


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

JUN 30 11:14

SENATE

S.B. No. 924

FILED BY: 

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**Introduced by Sen. Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada**

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

This measure proposes an ecotourism policy that would lay down a tourism framework based on a well-crafted balance between economic growth and environmental protection. It creates the National Ecotourism, Commission which shall formulate and implement a master plan with the assistance of the Department of Tourism and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. A network of ecotourism sites shall likewise be established, which will include but not to limited to those sites already covered by the National Integrated Protected Areas System under R.A. No. 7586.

The role of the local communities, including the indigenous cultural communities as stewards of ecotourism is mandated, not only because they will benefit from the profits generated from the activities to be implemented pursuant thereof.

The richness of our resources could only be optimally utilized if they are best protected. Tourism would yield the most profits if it ensures the primacy of the environment and the preservation of the culture of our people. It is high time that we reorient our tourism goals towards a sustainable type of tourism before nothing else would be left of us.


Approval of this bill is therefore sincerely sought.

  
**JINGGOY EJERCITO ESTRADA**  
Senator

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**AN ACT**  
**PROVIDING FOR A NATIONAL ECOTOURISM POLICY, ESTABLISHING A**  
**FRAMEWORK FOR ITS INSTITUTIONALIZATION, PROVIDING THE**  
**MECHANISMS FOR ITS APPROPRIATE IMPLEMENTATIONS,**  
**AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

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

SECTION 1. **Short Title.** - This Act shall be known as the "National Ecotourism Policy Act of 2004. "

SECTION 2. **Declaration of Policy.** - It is declared to be the policy of the State to;

- a) ensure the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology through the promotion of activities geared towards environmental protection and conservation;
- b) establish a framework for the utilization of natural sites for tourism purposes ensuring a well-crafted balance between economic development and resource enhancement;
- c) encouraging non-government organization, people's organizations and the private sector to take the lead in initiating programs for tourism development and environmental protection, and;
- d) enlist the participation of local communities including the indigenous peoples by providing them the necessary assistance in the determination of ecotourism sites and ensuring their right to the full enjoyment of the benefits thereof.

**SECTION 3. *Network of Ecotourism Sites.*** - There are hereby identified areas which shall be comprise the network of ecotourism sites established under this Act. The sites shall include but not be limited to areas within the National Integrated Protected Areas System as identified under Republic Act 7586, and other areas with significant and relevant cultural heritage to be identified by the Commission.

**SECTION 4. *National Ecotourism Commission.*** - There is hereby created a National Ecotourism Commission to be composed of one representative each from accredited non-government organizations and people's organization engaged in ecotourism, one recognized indigenous peoples federation, reputable travel organizations, the academe and the organization representing the local government chief executives.

The Commission shall be headed by a Chairman who must have a minimum of seven (7) years substantial exposure in the conduct of ecotourism activities and environmental protection. The chairman and the members of the Commission shall be appointed by the President for a term of five (5) years, with a possibility of one re-appointment.

The Department of Tourism and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources shall assist the Commission perform its task in pursuance of the objectives established in this Act.

**SECTION 5. *Functions and Responsibilities of the Commission.*** - The Commission shall be responsible for the following:

- a) review and from time to time, update, the existing Ecotourism Master Plan and supervise the implementation of the corresponding programs and activities therein.
- b) Assess and evaluate the potential impacts of development to the environmental integrity of areas to be included in the Network Ecotourism Sites through the conduct of Environmental Impact Assessment under Presidential Decree 1586 and its related rules and regulations.
- c) Conduct of consultations with the local population to be affected by ecotourism development to integrate their cultural values and beliefs in ecotourism plans and programs which may be formulated through their own initiative;
- d) Provide technical and financial assistance to communities which are included in the network of ecotourism sites established under this Act.
- e) Formulation of rules and regulations which shall prohibit poaching activities, collection of wildlife species and the purchase of authentic

cultural and anthropological possessions and artifacts and other activities which unnecessarily utilize forest and waste minimization and recycling; and

- f) Such other activities as may be necessary to carry out the objectives of this Act.

SECTION 6. **Role of Local Communities.** - The local communities as well as the indigenous communities to be affected by the development of ecotourism sites shall actively participate in the formulation of ecotourism plans with the assistance of the Commission. They shall also have the right to declare their own localities as included in the network of ecotourism sites.

SECTION 7. **Code of Ecotourism Practice and Ethics.** - The Commission shall formulate a Code of Ecotourism Practice and Ethics, six (6) months after the approval of this Act after a series of consultations with the concerned and affected stakeholders and practitioners of the tourism industry in the government and the private sectors as well as the affected communities and indigenous peoples.

SECTION 8. **Ecotourism Fund.** - To carry out the purpose of this Act, there shall be created a special fund called the Ecotourism Fund which shall be sourced from at least twenty percent (20%) of the gross receipts of the travel tax of the preceding year and such other sources as government may deem appropriate.

SECTION 9. **Appropriation.** - Such amount as may be necessary to defray the expenses of the Commission in the implementation of this Act shall be appropriated. Thereafter, the amount shall be regularly sourced from the General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 10. **Separability Clause.** - If any portion of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, any provision not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 11. **Effectivity Clause.** - This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved.