

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila
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First Regular Session

House Bill No. 2951



Introduced by HON. TRANQUILINO B. CARMONA, M.D.

“AN ACT DECLARING THE ROAD CONNECTING THE MUNICIPALITIES OF MURCIA AND SALVADOR BENEDICTO AND THE CITY OF SAN CARLOS IN THE FIRST DISTRICT OF NEGROS OCCIDENTAL AS AN ECOTOURISM HIGHWAY, TO BE KNOWN AS THE NORTH NEGROS ECOTOURISM HIGHWAY AND TO PROVIDE FUNDS THEREFOR”

EXPLANATORY NOTE:

Helping ecotourism grow, promote, sustain and conserve our natural heritage, are some of the thrusts of this Act for the northern part of Negros Occidental.

Ecotourism is now in the picture of tourism industry. In the case of the first district of Negros Occidental, this 87 kilometer road linking the cities of Bacolod and San Carlos, through the municipalities of Murcia and Salvador Benedicto has enticed tourists to spot this highway with desire to view the Mt Kanlaon, the enticing falls within the area, the Choco Hills in Barangay Prosperidad and the Codcod Rice Terraces, to name a few.

This highway is the best alternative route, giving a shortcut of one and a half to two hours travel time from Bacolod City to San Carlos City and vice versa. Considering the influx of individuals unto this highway, may it be a tourism or transportation related activity, the ecological sustainability of the area is at risk unless appropriate actions are given importance. To foster environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation under the ecotourism based programs with primary focus on experiencing natural areas, protection awareness promotion must be taken into consideration.

While this highway serves as a thoroughfare for commuters plying this particular route, it is a must that responsible travel that promotes the conservation of nature and sustains the well-being of local people be observed. Hence, the creation of programs, policies, rules and regulations in furtherance of the ecotourism along the **North Negros Ecotourism Highway** be resolved and implemented.

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

Section 1. *Title.* This Act shall be known as the ***North Negros Ecotourism Highway Act of 2004.***

Section 2. *Declaration.* The road connecting the municipalities of Murcia and Don Salvador Benedicto and the city of San Carlos is hereby declared as an “***Ecotourism Highway***” to be known as the “***North Negros Ecotourism Highway.***”

Section 3. *Definition of Terms.* As used in this Act, the following terms shall be defined as follows:

- a. *Ecotourism* refers to an ecologically sustainable tourism with primordial consideration on experiencing natural environs that fosters environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation, conservation, protection and maintenance.
- b. *Highway* refers to a public main thoroughfare.

Section 4. *Purposes.* The purpose of this Act is to call awareness among tourists, passengers of public utility buses and vehicles plying along the ***North Negros Ecotourism Highway***, mountain trekkers, bikers, motorists, environmentalists, and the constituents, that the aforesaid highway is subject to conservation, protection, preservation and maintenance.

Section 5. *Joint Undertakings.* The Secretaries of the Public Works and Highways, Tourism and the Environment and Natural Resources shall be required to jointly issue rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the purpose of this Act.

Section 6. *Appropriations.* The Secretaries of the Public Works and Highways, Tourism and the Environment and Natural Resources shall immediately include in their respective department's program the operationalization of the ***North Negros Ecotourism Highway***, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

Section 7. *Separability Clause.* If any part or provision of this Act shall be held unconstitutional or invalid, other provisions, which are not affected thereby, shall continue to be in full force and effect.

Section 8. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations or part thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

Section 9. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

APPROVED.