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

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ENATE 11

Introduced by **SENATOR IMEE R. MARCOS**

AN ACT DECLARING BARANGAY TALA IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF ORANI, PROVINCE OF BATAAN AN ECOTOURISM ZONE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

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 socioeconomic 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." Hence, it is the policy of the State to accord priority status to sustainable, vibrant and profitable tourism development.

The tourism sector is becoming a more significant source of economic success by generating job opportunities. The total number of visitors that arrives to the Philippines as tourists and sightseers significantly aided in the improvement of the economy and the rise of the Philippines as a tourist destination.

Barangay Tala is home of the Bataan National Park, which is renowned throughout Bataan for its tranquil natural beauty and distinctive topography. The Sinagtala Farm Resort and Retreat Park is another reason that Barangay Tala is well-known. Barangay Tala's designation as a local eco-tourism zone will undoubtedly increase its long-term viability as a tourist destination. However, the barangay's socioeconomic and environmental development is hampered by the lack of auxiliary infrastructure and facilities including hotels, lodges, campers, potable water supply, and public transportation. If Barangay Tala receives the amenities and facilities required

to reach the full extent of its potential as a tourist destination, it may be developed into a premier ecotourism region.

Thus, this bill seeks to declare Barangay Tala in the Municipality of Orani, Province of Bataan as eco-tourism zone. All Tala residents and those in nearby towns will get a stronger sense of history and pride as a result of the development of this barangay into an eco-tourism zone, which will also help to advertise the Bataan National Park as a tourist destination. Furthermore, it will create jobs for locals, and with the influx of tourists, the eco-tourism zone will be a significant source of business opportunities.

For the abovementioned reasons, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

IMEE R. MARCOS



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

SECTION 1. This Act shall be known as "Tala Ecotourism Zone Act."

SEC. 2. It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote a tourism industry that is ecologically sustainable, responsible, participative, culturally-sensitive, economically viable and equitably beneficial to local communities.

SEC. 3. Barangay Tala in the Municipality of Orani, Province of Bataan is hereby declared an ecotourism zone. Its development shall be prioritized by the Department of Tourism (DOT) and shall be subject to the rules and regulations governing the development of ecotourism zones.

The DOT shall prepare the development plan for Barangay Tala and shall incorporate the same in the overall National Tourism Development Plan (NTDP), pursuant to Republic Act No. 9593, otherwise known as "The Tourism Act of 2009." The plan shall be implemented jointly with the Municipality of Orani, the local Protected Area Management Board (PAMB), the Bataan National Park (BNP) and the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA).

The DOT, in coordination with the Municipality of Orani, PAMB, BNP, TIEZA and other concerned agencies of the government, shall identify well-defined geographic areas within Barangay Tala ecotourism zone, which shall include the Bataan National

Park and existing infrastructure and facilities therein, and ensure the integrated development of these areas for the optimum utilization of natural assets and attractions, as well as the preservation of their historic significance.

SEC. 4. The Secretary of the DOT, shall include in the Department's program the implementation of this Act, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act and internally generated funds of the DOT.

SEC. 5. Within sixty (60) days after the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of the DOT, in consultation with the Municipality of Orani, PAMB, BNP, TIEZA, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the proper implementation of this Act.

SEC. 6. All laws, orders, decrees, rules and regulations and other issuances, or parts thereof which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 7. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,