

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Philippines

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 2376



INTRODUCED BY HONORABLE DR. REY B. AQUINO

EXPLANATORY NOTE

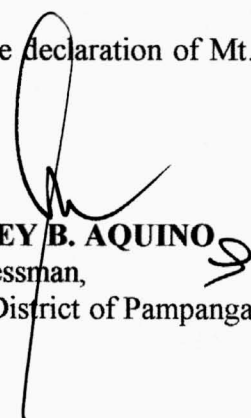
In November of 1993, R.A. 7690, which declared Arayat National Park a "Tourist Spot," took effect. The law empowered the Department of Tourism to give priority to the development of Arayat National Park, particularly in the construction, installation and maintenance of appropriate facilities and infrastructure therein that will enhance tourism.

Since then, however, issues regarding awareness and conservation of ecology and environment have increasingly knocked on the doors of the tourism industry. Thus, the birth of "Ecotourism," which is generally defined as an enlightening travel experience to natural areas that contributes to the conservation of the ecosystem, while building ecological, environmental and cultural awareness of and respect to the host communities.

Lately, too, there has arisen a growing demand of tourists for activities related to nature, outdoor adventure, and cultural experience in the countryside. It is in this regard that the transformation of the whole of Mt. Arayat, from a simple "Tourist Spot" to an "Ecotourism Destination," becomes necessary.

This bill aims to declare and transform Mt. Arayat as an "Ecotourism Destination," making it a haven for the rising number of tourists looking for nature-based activities, among which are wildlife viewing, hiking, trekking, cycling, and trail riding. On one hand, this will translate to giving a positive ecotourism experience for visitors, while promoting ecological and environmental awareness; on the other, it will provide direct financial benefits to the people of Arayat and generate additional revenue to the tourism industry as a whole.

Toward this end, approval of this bill for the declaration of Mt. Arayat as an "Ecotourism Destination" is earnestly requested.


DR. REY B. AQUINO
Congressman,
Third District of Pampanga

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**AN ACT DECLARING MT. ARAYAT,
IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF ARAYAT, PROVINCE OF PAMPANGA,
AN ECOTOURISM DESTINATION**

SECTION 1. *Title.*- This Act shall be known as the "Mt. Arayat Ecotourism Destination Act."

SECTION 2. *Priority Development to Mt. Arayat.* - Mt. Arayat, in the Municipality of Arayat, Province of Pampanga, is hereby declared an "Ecotourism Destination." It shall be given priority by the Department of Tourism (DOT) in its development as an ecotourism spot, providing guests and tourists an enlightening travel experience that would contribute to Mt. Arayat's conservation as an ecological unit, and also making available activities related to nature, outdoor adventure, and cultural experience in the countryside.

SECTION 3. *Preparation of Development Plan.* - The Department of Tourism, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and other government agencies concerned, in coordination with the Municipality of Arayat, shall, within one (1) year from the approval of this Act, prepare a development plan involving the construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of appropriate facilities and infrastructure in Mt. Arayat necessary to transform it into an ecotourism destination.

SECTION 4. *Considerations for Development Plan.* - In the preparation of the development plan mentioned in Sec. 3 hereof, the government agencies concerned shall consider making available to tourists nature-based activities, including but not limited to, wildlife-viewing, hiking, trekking, cycling, trail riding and jungle-survival. Likewise, the development plan shall take into account the accessibility of guided tours providing information on various subjects like conservation issues, environmental politics, and history and culture of Pampanga.

SECTION 5. *Implementation of Development Plan.* - The Department of Tourism shall take immediate steps to implement said development plan and shall incorporate the same in the Department's overall tourism development program for the ensuing calendar year.

SECTION 6. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - The Department of Tourism shall issue the necessary rules and regulations for the proper implementation of this Act.

SECTION 7. *Appropriations.* - The amount necessary for the purpose of implementing this Act shall be taken from the appropriations of the Department of Tourism and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources under the current General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 8. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

APPROVED,