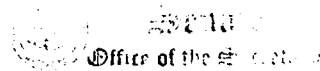
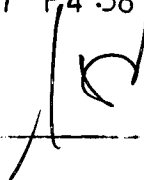


**NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
Second Regular Session**



24 FEB 27 P 4 :38

SENATE
S.B. No. 2577

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by SENATOR RAMON BONG REVILLA, JR.

**AN ACT
DECLARING THE VERDE ISLAND PASSAGE, LOCATED IN THE PROVINCES OF
BATANGAS, MARINDUQUE, OCCIDENTAL MINDORO, ORIENTAL MINDORO
AND ROMBLON, AND ECOTOURISM ZONE**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Verde Island Passage is globally known as the *center of the center of marine shorefish biodiversity*. With an international point and oil and gas facilities, it is considered one of the busiest shipping corridors in the country. The Passage is more than 1.4 million hectares which traverses five (5) provinces: Batangas, Occidental Mindoro, Oriental Mindoro, Marinduque and Romblon.

The Verde Island Passage is known for its rich biodiversity; being home to 1700 fish species and 300 coral species. Furthermore, it houses 54 marine protected areas, especially so that is also home to various endangered and threatened species; which includes: hawksbill turtles, whale sharks, manta rays, dugongs, humphead wrasses, giant groupers, and giant clams.

One can easily see how productive an ecosystem Verde Island Passage is. Being central to both fishing and shipping, it is definitely an economic asset.

This bill seeks to declare the Verde Island Passage as an ecotourism zone so that it will be considered in the Department of Tourism's annual planning for the better preservation and conservation of the Passage.

In this light, consideration of this bill is earnestly sought.


RAMON BONG REVILLA, JR.

1 thereto, its development and promotion shall be prioritized and supported by the
2 Department of Tourism (DOT), subject to the rules and regulations governing
3 ecotourism zones.

4
5 **Sec. 4. Verde Island Passage Ecotourism Council.** – There is hereby created
6 the Verde Island Passage Ecotourism Council, hereinafter referred to as the Council,
7 which shall be the primary policy-making, planning and coordinating body in the
8 development and administration of the ecotourism zone.

9
10 The Council shall be composed of the following members:

- 11 (a) Secretary of the DOT, or a duly authorized representative as Chairperson;
- 12 (b) Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR),
13 or a duly authorized representative, as Co-chairperson;
- 14 (c) Governors of the Provinces of Batangas, Marinduque, Occidental Mindoro,
15 Oriental Mindoro and Romblon, who shall elect from among themselves the
16 Vice-chairperson;
- 17 (d) Mayors of the municipalities and cities comprising the ecotourism zone;
- 18 (e) Regional directors for Region IV-A and Region IV-B of the DOT, DENR,
19 Department of Science and Technology, Department of Health, Department of
20 Interior and Local Government, Department of Justice, Department of Energy,
21 Department of Public Works and Highways, Department of Finance,
22 Department of Labor and Employment, Department of Social Welfare and
23 Development, Department of Transportation, Department of Trade and
24 Industry, Department of National Defense, and the Philippine National Police;
- 25 (f) Chief Operating Officer of the Tourism Promotions Board;
- 26 (g) Chief Operating Officer of the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone
27 Authority;
- 28 (h) Regional Directors of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources for
29 Region IV-A and Region IV-B;
- 30 (i) Regional Directors of the National Economic and Development Authority for
31 Region IV-A and Region IV-B;
- 32 (j) Executive Director of the Philippine Commission on Sports Scuba Diving;
- 33 (k) Director of the Biodiversity Management Bureau of the DENR;

- 1 (l) A representative from the private sector who is distinguished in a profession or
2 field of interest relevant to marine protection and management; and
3 (m) A representative from an academic institution, with proven track record or
4 related to marine protection and management.
5

6 The sectoral members of the Council shall be selected by the Council in a fair
7 and transparent manner. They shall each serve a term of three (3) years and may be
8 reappointed for another term.
9

10 The Council may call on the other government agencies and offices to provide
11 advice and assistance on matters relating to the performance of its functions and the
12 development of ecotourism in said provinces.
13

14 The provincial governments of Batangas, Marinduque, Occidental Mindoro,
15 Oriental Mindoro and Romblon shall provide a secretariat for the Council, including the
16 funding necessary to cover expenses for the performance of its official functions and
17 activities.
18

19 **Sec. 5. Ecotourism Development Plan.** – Within one (1) year after the approval
20 of this Act, the Council, in consultation with concerned agencies of the government
21 and stakeholders prepare a tourism development plan that shall include the
22 construction, installation and maintenance of such appropriate infrastructure and
23 facilities to enhance tourism in the area: *Provided*, That said development plan shall
24 ensure the preservation and conservation of the natural beauty and resources of the
25 area: *Provided, further*, That pertinent and existing policies, management plans and
26 efforts to protect and conserve marine biodiversity thereat shall be taken into account
27 in the preparation of the tourism development plan.
28

29 **Sec. 6. Role of the DOT.** – The DOT shall assist the provincial governments of
30 Batangas, Marinduque, Occidental Mindoro, Oriental Mindoro and Romblon in the
31 implementation of the tourism development plan by providing technical assistance in
32 tourism capacity building. It shall also include the Verde Island Passage in its national
33 and regional promotion programs.

1 **Sec. 7. Appropriations.** – The funding for the implementation of this Act shall
2 be included in the respective annual budgets of the provincial governments of
3 Batangas, Marinduque, Occidental Mindoro, Oriental Mindoro and Romblon. The DOT
4 may augment shall allocation with internally-generated funds.
5

6 **Sec. 8. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – Within sixty (60) days from the
7 effectivity of this Act, the Council shall, in consultation with the concerned agencies of
8 the government, promulgate the rules and regulations to implement this Act.
9

10 **Sec. 9. Separability Clause.** – if any provision of this Act shall be declared
11 unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full
12 force and effect.
13

14 **Sec. 10. Repealing Clause.** – All laws, decrees, orders, and issuances or
15 portions thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, are hereby
16 repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.
17

18 **Sec. 11. Effectivity.** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication
19 in a newspaper of general circulation.
20

21 *Approved.*