

23 FEB 27 P3 :25

SENATE

S. No. 1931

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by **SENATOR CYNTHIA A. VILLAR**

AN ACT
IDENTIFYING TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AREAS IN THE PROVINCE OF
ISABELA, MANDATING SUPPORT FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT,
CREATING THE ISABELA TOURISM COUNCIL

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Province of Isabela is home to some of the most captivating potential tourism destinations in Northern Luzon. A sample of these landmarks include: Aguinaldo Shrine, Bonsai Forest, Camp Samal, Crocodile Sanctuary of San Mariano, Dibulo Falls, Dicotcotan Beach, Fuyot Springs National Park, Giant Butaka, Honeymoon Island, Landmark of Heroes, Maconacon Falls, Magat Dam Tourism Complex, Mororan River, Palanan Rainforest, and Sinavulluan Caves.

Despite Isabela's great potential as a heritage and ecotourism powerhouse, the province's tourism infrastructure is severely underdeveloped. There is also a critical lack of long-term planning for tourism development. As such, Isabela's potential as a tourism powerhouse remains undeveloped, and opportunities for economic growth and job creation in the tourism sector remain underutilized.

In order to finally bring Isabela's full tourism potential to realization, this bill seeks the creation of the Isabela Tourism Council to identify and nurture Tourism Development Areas throughout the province. This will set the stage for the crafting of a Provincial Tourism Development Plan that will be incorporated into the National Tourism Development Plan under the Department of Tourism. The implementation

of this Act would result in the development of provincial tourism support facilities and infrastructure as we seek to unlock the true potential of the Province of Isabela as a domestic and international tourism powerhouse. This would serve as a catalyst for a province-wide tourism boom and stimulate significant economic growth for the benefit of the people of Isabela.

This is the Senate counterpart measure of HB No. 6072 principally authored by Hon. Ed Christopher Go, the Representative of the Second District of Isabela.

In view of the foregoing, I recommend the approval of this measure.


CYNTHIA A. VILLAR

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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 equitably beneficial
4 to local communities. To this end, the State shall endeavor to provide the proper
5 mechanisms and infrastructure for sustainable tourism development. It shall develop
6 and promote certain areas and sites identified as tourist destinations or attractions in
7 order to drive and propel inclusive growth throughout the country.

8 Pursuant thereto, all areas within the Province of Isabela endowed with
9 natural 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 (TDAs).

12 Sec. 2. *Identification and Declaration of Tourism Sites.* – The areas in the
13 Province of Isabela that have potential for tourism shall be declared as ecotourism,
14 cultural heritage tourism, health and wellness tourism, general leisure tourism, or
15 mixed-use tourism sites after consultation with the Department of Tourism (DOT):

1 *Provided,* That areas in environmentally protected areas shall not be declared
2 tourism sites without consultation with the Department of Environment and Natural
3 Resources (DENR).

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

7 *Sec. 3. Isabela Tourism Council.* – There is hereby created the Isabela
8 Tourism Council, hereinafter referred to as Council, which shall be the primary
9 policy-making, planning and coordinating body in the development of tourism in the
10 Province of Isabela and the administration of tourism sites therein. It shall be
11 composed of the following members:

- 12 a) Provincial Governor of Isabela, as Chairperson;
- 13 b) Municipal Mayors of all the municipalities and cities of the Province of
14 Isabela, who shall elect from among themselves the Vice-Chairperson;
- 15 c) Member of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Isabela, duly designated
16 by such body; and
- 17 d) Two (2) representatives from the private sector, appointed by the
18 Chairperson of the Council, who shall serve for a period of two (2)
19 years.

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

23 *Sec. 4. Functions of the Council.* – The Council shall have the following
24 functions:

- 25 a) Identify and declare areas as tourism sites;
- 26 b) Formulate programs and recommendations and manage local
27 resources and funds to develop local tourism facilities and attractions;

- 1 c) Assist in the regulation and supervision of tourism-oriented
2 establishments, thereby ensuring wholesome and clean tourism
3 activities;
- 4 d) Assist in monitoring the implementation of the Local Government Code
5 on the licensing of tourism establishments in the locality to ascertain
6 safe and enjoyable stay of travelers;
- 7 e) Strictly enforce health and sanitary standards in public restrooms
8 frequented by public utility vehicles and tourist transport services, i.e.,
9 gasoline stations and restaurants along main highways and bus stops;
10 and
- 11 f) Perform any other duties in accordance with the guidelines issued by
12 the Department of the Interior and Local Government.

13 *Sec. 5. Isabela Tourism Development Plan.* – The Council, in coordination
14 with the provincial government of Isabela, LGUs of identified tourism sites, DOT,
15 DENR and concerned agencies of the government, prepare a tourism development
16 plan for the Province of Isabela. It shall delineate well defined geographic areas
17 within the tourism sites and coordinate the integrated development of these sites for
18 the optimal use of natural assets and attractions, as well as of existing facilities:
19 *Provided,* That the said development plan shall ensure the preservation of the
20 ecological balance and natural beauty of the areas: *Provided, further,* That the
21 implementation of the tourism development plan shall be included in the respective
22 budgets of the municipal governments of identified tourism sites.

23 *Sec. 6. Role of the DOT.* – The DOT shall assist the Council and concerned
24 LGUs in the implementation of the tourism development plan by providing technical
25 assistance in tourism capacity building. It shall include the Province of Isabela in its
26 national and regional tourism promotion programs.

27 *Sec. 7. Appropriations.* – The funding for the implementation of this Act shall
28 be included in the respective annual budgets of the municipal governments of
29 identified tourism sites. The DOT may augment such allocation with internally-
30 generated funds.

1 Sec. 8. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within sixty (60) days from
2 the effectivity of this Act, the Council, in consultation with concerned LGUs, DOT,
3 DENR, Department of Public Works and Highways, Department of Transportation,
4 National Economic and Development Authority and other concerned agencies of the
5 government, promulgate rules and regulations to implement this Act.

6 Sec. 9. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act shall be declared
7 unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in
8 full force and effect.

9 Sec. 10. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, rules, regulations, executive orders,
10 proclamations, presidential decrees and other issuances inconsistent with any of the
11 provisions of this Act are hereby deemed repealed or amended accordingly.

12 Sec. 11. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
13 publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,