

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL No. 2689



Introduced by
HON. RODOLFO G. VALENCIA, 1st District, Oriental Mindoro,
HON. ALFONSO V. UMALI, JR. 2nd District, Oriental Mindoro and
HON. MA. AMELITA C. VILLAROSA, Lone District, Occidental Mindoro

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The bill seeks to declare the Halcon Mountain Range in the Island of Mindoro as an eco-tourism zone.

The Island of Mindoro, which comprises the Provinces of Occidental Mindoro and Oriental Mindoro, is bestowed with unique treasures known as the *Mahalta* – Mangyan, Halcon and Tamaraw.

Mt. Halcon, the third-highest mountain in the Philippines, is part of the Halcon Mountain Range that divides the island into two provinces. Apart from being a favorite destination of both local and foreign adventurers, trekkers and mountaineers, Halcon Range supports lowland agriculture and industries through the numerous rivers flowing from it.

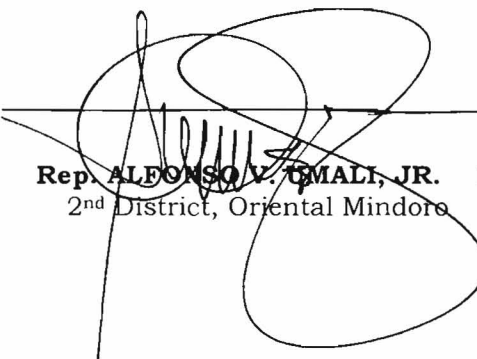
Despite its international reputation, Halcon has been listed among the six extremely high critical areas for conservation in Mindoro as assessed by 300 local and international experts in the 2001 Philippine Biodiversity Priority Setting Workshop. There is, therefore, an urgent need to preserve Halcon as an eco-tourism zone to pave the way for an organized planning, administration and effective conservation of the area with the end view of avoiding the destruction of its natural beauty and its vast variety of *flora* and *fauna*.

Halcon, together with other identified destinations in Mindoro, has long been considered as a leading spot that could anchor the eco-tourism development of the two provinces. Through these destinations, Mindoro is expected to contribute significantly in the over-all tourism development thrust of the country.

Cognizant of the potential of tourism in becoming an economic pump-primer and the urgency of conserving and preserving the attractions of the Halcon Mountain Range, the proponents strongly recommend and request the enactment of this bill.



Rep. RODOLFO G. VALENCIA
1st District, Oriental Mindoro
Mindoro



Rep. ALFONSO V. GMALI, JR.
2nd District, Oriental Mindoro



Rep. MA. AMELITA C. VILLAROSA
Lone District, Occidental

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AN ACT
DECLARING THE HALCON MOUNTAIN RANGE AS AN ECO-TOURISM ZONE,
PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote a sustainable tourism industry.

Towards that end, the country shall formulate effective strategies to enable the industry to become a major source of livelihood and employment as well as rationalize all efforts pertaining to environmental protection. Henceforth, aggressive measure seeking to restore the country's share in the global tourist market shall be consistent with the preservation of the natural environment and the ecosystem.

SECTION 2. Pursuant to the public policy, the Halcon Mountain Range is hereby declared an eco-tourism zone. As such, it shall be subject to the rules and regulations governing the development of eco-tourism zones.

SECTION 3. Within a year from the approval of this Act, the Department of Tourism, in coordination with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the local government units, and with other concerned agencies of the government, shall prepare an eco-tourism master plan, promulgate the necessary rules and regulations, review and strengthen existing local structural framework to enhance cooperation and support. *Provided*, That said development plan shall ensure the preservation of the natural resources of the area.

SECTION 4. The Department of Tourism shall take immediate steps to implement said development plan and shall incorporate the same in its overall development program for the ensuing calendar year.

SECTION 5. The Department of Tourism shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the proper implementation of this Act.

SECTION 6. The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be taken from the appropriation of the General Appropriations Act of the year following its enactment into law and thereafter.

SECTION 7. All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees, rules and regulations, and other issuance contrary to or inconsistent with this Act shall be deemed repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 8. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved.
