

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. **5408**



Introduced by HONORABLE SCOTT DAVIES S. LANETE, M.D.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

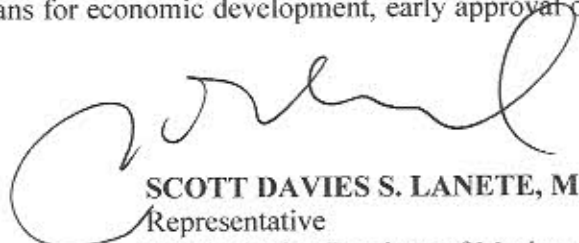
Under the Regalian doctrine which is embodied in Section 2, Article XII of the 1987 Constitution, all lands of the public domain belong to the State, which is the source of any asserted right to ownership of land. As an incident of ownership over public lands, it is also the prime duty of the State therefore to promote and develop these in order for them to reach their full use and potential.

Being an archipelago, the Philippines is gifted with an abundance of beaches with incomparable beauty. Because of this and the persistent efforts of the State, the country has gained acknowledgement as a major tourist destination in the world. Throughout the century, beach attractions such as Boracay Beach in Aklan, El Nido in Palawan, Puerto Galera in Mindoro etc., have become and continue to be an attraction.

However, these are not the only places to explore in the Philippines. The plethora of wonderful beaches in the country remains undiscovered and untapped. Examples of which are the virgin undiscovered beaches located in the easily accessible municipality of Esperanza, Province of Masbate.

Situated less than four hours away from the main city of Masbate, Esperanza offers a breathtaking experience with its extensive shorelines filled with fine white sand. Aside from Talisay beach front located in Barangay Labangtaytay, Esperanza has other pristine white beaches in Barangays Villa, Sorosimbahan and Domorog. Esperanza is also the site where the Agoho River passes through - a river full of promise because it is a perfect spot for river cruising and floating hotels. In short, Esperanza presents as an alternative to the prominent beaches of the country.

This bill seeks to jumpstart the development and promotion of the wonder hidden in Esperanza by declaring it as an eco-tourism zone. Through this, the recognition of its hidden wonders shall be fast-tracked and the progress of the surrounding community shall also be benefited without compromising the existing ecosystem. In view of the State policy to promote and maximize tourism as a means for economic development, early approval of this bill is earnestly sought.


SCOTT DAVIES S. LANETE, M.D.
Representative
Third District, Province of Masbate

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**AN ACT
DECLARING THE MUNICIPALITY OF ESPERANZA IN THE PROVINCE
OF MASBATE AS AN ECOTOURISM ZONE AND APPROPRIATING
FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

SECTION 1. It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote a sustainable and effective ecotourism industry to attract tourists, both local and international. Towards this end, the country shall rationalize all efforts pertaining to environmental protection and making the industry a major source of livelihood and an avenue for the generation of employment. Henceforth, aggressive measures seeking to restore the country's share in the Asian tourist market shall be consistent with the preservation of the existing ecosystem and natural environment.

SEC. 2. Pursuant to Section 1 hereof, the Municipality of Esperanza in the Province of Masbate is hereby declared an ecotourism zone.

SEC. 3. There shall be created an ecotourism board, to be known as the Esperanza Ecotourism Governing Board WITHIN A YEAR FROM THE APPROVAL OF THIS ACT.

The board shall be composed of the FOLLOWING:

1. Representative of the 3rd District of Masbate as Chairman,
2. the Secretary of the Department of Tourism OR HIS duly authorized representative,
3. the Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources OR HIS duly authorized representative,
4. a member of a non-government organization whose advocacy is environmental preservation,
5. a member of the academe,
6. a representative of the business sector, AND
7. the Local Chief Executive of the Municipality of Esperanza.

The governing board shall prepare the rules and regulations necessary for the full implementation by the local government unit of Esperanza of the provisions of this Act and shall, as the need arises, amend, modify or revise such rules and regulations to meet the needs of changing times.

SEC. 4. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Department of Tourism shall, within 120 days from the approval of this Act, develop a master plan to be approved by the President of the Republic of the Philippines upon the recommendation of the governing board.

SEC. 5. The amount necessary to implement the provisions of this Act shall be charged against the appropriations under the Annual General Appropriations Act and/or against the internally generated funds of the Department of Tourism.

SEC. 6. If, for any reason, any part or provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining part or provision not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 7. All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations and other issuances or parts thereof contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 8. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,