

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

Thirteenth Congress
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **4199**



Introduced by Honorable Catalino V. Figueroa

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to declare the Municipality of Sta. Rita, Province of Samar as an eco-tourism zone.

Eco-tourism is one of the fast growing activities and dollar-earning industries of the country. The tourism boom during the 80's was due to the numerous tourist spots that have been developed and made accessible to tourists, local and foreign alike. Aside from this, the country has lots of natural wonders which cannot be found anywhere else in the world. In fact, the government has launched a massive tourism development program called "I love the Philippines" to help strengthen the economy of the country.

In the Province of Samar, there are a number of tourist spots but they are yet to be developed. One of these is the Municipality of Sta. Rita. It is one of Samar's towns that boasts of the Tagacay Cave which was formed since time immemorial.

Sta. Rita is where you can do water trekking and "waterfalls" hopping. The town offers a rigid series of water drop courtesy of its 2.5 kilometer stretch of downstream running Igang-igang River. For an overview, there are more than five waterfalls along the way up the said river. For hopeless romantics and adventure seekers, the soothing and peaceful ambience of Taytay Falls can be mesmerizing. It offers an unrelenting water drop less the irritating sound of water disgorge.

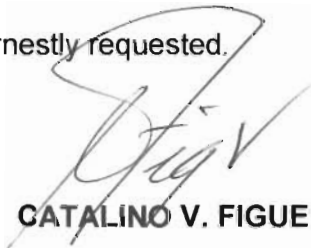
One can indulge in an island escapade at Dabong Beach Island which is just near the San Juanico Bridge. Other places to visit in Sta. Rita are the Sta. Rita Tree Park, the natural Pillars of Tabucan and the Water Tower 1 of Tabucan. Lodging facilities are available at Marjorie's Garden

Sta. Rita is where one can experience the *Patiklos* Festival. *Patiklos* refers to the *bayanihan* spirit of Samareños in accomplishing a community

activity. Village folks take turns in helping each other until all the members of the community have participated in wrapping up a particular activity pertaining to farming. Drum-bearing men would go around the village to herald the start of *Patiklos* and its intention just like what the village people did in the 17th and 18th centuries

One can go to Sta. Rita by plane via Tacloban City traversing through the San Juanico Bridge and a well-built highway. It is also one hour and fifteen minutes away from Samar's capital town of Catbalogan. Being one of Samar's progressive towns, Sta. Rita's declaration as an eco-tourism zone would create more jobs for its populace and increased awareness among its people of the importance of preserving nature.. Thus, economic growth in the area would be enhanced. Furthermore, it would promote the growth of the eco-tourism industry and help project a good image of our province and country locally and internationally.

Hence, approval of this bill is earnestly requested.



CATALINO V. FIGUEROA

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**AN ACT
DECLARING THE MUNICIPALITY OF STA. RITA,
PROVINCE OF SAMAR AS AN ECO-TOURISM ZONE,
AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.**

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

SECTION 1. The Municipality of Sta. Rita, Province of Samar is hereby declared an Eco-tourism Zone and shall be accorded priority development by the Department of Tourism.

SECTION 2. The Philippine Tourism Authority, in consultation with the Department of Public Works and Highways, shall prepare, within one year from the approval of this Act, an eco-tourism development plan for the Municipality of Sta. Rita, Province of Samar. The development plan shall provide for the construction and installation of such appropriate facilities and infrastructure as shall encourage eco-tourism in the area and shall be submitted for final approval to the Department of Tourism prior to its implementation.

SECTION 3. Upon the approval by the Department of Tourism of the eco-tourism development plan for the Municipality of Sta. Rita, Province of Samar, it shall take immediate steps to expedite the implementation thereof and, for the purpose, shall incorporate the same in the Department's overall eco-tourism development program for the ensuing calendar year.

SECTION 4. The amount necessary for the development of the Municipality of Sta. Rita, Province of Samar as an eco-tourism zone and for the construction and installation of such appropriate facilities and infrastructure shall be charged to the appropriations for the Department of Tourism under the current General Appropriations Act. Thereafter, such sum as may be necessary for the operation and maintenance of the eco-tourism zone shall be included in the annual budget of the Municipality of Sta. Rita.

SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved,