

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

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4496



Introduced by **HON. RENE L. RELAMPAGOS**
First District, Bohol

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill proposes natural resources and cultural heritage management through tourism.

It is an understatement to say that tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors in the Philippines and is a stable economic factor in the recent years. In 2000, the Philippines' tourist arrivals totaled 2.2 million. Twelve years after, or in 2012, the country recorded 4.27 million tourist arrivals.

According to the Department of Tourism (DOT), a total of 884,014 visitors were received by the Philippines from January to February of this year alone which represented a 3.49% increase over the same months of 2013 with registered arrivals of 854,187. The month of January supplied 461,383 visitors which lodged a 5.80% increase while the month of February provided 422,631 visitors for a growth of 1.08%.

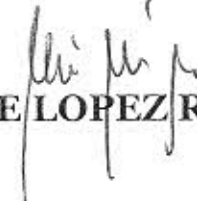
The main attractions for tourism remain our natural resources and cultural heritage sites. Necessarily, the growth in the tourism sector adds unwarranted strain in these natural resources and cultural heritage sites. Equally important, and a pressing reality, is the challenge of climate change to the environment.

It, thus, becomes imperative that additional mechanism be set in place to ensure a cycle of use, preservation, conservation, development, promotion and protection of the natural and cultural resources in the country.

The imposition of environmental or "green fees" is thus proposed. These green fees, which will initially be in the minimal amount of one hundred pesos (Php 100.00), shall be charged to all visitors who will go and visit the provinces and shall be collected in all ports, airports and terminals in the province concerned.

Proceeds of this collection will be used exclusively for the development and conservation of the province's natural and cultural heritage. These funds will fill a significant gap in improving tourism products and services at the same ensure that all sectors get a benefit from the tourism industry and ultimately work for the advantage of these natural and cultural heritage.

In view of the foregoing, the passage of the instant bill is earnestly sought.


RENE LOPEZ RELAMPAGOS

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HOUSE BILL NO. 4496

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First District, Bohol

AN ACT
MANDATING NATURAL RESOURCES AND CULTURAL HERITAGE
MANAGEMENT THROUGH TOURISM WITH THE IMPOSITION OF
ENVIRONMENTAL FEES OR "GREEN FEES" FOR THE USE,
PRESERVATION, CONSERVATION, DEVELOPMENT, PROMOTION AND
PROTECTION OF THE COUNTRY'S NATURAL RESOURCES AND
CULTURAL HERITAGE

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

SECTION 1. Title. This Act shall be known as the "Green Fee Act of 2014."

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. The State declares tourism as indispensable element of the national economy and an industry of national interest and importance, which must be harnessed as an engine of socio-economic growth and cultural affirmation to generate investment, foreign exchange and employment, and to continue to mold an enhanced sense of national pride for all Filipinos.

Towards this end, the State shall seek to, among others, ensure the development of Philippine tourism that is for and by the people, conserve and promote their heritage, national identity and sense of unity as well as promote a tourism industry that is ecologically sustainable, responsible participative, culturally sensitive, economically viable, and ethically and socially equitable for local communities.

SEC. 3. Green Fees. There shall be imposed environmental fees or "green fees" on all tourists going in the country and in the province-destinations in the amount of one hundred pesos (Php 100.00). This amount may later be changed upon recommendation by the Department of Tourism (DOT) in consultation with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) and Climate Change Commission (CCC).

Green fees shall be collected in all entry points in the respective provinces such as, but not limited to airports, ports, terminals and other points of entry.

DOT shall coordinate with DILG and DOTC on the manner and details of collection.

SEC. 4. Coverage. The Green Fee shall be imposed on all foreign visitors and guests in the country.

SEC. 5. Green Fund. Proceeds of this collection, which will be referred to as the "Green Fund," shall be used exclusively for the use, preservation, conservation, development, promotion and protection of the country's natural resources and cultural heritage, including, but not limited to the development of new tourism destinations; improvement of tourism products and services; research; promotion for the awareness of, and preparedness for, climate change and others.

Plans and programs of DOT in implementing this law shall, as far as practicable, complement and harmonize efforts already done by other agencies which are also mandated to preserve and promote natural resources and cultural heritage sites.

Thus, the Green Fund shall not be used for plans, programs and activities which are already funded from other sources or by other government agencies. Provided that, local government units shall be allowed to apply for the Green Fund subject to one hundred percent (100%) counterpart from their own fund and provided further, that they comply with the guidelines as well as the requirements as may later be declared by the DOT.

The collection, disbursement and use shall be laid out in the implementing rules and regulations.

The Green Fund shall be subject to the usual auditing rules and regulations.

SEC. 6. Implementing Agency. DOT shall be primarily responsible for the management and operation of the Green Fund.

There shall be a Secretariat attached to the DOT which will be headed by an Executive Director who shall have the level and rank of an undersecretary.

SEC. 7. Joint Congressional Oversight Committee. The Joint Oversight Congressional Oversight Committee ("Oversight Committee"), created under Republic Act No. 9593, shall monitor implementation of this Act.

SEC. 8. Submission of Reports. DOT shall submit, after nine (9) months from the enactment of this law, its initial report on the implementation of this Act to the Oversight Committee and every year thereafter.

SEC. 9. Implementing Rules and Regulations. DOT in consultation with DENR, DILG, DOTC, CCC and other relevant government agencies shall promulgate the necessary implementing rules and regulations within six (6) months from the passage of this law.

SEC. 10. Appropriation. The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriations of the DOT.

SEC. 11. Separability Clause. – The provisions of this Act are declared separable and in the event of any such provision is declared unconstitutional, the other provisions, which are not affected, shall remain in force and effect.

SEC. 12. Repealing Clause. – All other laws, decrees, rules and regulations or parts thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SEC. 13. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,