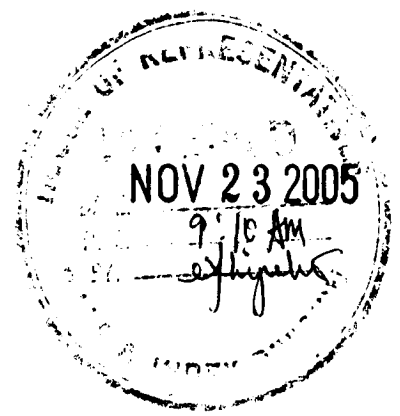


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila



Thirteenth Congress
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 4939

Introduced by Honorable Catalino V. Figueroa

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to declare the Municipality of Jiabong, 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. This will also be in consonance with the theme "One Island, One People, One Culture" formulated by the Samar Island Tourism Venture which aims to boost the tourism capabilities of the three Samar provinces.

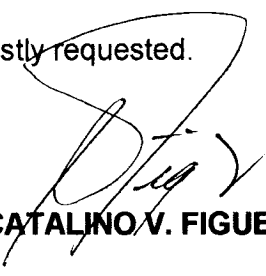
In the Province of Samar, there are a number of tourist spots but they are yet to be developed. One of these is the Municipality of Jiabong. It is one of Samar's towns that boast of several natural caves which are endowed with nature's bounty and beauty intricately designed for everyone to feast on. The Panaghoy Cave in *Barangay* Tagbayaon boasts of the flowstone and stalactite formations. Same holds true with the Lobo Cave also in *Barangay* Tagbayaon.

It is also in the municipality that the *tahong* is in abundance the whole year round. In fact, it's end product, the *tahong* chips, was chosen as the representative-product of Region 8 in the "One Town, One Product" program of the Department of Trade and Industry in 2004.

From Manila, one can go to Jiabong by plane via Tacloban City traversing through the San Juanico Bridge and the Pan-Philippine Highway. It is only fifteen minutes away from Samar's capital town of Catbalogan. Being one of Samar's fast-growing towns, Jiabong'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

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

Thirteenth Congress
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House Bill No. 4939

Introduced by Honorable Catalino V. Figueroa

**AN ACT
DECLARING THE MUNICIPALITY OF JIABONG,
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 Jiabong, 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 Jiabong, 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 Jiabong, 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 Jiabong, 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 Jiabong.

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

Approved,