATE APPLICATION AND, UPON APPROVAL, PROCEED WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SISTER-PROVINCE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STATE OF HAWAII AND THE PROVINCE OF AKLAN OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

Chair Ito, Vice Chair Tokioka and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony for HCR 177. My name is Donald Straney, Chancellor of the University of Hawai'i at Hilo (UH Hilo). I am testifying as a member of the Hawai'i Island community and I support the intent of HCR 177 to proceed with the establishment of a sister-province relationship between the State of Hawaii and the Province of Aklan of the Republic of the Philippines.

Last month, UH Hilo and Aklan State University, the flagship public university of the Province of Aklan, consummated a Memorandum of Understanding on International Exchange programs to enhance the teaching, research, and outreach activities at both universities. The primary areas of cooperative interest are marine science, aquaculture and fisheries, tropical agriculture, agro/eco-tourism, coastal restoration ecology, sustainable rural livelihood technologies, rural resource management and appropriate industrial technologies for humid tropical islands, and Filipino studies. UH Hilo presently offers a very popular and unique Filipino Studies Certificate program that emphasizes the interface between Filipino culture and natural resource management.

There is a strong desire in the Province of Aklan to forge closer relationship with Hawai'i and the University of Hawai'i at Hilo has several faculty and staff with strong Philippine ties by national origin and international volunteer work with the Peace Corps and NGOs. I urge the Committee to approve this resolution to enhance the international standing of our state and to ensure a bright future for our students with interests in the Philippines.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HCR 177. Aloha.



THE FILIPINO COMMUNITY CENTER, INC.

94-428 Mokuola St., Suite 302 Waipahu, Hawai'i 96797 Phone: 680-0451 Fax: 680-7510 www.filcom.org

Our mission is to develop, own and operate a community center that provides social, economic and education services and to promote and perpetuate Filipino culture and customs in the State of Hawai'i.

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March 21, 2017

Chair Rep. Ken Ito
Vice Chair Rep. James K. Tokioka
State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

RE: HCR 177, Sister-State Application, Province of Aklan, Philippines

Dear Chair Ito, Vice Chair Tokioka, and Members of the Committee,

An important part of The Filipino Community Center, Inc.'s mission statement is to operate a community center that provides social, economic and education services and to promote and perpetuate Filipino culture and customs in the State of Hawaii. As one of the largest ethnic groups representing the population of the State of Hawaii, the furtherance of stronger relationships between our State and the Philippines is of utmost importance.

Therefore, we support the Establishment of a Sister-Province between the State of Hawaii and the Province of Aklan of the Republic of the Philippines. The passing of this measure would solidify the relationship and ties and encourage the nurturing of endeavors between the two parties.

Sincerely,
The Filipino Community Center, Inc.

Edmund C. Aczon
Chair
Board of Directors



CONGRESS OF VISAYAN ORGANIZATION

To: The Honorable Ken Ito, Chair
The Honorable James Kunane, Vice Chair
and members of the House Committee on VMI

Date: March 23, 2017

Time: 9:50am

Place: State Capitol, Room 429

From: May Mizuno, President
Congress of Visayan Organizations (COVO)

Re: HCR177 REQUESTING THE HAWAII SISTER-STATE COMMITTEE TO EVALUATE THE SISTER-STATE APPLICATION AND, UPON APPROVAL, PROCEED WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SISTER-PROVINCE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STATE OF HAWAII AND THE PROVINCE OF AKLAN OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

Position: IN SUPPORT

My name is Mizuno and I am the president of Congress of Visayan Organizations or COVO. COVO is a statewide umbrella of Visayan organizations in the State of Hawaii for 30 years now in which Aklan Association of HI is one of the unit organizations. Its mission is to unite Visayan organizations in Hawaii under one umbrella and to assist in the development of all Visayans in the social, cultural, educational, political and livelihood aspects of their lives in Hawaii and in the Philippines.

Hawaii is home to a large and vibrant Filipino community that contributes culturally, socially, economically, and educationally to Hawaii's well-being.

Province of Aklan is emerging as a technological hub in the central Philippines, with growing business-process-outsourcing and other technology-related industries, and is a top international tourist destination, making the province much like Hawaii.

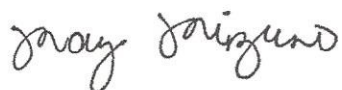
The sisterhood will help both parties in areas of cooperation such as Disaster Risk Management, Climate Change Adaptation/Mitigation best practices, Beach Enhancement Technology and may other mutual learnings to ensure a sustainable tourism development.

I am attaching herewith the letter from the Office of the Governor in the Province of Aklan, Philippines to the DBEDT director Luis Salaveria.

With all the foregoing reasons, I urge your committee to pass this resolution.

Thank you.

Salamat and aloha,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "May Mizuno".

May Mizuno, COVO President

attachment



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
PROVINCE OF AKLAN
KALIBO, AKLAN

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT - AKLAN
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
RELEASED

BY: Mur
DATE: Feb 8, 2017
TIME: 5:45 pm

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

To: **MR. Roberto T. Bernardo, Acting Head of Post**
MS. Joyleen Espinosa Santos, Consul
Philippine Consulate of the Republic of the Philippines Honolulu, Hawaii

Re: *Your email exchanges with Mr. Milton Kwock and Mr. Dennis T. Ling dated January 31, 2017, February 1, 2017 respectively and Letter of Mr. Roberto T. Bernardo dated February 1, 2017*

From: **MS. Billie V. Calizo-Quimpo**
Consultant to Governor Florencio T. Miraflores for Trade and Tourism

Dear **Mr. Bernardo & Ms. Santos,**

Greetings!

As previously informed to the Philippine Consulate, Governor Florencio T. Miraflores of the Province of Aklan has tasked me to coordinate with you and the State Legislature of Hawaii the matter of the proposed Sisterhood Agreement between the State of Hawaii and the Province of Aklan.

In reply to Messrs. Dennis Ling and Milton Kwock's concerns and may I quote as follows

- 1.) Their should be a strong justification for the establishment of a sister state/province relationship by identifying programs and projects that Hawaii could benefit from the said agreement.
- 2.) The evaluation committee is expected to review the documents with the eye on what a sister relationship with Akan Province can do for Hawaii especially in regards to investment into the State of Hawaii, Trade expansion for Hawaii products and business expansion.
- 3.) If Aklan has never had a sister state relationship, where was the impetus for Hawaii to be its first and for what reason? How will this relationship benefit Hawaii?

The aforesaid comments/questions coming from Messrs. Dennis T. Ling and Milton Kwock understandably are logical basis when any of the 2 parties are to evaluate the benefits each of the party can derive from in a usual Sisterhood Agreement. However, in the case of the State of Hawaii and the Province of Aklan it is very obvious that Hawaii is one of the fifty (50) States of the United States of America, a develop country and a world leader whilst the Province of Aklan is a 2nd class province, one (1) of the eighty (80) provinces of the Republic of the Philippines, a developing country. There is no point of comparison



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
PROVINCE OF AKLAN
KALIBO, AKLAN

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

we could help each other sustainably develop our respective territories which hopefully will have a positive impact in the global community.

We could not think of anymore stronger justifications than what we cited here, so we leave it to the good judgement of the reviewing authorities in Hawaii.

With our highest esteem!

Very truly yours,

GABRIELLE V. CALIZO-QUIMPO

Consultant to the Governor for Tourism and Trade
Former Vice Governor (July 2007- June 2016)
Province of Aklan

cc: Hon. Florencio T. Miraflores, Governor, Province of Aklan
Atty. Reynaldo M. Quimpo, Vice Governor, Province of Aklan
Dr. Gina Jamoralin, Consul General, Philippine Consulate General Honolulu
Mr. Dennis T. Ling, Administrator, DBEDT
Mr. Milton Kwock, DBEDT
Ms. May Mizuno, President, Congress of Visayan Organizations
Ms. Mary Jean Castillo, Aklan Society of Hawaii



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
PROVINCE OF AKLAN
KALIBO, AKLAN

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF AKLAN
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

RELEASED

BY: [Signature]
DATE: JAN 20 2017
TIME: 3:49 PM

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

January 20, 2017

MR. LUIS P. SALAVERIA

Director

Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism
No. 1 Capitol District Building
250 South Hotel Street, 5th Floor
Honolulu Hawaii
96913

Dear Director Salaveria,

Reference is made to your letter to Governor Florencio T. Miraflores inquiring as to the process undertaken by the Provincial Government of Aklan on the Proposed Sisterhood between the State of Hawaii and the Province of Aklan, Philippines.

The idea was brought up during the visit to Aklan of Vice Speaker John Mizuno of Hawaii's State Legislature, The members of our provincial legislature known as the Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Aklan met with him over lunch and both discussed possible areas of cooperation considering that our province and Hawaii have a common industry which is tourism. Aklan is home of the world famous Boracay Island, many times voted by major international travel magazines and tourism organizations as The Best Tropical Beach in the World. Boracay is number 1 tourist destination in the Philippines, generating 30 to 35% of total tourist arrivals in the country. On the other hand, Hawaii is obviously an institution as far as tourism is concerned. We believe we could learn from both our experiences over the years to ensure a sustainable tourism development.

On June 03, 2016 Governor Miraflores received a letter from Mr. Brian Takeshita, Chief Clerk, House of Representatives, dated May 12, 2016 copying the Governor with **House Resolution No.77, H.D. 1**, which was adopted by the House of Representative of the 28th Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2016 entitled **"Requesting the Hawaii-State Committee to Review and Consider the Establishment of a State/Province Relationship Between the State of Hawaii of the United State of America and the Province of Aklan of the Philippines"**. The said Resolution was referred by the Governor to the Sangguniang Panlalawigan and the latter during its Regular Session referred the same to the Joint Committees on Trade and Tourism which favorably recommended to authorize the Governor through **SP Resolution No. 2016-010, entitled "a Resolution Establishing a State-Province Sisterhood Relationship and Authorizing Governor Florencio T. Miraflores to enter into a Sisterhood Agreement between the State of Hawaii of the United States of America and the Province of Aklan of the Republic of the Philippines"**. The application for Sisterhood and required supporting documents were submitted to your office through the Consulate Office of the Philippines, Dr. Gina Jamoralin, Consul General.



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
PROVINCE OF AKLAN
KALIBO, AKLAN

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

We were advised that the voluminous documents were duly submitted to your office for your review and endorsement to the State Legislature and the Governor of Hawaii.

With much enthusiasm and great anticipation, we look forward to your favorable endorsement and final approval of the Sisterhood Agreement between the State of Hawaii and the Province of Aklan.

With our highest esteem!

Very truly yours

GABRIELLE V. CALIZO-QUIMPO
Consultant to the Governor for Tourism and Trade
Former Vice Governor (July 2007- June 2016)
Province of Aklan

cc: Hon. Florencio T. Miraflores, Governor, Province of Aklan
Atty. Reynaldo M. Quimpo, Vice Governor, Province of Aklan
Dr. Gina Jamorain, Consul General, Philippine Consulate General Honolulu
Ms. May Mizuno, President, Congress of Visayan Organizations
Ms. Mary Jean Castillo, Aklan Society of Hawaii
Ms. Joyleen Espinosa Santos, Consul, Philippine Consulate General



AKLAN CULTURAL SOCIETY OF HAWAII
94-683 MAKAAMOAMO PL., MILILANI, HI 96789

March 22, 2017

The Honorable Representative Ken Ito, Chair
The Honorable Representative James Kunane Tokioka, Vice Chair
& Members of the Veterans, Military, & International Affairs, & Culture and the Arts
Conference Room #429, State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Date and Time of Hearing : Thursday, March 23, 2017 at 9:50 am
Measure Number : HCR 177

Dear Chair Ito, Vice Chair Tokioka, and Members of the Committee:

RE: HCR 177 - Relating to the HCR 177 “Requesting the Hawaii Sister-State Committee to evaluate the Sister-State application, and upon approval, proceed with the establishment of a Sister-Province Relationship Between the State of Hawaii and the Province of Aklan of the Republic of the Philippines”

I am appealing for your support of HCR 177 to consider the establishment of a Sister-State-Province relationship between the State of Hawaii and the Province of Aklan, Philippines.

My name is Mary Jean Castillo and I am the President of the Aklan Cultural Society of Hawaii (ACSH). On behalf of the ACSH, I assure you that we will be in full support of the Sister-Province Relationship and will undertake projects and activities to sustain, promote and foster said relationship.

ACSH is a local nonprofit corporation organized to perpetuate the Philippine culture of the Aklan/Panay Region. Formerly known as Aklanon Association of Hawaii, ACSH was founded on July 30, 1988 with over 50 family memberships. It is affiliated with the Congress of Visayan Organization (COVO), the 30-year old statewide umbrella organization for Visayan groups and associations in the State of Hawaii. Our organization is currently applying for a 501(C)3 tax exemption with the Internal Revenue Service to enable us to plan for more activities geared towards the attainment of our goals and objectives.

ACSH aims to promote and preserve the customs and traditions of Aklan. Aklan is very famous for its world renowned *Ati-Atihan* Festival, a weeklong festivity of grouped revelers marching and dancing through the streets to the continuous beating of the drums from dawn 'till dusk. It is one of the best picturesque and most exciting celebrations among all Philippine Festivals. Aklan's *Ati-Atihan* has tremendously boosted the economic development of the Philippines by drawing over a million tourists from all over the world annually.

Like Hawaii, Boracay, Aklan is known and famous throughout the world for its fine white sand beaches drawing over 1.5 million tourists annually, almost one third of the tourist arrivals of the Philippines. These natural attractions of Aklan are akin and similar to what the State of Hawaii is known for.

The Department of Tourism and the Province of Aklan finalized an important business deal on March 19, 2017, that would further open the Western Visayas region, especially Boracay, AKLAN to the global cruising market. **Please see Attachment 1.**

<http://business.mb.com.ph/2017/03/19/ph-seals-deal-with-cruise-giant-to-build-port-in-aklan/>

Aklan Cultural Society of Hawaii Foundation is designed to work in partnership with both Hawaii and Philippine government agencies, community-based organizations, businesses and schools to promote the Aklan's culture and traditions, most especially the *Ati-Atihan* Festival. In celebration of our organization's 30th anniversary in 2018, **we plan to spearhead and continue, among other projects, the yearly Ati-Atihan activities/event to educate the community and the people of Hawaii the rich and vibrant culture of Aklan, Philippines. We dream that someday that the Ati-Atihan Festival will become a famous Hawaii State event. Hence, would help boosts Hawaii's economic development just as it did to Philippines' tourism industry.**

Aside from the *Ati-Atihan*, we also plan to organize activities that will create goodwill between the Governments and peoples of Hawaii and Aklan, which will be made possible with the DBEDT's endorsement of the Sister-Province Relationship to the Hawaii State Legislature, and its eventual signing into law by Governor David Ige.

I humbly ask for your support and approval on becoming a Hawaii Sister-Province.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Me Ke Aloha Pumehana,



Mary Jean Castillo

President

Aklan Cultural Society of Hawaii

Attachment 1: PH seals deal with cruise giant to build port in Aklan

Attachment 1:

<http://business.mb.com.ph/2017/03/19/ph-seals-deal-with-cruise-giant-to-build-port-in-aklan/>

PH seals deal with cruise giant to build port in Aklan

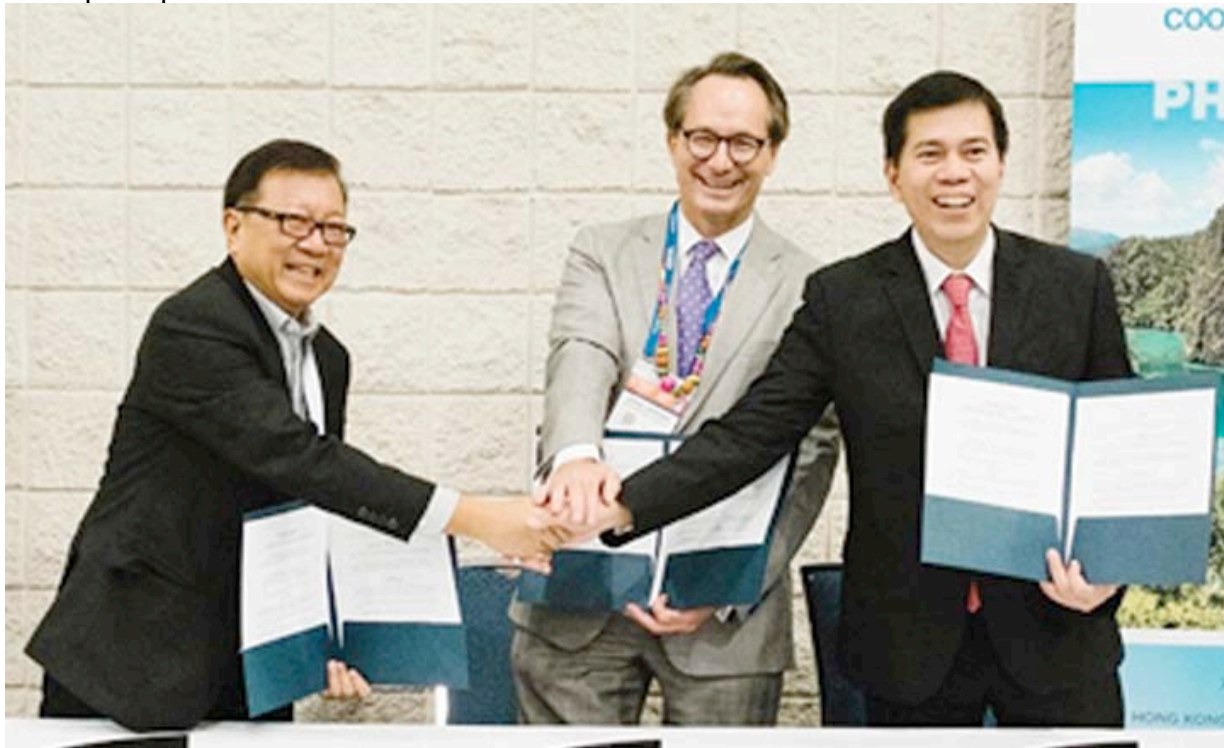
Published March 19, 2017, 10:01 PM

Fort Lauderdale, Florida — **The Department of Tourism (DOT) and the Province of Aklan** on Tuesday clinched an important business deal that would further open the Western Visayas region to the global cruising market.

Undersecretary Benito Bengzon, Jr. signed the agreement in behalf of Tourism Secretary Wanda Corazon Tulfo-Teo. Also present were Aklan Governor Florencio Miraflores, and Royal Caribbean Cruise Ltd. (RCCL) VP for New Commercial Development John Tercek.

The agreement among DOT, Province of Aklan, and RCCL stipulates that **the American global cruise company based in Miami will be providing all the necessary technical and financial support towards the building of a purpose-built terminal either in Caticlan or Boracay.** It is still under negotiation, however, if the expected homeport for RCCL will be open to other commercial vessels as well.

“We are excited over the prospects of the Royal Carribean Lines getting more involved in the development and promotion of Caticlan/ Boracay for cruise tourism. We are confident that the strategic partnership will result in more ships calling on Boracay, and pave the way for eventual home port operations”.



Tourism Undersecretary Benito Bengzon Jr. (right) representing DOT Secretary Wanda Teo-Tulfo, Aklan Governor Florencio Miraflores (left), and Royal Caribbean Cruise Ltd. (RCCL) VP for New Commercial Development John Tercek (center) join hands after **signing an agreement to build a terminal for Carribean cruise ships in Aklan.** The agreement was signed last Tuesday at the sidelines of the Seatrade Cruise Conference 2017 in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Bengzon is in Fort Lauderdale to lead this year's Philippine delegation to the Seatrade Cruise Conference (SCC) the ended on March 16 at the Broward County Convention Center. SCC is the leading annual global business-to-business event in the cruise industry, which provides a platform to discuss topics and issues in cruising led by top executives, industry experts and thought-leaders.

The Philippines' ninth year at Seatrade also features a mixture of old and the latest cruise destinations in the country such as Hundred Islands in Pangasinan, Kalanggaman in Leyte, Coron in Northern Palawan, Romblon, and Bicol region for expedition cruises that carry less than 300 passengers.

"We are seeing a major shift in the major cruise market. There will be more ships to be deployed in Southeast Asia, and we are hoping that the Philippines will get more than its fair share of the market," the head of Philippine delegation said, eyeing the extended deployment of a number of large cruise ships to the country as a crucial factor in positioning the Philippines as a compelling and attractive value for money transit port.

"The big news for us this week is that we will finally have the major cruise ship, the Superstar Virgo of Singapore's Star Cruises, homeporting in the PH. And we are hoping this will be the start of other homeporting of cruise vessels in the region," Bengzon added.

Tercek has only good words to say about this newfound partnership. According to him, the Philippines has a great potential to become a cruise hub in the region. "The Philippines is the future Caribbean of Asia," the cruise maverick went on to say.

Governor Miraflores proudly shared that residents of Aklan were quick to throw in their approval of the plan as they stand to benefit from the new economic opportunities it would generate such as employment and business ventures.

Boracay is the Philippines' third largest cruise destination with 29 calls over the last four years. It is topped by Puerto Princesa accumulating the most aggregate visits with 39 transits and 16 overnights, and is followed by Manila, with 48 transits but only 5 overnights.

On the whole, international cruise calls to the Philippines have been growing at an average rate of 27.8% over the past four years, from 56 calls in 2014 to 70 calls the following year, and 72 calls in 2016. This year, the Philippines expects over a hundred port calls bringing in an estimated 122,000 cruise passengers.

Tags: [Aklan](#), [Department of Tourism](#), [manila bulletin](#), [mb.com.ph](#), [PH seals deal with cruise giant to build port in Aklan](#), [Western Visayas region](#)

Related Posts

March 22, 2017

The Honorable Representative Ken Ito, Chair
The Honorable Representative James Kunane Tokioka, Vice Chair
& Members of the Veterans, Military, & International Affairs, & Culture and the Arts
Conference Room #429, State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Date and Time of Hearing: **Thursday, March 23, 2017 at 9:50 am**

Dear Chair Ito, Vice Chair Tokioka, and Members of the Committee:

RE: HCR 177 – RELATING TO “Requesting the Hawaii Sister-State Committee to evaluate the Sister-State application, and upon approval, proceed with the establishment of a Sister-Province Relationship Between the State of Hawaii and the Province of Aklan of the Republic of the Philippines”

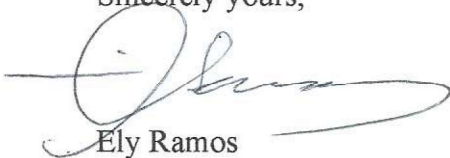
I am writing to express strong support of HCR 177 for the proposal to create a Sister State/Province Relationship between the State of Hawaii and the Province of Aklan, as I believe that having such a relationship will redound to a better relationship between the State of Hawaii and Aklan, Philippines.

My name is Ely Ramos and I am a member of the Aklan Cultural Society of Hawaii.

I support HCR 177 because it will bear a fruitful and beneficial relationship.

I humbly urge you to support HCR 177.

Sincerely yours,



Ely Ramos
Member
Aklan Cultural Society of Hawaii

March 22, 2017

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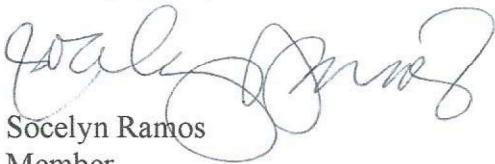
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My name is Socelyn Ramos and I am a member of the Aklan Cultural Society of Hawaii.

I support HCR 177 because it will bear a fruitful and beneficial relationship.

I humbly urge you to support HCR 177.

Sincerely yours,



Socelyn Ramos
Member
Aklan Cultural Society of Hawaii

March 22, 2017

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I am appealing for your support of HCR 177 relating to the Hawaii Sister State/Province Relationship between the State of Hawaii and the Province of Aklan, as I believe that having such a relationship will redound to a better relationship between the Government and the people of Hawaii and Aklan, Philippines.

My name is Fely Agustin and I am a member of the Aklan Cultural Society of Hawaii.

I support HCR 177 because it will be beneficial to the State of Hawaii.

I humbly urge you to support HCR 177.

Sincerely yours,



Fely Agustin
Secretary/Director
Aklan Cultural Society of Hawaii

March 22, 2017

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My name is Linda Castillo and I am a member of the Aklan Cultural Society of Hawaii.

I support HCR 177 because it will bear a fruitful and beneficial relationship.

I humbly urge you to support HCR 177.

Sincerely yours,



M. Linda Castillo
Member
Aklan Cultural Society of Hawaii

March 22, 2017

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& Members of the Veterans, Military, & International Affairs, & Culture and the Arts
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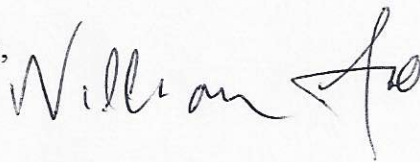
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I support HCR 177 because it will bear a fruitful and beneficial relationship.

I humbly urge you to support HCR 177.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William Foo". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "F" at the end.

William Foo
7258 Pikoni Pl.
Honolulu, HI 96825

Nancy Nguyen
1253 S. Beretania St. #3208
Honolulu, HI 96817

March 22, 2017

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The Honorable Representative James Kunane Tokioka, Vice Chair
& Members of the Veterans, Military, & International Affairs, & Culture and the Arts
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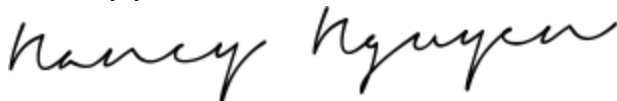
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My name is Nancy Nguyen and I am a member of the Aklan Cultural Society of Hawaii.

I support HCR 177 because it will be beneficial to the State of Hawaii.

I humbly urge you to support HCR 177.

Sincerely yours,



Nancy Nguyen
Member
Aklan Cultural Society of Hawaii

Glenn Remigio Sr.
91-1126 Kauiki Street
Ewa Beach, 96706

March 22, 2017

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My name is Glenn Remigio Sr. and I am a member of the Aklan Cultural Society of Hawaii.

I support HCR 177 because it will be beneficial to the State of Hawaii.

I humbly urge you to support HCR 177.

Sincerely yours,



Glenn Remigio Sr.
Member
Aklan Cultural Society of Hawaii

March 22, 2017

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My name is John C. Murray and I am a member of the Aklan Cultural Society of Hawaii.

I support HCR 177 because it will be beneficial to the State of Hawaii.

I humbly urge you to support HCR 177.

Sincerely yours,



John C. Murray
98-1359 C Nola Street
Pearl City, HI 96782

Noel P. Henry
P.O. Box 37063
Honolulu, HI 96837

March 22, 2017

The Honorable Representative Ken Ito, Chair
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My name is Noel P. Henry and I am a member of the Aklan Cultural Society of Hawaii.

I support HCR 177 because it will be beneficial to the State of Hawaii.

I humbly urge you to support HCR 177.

Sincerely yours,



Noel P. Henry
Member
Aklan Cultural Society of Hawaii

HCR177

Submitted on: 3/22/2017

Testimony for VMI on Mar 23, 2017 09:50AM in Conference Room 429

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Serafin Colmenares | Aklan Cultural Society of Hawaii | Support | No |

Comments: Please support HCR177. The sister-province relationship will be beneficial - culturally and economically - to both Hawaii and the province of Aklan.

March 22, 2017

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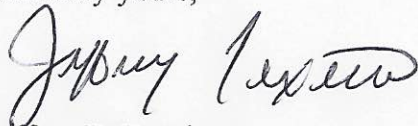
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My name is Jeffrey Texeira and I am a member of the Aklan Cultural Society of Hawaii.

I support HCR 177. **I humbly urge you to support HCR 177.**

Sincerely yours,



Jeffrey E. Texeira
Member
Aklan Cultural Society of Hawaii

LATE

HCR177

Submitted on: 3/23/2017

Testimony for VMI on Mar 23, 2017 09:50AM in Conference Room 429

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| BENNETTE MISALUCHA | Individual | Support | No |