

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



SENATE  
Office of the Secretary

23 JUL 19 P12:47

SENATE  
S.B. No. 2330

RECEIVED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

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Introduced by **SENATOR IMEE R. MARCOS**

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**AN ACT**  
**DECLARING LAKE BABABU LOCATED IN BARANGAY MELGAR IN THE**  
**MUNICIPALITY OF BASILISA, PROVINCE OF DINAGAT ISLANDS A TOURIST**  
**DESTINATION, PROVIDING FOR ITS DEVELOPMENT, AND APPROPRIATING**  
**FUNDS THEREFOR**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

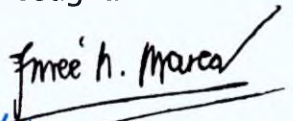
Article II, Section 16 of the Philippine Constitution states that *"the State shall protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature."*

The Lake Bababu is approximately 650 meters and is regarded as the longest fully submerged underwater cave system in the Philippines. It is one of the most unusual lakes because of its meromictic condition, which means that it has both freshwater and salt water. The fresh water and saltwater do not mix due to the unique formation of its basin, its surface waters, and the chalk-white limestone walls surrounding the area. The name Bababu derives from the Cebuano words *"baba sa buwaya"*, which translates to crocodile's mouth, referring to the shape of Babas Cove to which it is connected.

At present, the Lake Bababu is under the management of the Bababu Ecotourism Adventure Park (BEAP) whose members are composed of officers from the local government unit of Basilisa and the descendants of the original founder of the lake. However, the financial constraints of the local government and BEAP have made regular and efficient maintenance difficult to accomplish. Such issues might cause deterioration of the lake's fragile nature.

Hence, the bill seeks to declare Lake Bababu, located in Barangay Melgar in the Municipality of Basilisa, Province of Dinagat Islands, as a tourist destination. Such declaration shall guarantee sufficiency of funds necessary for the maintenance of the Lake Bababu, as well as to ensure that it is being adequately managed and promoted through effective tourism development plan. Moreover, this declaration shall likewise foster tourism growth in the area while simultaneously minimizing the risk on its natural resources.

In view of the foregoing, 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:*

1           **SECTION 1.** Lake Bababu in Barangay in Barangay Melgar in the Municipality of  
2 Basilisa, Province of Dinagat Islands is hereby declared a tourist destination. As such,  
3 the Department of Tourism (DOT) shall prioritize its development and subject the same  
4 to the rules and regulations governing tourist destinations.

5  
6           **SEC. 2.** Within one (1) year after the approval of this Act, in collaboration with  
7 the concerned local government units and agencies of the government, shall prepare a  
8 tourism development plan that complements the natural qualities of Lake Bababu:  
9 *Provided,* That said development plan shall take into account the preservation and  
10 conservation of the natural beauty and resources of the area: *Provided, further,* That  
11 any and all activities and developments to be implemented in the area shall conform  
12 with the guidelines for ecotourism development jointly issued by the Department of  
13 Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the DOT.

14  
15           **SEC. 3.** The DOT and its concerned attached agencies shall take immediate steps  
16 in order to implement the tourism development plan. It shall also include Lake Bababu  
17 in all its national, regional, and local promotion programs.  
18

1           **SEC. 4.** The Secretary of Tourism shall include in the Department's program the  
2 construction, installation, and maintenance of appropriate facilities in Lake Bababu, the  
3 funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.  
4

5  
6           **SEC. 5.** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the  
7 Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.  
8

*Approved,*