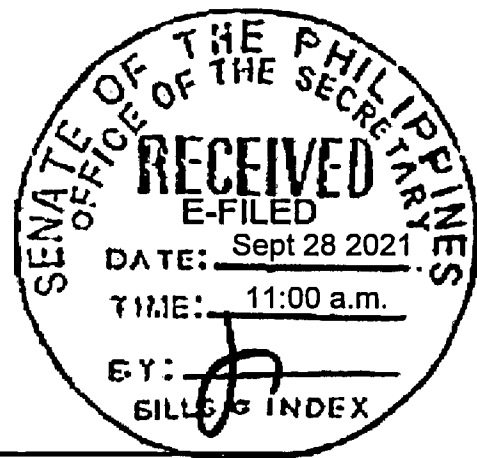


EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE )  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
*Third Regular Session* )

SENATE  
S.B. No. 2418



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Introduced by **SENATOR IMEE R. MARCOS**

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**AN ACT IDENTIFYING TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AREAS IN THE PROVINCE  
OF ISABELA, MANDATING SUPPORT FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT,  
CREATING THE ISABELA TOURISM COUNCIL, AND  
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Section 2, Chapter I of Republic Act No. 9593 or The Tourism Act of 2009, provides that, *"The State declares tourism as an indispensable element of the national economy and an industry of national interest and importance, which must be harnessed as an engine of socio-economic growth and cultural affirmation to generate investment, foreign exchange, and employment, and to continue to mold an enhanced sense of national pride for all Filipinos."*

The Department of Tourism (DOT) is pursuing a 2022 recovery plan with the end goal of a sustainable, resilient, and inclusive Philippine tourism industry. According to Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat, DOT's policy direction banks on the reformulated National Tourism Development Plan (NTDP) for 2016 to 2022, which has a three-pronged thrust of promoting safe, fun, and competitive tourism; pursuing sustainable, inclusive, and resilient tourism; and strengthening governance and destination management.

The Coronavirus 2019 pandemic, indeed, took a toll on tourism industry all over the world. The imposition of restrictions limited the movement and travelling of people which in turn had huge effects on the businesses and employees in the sector. In 2020, the contribution of the tourism industry to the Philippines' gross domestic product fell to 5.4% from 12.8% in 2019.

More than a year after the imposition of restrictions, people express their desire to travel again both for business and leisure. Various surveys depicts the desire of people for a change in environment and improve mental health. As the world starts to reopen for personal transactions and interactions, it is high time to take this opportunity for the promotion of tourism in the country to support the businesses and workers grappling for sustained livelihood amidst these challenging times.

In order to facilitate the work of the missionaries in the evangelization of the Cagayan Valley, a Royal Decree was issued on 01 May 1856 which created the Province of Isabela from the portion of the Province of Cagayan and Nueva Vizcaya. The new province was named in honor of "Her Royal Highness Queen Isabela II" of Spain.

Isabela is the second largest province of the Philippines and the largest in Luzon in terms of land area and is home to Magat High Rise Dam and Tourism Complex known to be the highest and biggest dam in Asia at the time of its construction. The Province of Isabela comprises an aggregate land area of 10,665 square kilometers, representing almost 40 percent of the regional territory.

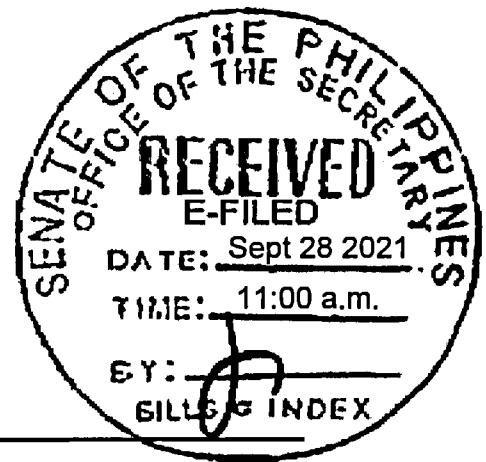
Possessing the vast expanse of marvelous scenic location and an abundance of cultural heritage, it is but felicitous to protect and shield our valuable tourism and heritage to ensure their availability for the future generations.

This bill seeks to identify various Tourism Development Areas in the Province of Isabela and the creation of Isabela Tourism Council which will pave the way for the formulation of a Tourism Development Plan for the Province and its incorporation into the Department of Tourism's National Tourism Development Plan and the development of support facilities and infrastructure to encourage positive experience for tourists, preserve the aesthetic beauty of the tourist attractions, promote the development of the tourism sector of the entire province, and improve the well-being of local residents.

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

  
**IMEE R. MARCOS**

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE )  
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*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in  
Congress assembled:*

1           **SECTION 1. Declaration of Policy.** – It is hereby declared the policy of the State  
2 to promote a tourism industry that is ecologically sustainable, responsible,  
3 participative, culturally sensitive, economically viable, and equitable for local  
4 communities. To this end, the State shall endeavor to provide the proper mechanisms  
5 and infrastructure for sustainable tourism development. It shall develop and promote  
6 certain areas and sites identified as tourist destinations or attractions in order to drive  
7 and propel inclusive growth throughout the country.

8           Pursuant thereto, all areas within the Province of Isabela endowed with natural  
9 beauty or historical and cultural significance, with either existing or potential  
10 integrated leisure facilities developed for one or more tourism purpose, shall be  
11 considered tourism development areas.

12           **SEC. 2. Identification and Declaration of Tourism Sites.** – Areas in the Province  
13 of Isabela that have potential for tourism shall be declared as ecotourism, cultural  
14 heritage tourism, health and wellness tourism, general leisure tourism, or mixed-use  
15 tourism sites after consultation with the Department of Tourism (DOT): *Provided*, That  
16 areas in environmentally protected areas shall not be declared tourism sites without  
17 consultation with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

18           The survey and verification of the areas shall be conducted by the National  
19 Mapping and Resource Information Authority, in coordination with the Provincial  
20 Government of Isabela.

21           **SEC. 3. Isabela Tourism Council.** – There is hereby created the Isabela Tourism  
22 Council, hereinafter referred to as Council, which shall be the primary policy-making,  
23 planning and coordinating body in the development of tourism in the Province of

1 Isabela and the administration of tourism sites therein. It shall be composed of the  
2 following members:

- 3 a) Provincial Governor of Isabela, as Chairperson;
- 4 b) Municipal Mayors of all the municipalities and cities of the Province of Isabela,  
5 who shall elect from among themselves the Council's Vice Chairperson;
- 6 c) Member of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Isabela, duly designated by such  
7 body; and
- 8 d) Two (2) representatives from the private sector, appointed by the  
9 Chairperson of the Council, who shall serve for a period of two (2) years.

10 The Provincial Government of Isabela shall provide a Secretariat for the Council  
11 including the funding necessary to cover expenses for the performance of its official  
12 functions and activities.

13 **SEC. 4. *Functions of the Council.*** – The Council shall have the following  
14 functions:

- 15 a) Identify and declare areas as tourism sites;
- 16 b) Formulate programs and recommendations and manage local resources and  
17 funds to develop local tourism facilities and attractions;
- 18 c) Assist in the regulation and supervision of tourism-oriented establishments,  
19 thereby ensuring wholesome and clean tourism activities;
- 20 d) Assist in monitoring the implementation of the Local Government Code on the  
21 licensing of tourism establishments in the locality to ascertain safe and  
22 enjoyable stay of travelers;
- 23 e) Strictly enforce health and sanitary standards in public restrooms frequented  
24 by public utility vehicles and tourist transport services, i.e., gasoline stations  
25 and restaurants along main highways and bus stops; and
- 26 f) Perform any other duties in accordance with the guidelines issued by the  
27 Department of the Interior and Local Government.

28 **SEC. 5. *Isabela Tourism Development Plan.*** – The DOT shall, in coordination  
29 with the Council and concerned local government units (LGUs) and agencies of the  
30 government, prepare a tourism development plan for the Province of Isabela and  
31 incorporate the same in its overall tourism development plan pursuant to Republic Act  
32 No. 9593, otherwise known as the "*Tourism Act of 2009*". The development plan shall  
33 be jointly implemented with the concerned LGUs and the Council.

34 The concerned LGUs shall, in coordination with the DOT, DENR, the Tourism  
35 Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority and other concerned agencies of the  
36 government, delineate well defined geographic areas within the tourism sites and

1 coordinate the integrated development of these sites for the optimal use of natural  
2 assets and attractions, as well as of existing facilities: *Provided*, That said development  
3 plan shall ensure the preservation of the ecological balance and natural beauty of the  
4 areas.

5 Upon the promulgation of this Act, the Department of Public Works and  
6 Highways (DPWH) shall, in coordination with the DOT and the Council, implement the  
7 construction and improvement of roads and other infrastructure necessary in the  
8 development of tourism sites and shall incorporate the same in its infrastructure  
9 program.

10 **SEC. 6. Appropriations.** – The Secretaries of DOT, DPWH, DENR and Department  
11 of Transportation (DOTr) shall include in their respective Department’s program the  
12 implementation of this Act, the funding of which shall be included in the annual  
13 General Appropriations Act and shall augment such allocation with internally  
14 generated funds of the DOT.

15 **SEC. 7. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – Within sixty (60) days from the  
16 effectivity of this Act, the Council shall, in consultation with the DOT, DENR, DPWH,  
17 DOTr, the National Economic and Development Authority and other concerned  
18 government agencies and stakeholders, promulgate the necessary rules and  
19 regulations for the proper implementation of this Act.

20 **SEC. 8. Separability Clause.** – If any provision of this Act shall be declared  
21 unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in  
22 full force and effect.

23 **SEC. 9. Repealing Clause.** – All laws, rules, regulations, executive orders,  
24 proclamations, presidential decrees and other issuances inconsistent with any of the  
25 provisions of this Act are hereby deemed repealed or amended accordingly.

26 **SEC. 10. Effectivity.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its  
27 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

*Approved,*