

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF THE REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

733
HOUSE BILL NO. _____



Introduced by CHRISTOPHER S. CO and RODEL M. BATOCABE

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to prohibit the act of climbing and other activities on active volcanoes except upon authorization of the government and a clearance from the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS).

On May 7, 2013, five people died while trying to climb Mount Mayon, an active volcano, when it exploded and spewed ash. This includes four German tourists and their Filipino tour guide. Seven more were injured, including four Thai citizens.

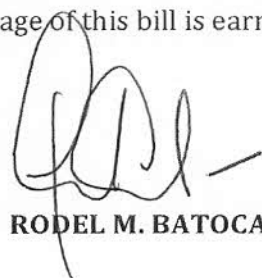
PHIVOLCS maintained that Mayon was in no danger of erupting but reminded the public not to venture into a six-kilometer permanent danger zone. According to them, steam or phreatic eruption is normal for active volcanoes like Mayon. However, it is evident that mountain climbers are not mindful of this danger, choosing to hike near the crater even if the danger of a volcano spewing ashes is lurking around the corner.

Because of the boom in the tourism industry, several companies and organizations have been formed that organize travel tours to different locations in the Philippines. The proliferation of these companies and the rapid development of the industry itself have made it more difficult for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to monitor the traffic to our tourist destinations and to maintain minimal impact on the ecological footprint. It is necessary to protect and maintain these areas for the benefit of more tourists.

But most importantly, the primary concern of the government should be the safety of its citizens and tourists who have come to the Philippines to see and experiences its attractions. The potential fatalities and injuries that may result from allowing leisure and recreational climbers surpass the demand for a tourism industry to boom in areas where there are active volcanoes.

In light of all these circumstances, the swift passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


CHRISTOPHER S. CO


RODEL M. BATOCABE

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AN ACT PROHIBITING MOUNTAINEERING AND OTHER ACTIVITIES ON ACTIVE VOLCANOES

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

SECTION 1. Title. This act shall be known as the "Anti-Volcano Climbing Act of 2012."

SECTION 2. Prohibition on mountaineering on active volcanoes. The penalty of a fine not less than Ten Thousand Pesos (Php 10,000) but not more than Fifty Thousand Pesos (Php 50,000) shall be imposed upon any person who shall conduct any mountaineering activities on active volcanoes within a ten (10) kilometer radius from the crater of the volcano, except if such activity was under the direct supervision and control of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and authorized by the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS), and only for educational, academic and research purposes.

SECTION 3. Liability of officers and juridical persons. If the person is a partnership, firm, corporation, association or any other organization, the officers and/or the organizers of the activity who know or should have known the commission of the offense shall be liable.

SECTION 4. Authorization of the PHIVOLCS. The PHIVOLCS shall issue a written authorization to any natural or juridical person to claim an exception to this Act upon the submission of documents showing the purpose for which the climb is to be undertaken, the list of the members of the team who will make the climb which shall not be less than four (4) members, a list of the officers and/or organizers of the climb, if different from the team members, and payment of required fees.

SECTION 5. Control and supervision of the DENR. The team shall report to the nearest DENR Office or Ranger Station before and after the climb. They shall provide the DENR with all the documents submitted to the PHIVOLCS together with its written authorization. The DENR may have the option of sending a representative to accompany the team in the climb.

SECTION 6. Separability Clause. - If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SECTION 7. Repealing Clause. - Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with, the provision of this Act is hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

SECTION 8. Effectivity. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days in at least one (1) newspaper of general circulation.

Approved.