



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

Sixteenth Congress
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **5967**

Introduced by Honorable Fernando V. Gonzalez

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Republic Act 9593 or the Tourism Act of 2009 declared tourism as an 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.

In this light, this bill seeks to declare the Municipality of Jovellar in the province of Albay as an ecotourism zone. Located in Jovellar are tourist spots that have tremendous tourism potential such as the Quitinday Falls, caves and underground river and the Quipia River that runs all the way to butanding-famous Donsol in Sorsogon.

Developing Jovellar into an ecotourism zone will generate investment and foreign exchange in the area and will also provide employment opportunities for local residents. With the influx of tourists, the ecotourism zone will be a significant source of business opportunities.

Lack of sufficient lodging and retail facilities and round-the-clock public transportation hinder the socioeconomic and environmental development of the area. When the Municipality of Jovellar becomes an ecotourism zone, all these problems will be properly addressed.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is earnestly requested.

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AN ACT
DECLARING THE MUNICIPALITY OF JOVELLAR IN THE PROVINCE OF ALBAY
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. - Department of Tourism Priority Development. The Municipality of Jovellar in the Province of Albay, famous for its Sigpit/Quitinday Falls and underground river and caves, is hereby declared as an eco-cultural tourism zone. As such, it shall be accorded priority development by the Department of Tourism, hereinafter referred to as the DOT, and shall be subject to the rules and regulations governing the development of tourist zones.

SEC. 2. - Development Plan. The DOT, in coordination with the local government units concerned, the Representative of the Third Congressional District of Albay and other concerned agencies of the government shall, within one (1) year after the approval of this Act, prepare a development plan involving the construction, installation and maintenance of such appropriate facilities and infrastructure which shall enhance tourism in the area: Provided, That the said development plan shall ensure the preservation and conservation of the natural beauty and indigenous nature of the area. Consideration must also be given to the formulation, development

and implementation of programs and strategies that will generate livelihood and employment opportunities for the local inhabitants of the area.

SEC. 3. - Implementation. The DOT shall take immediate steps in implementing the tourism development plan that will suit the natural characteristics of the area and shall incorporate the same in its overall development plans and programs for national implementation.

SEC. 4 - Promotion of Jovellar. It shall also be the responsibility of the DOT to promote Jovellar as a tourism area in all its national, regional and local promotion programs.

SEC. 5. - Rules and Regulations. The DOT shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the proper implementation of this Act.

SEC. 6. - Appropriations. The DOT shall include in the Department's program the implementation of this Act, the funding of which shall be charged against the internally generated funds of the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA) and/or the appropriations in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 7. - Repealing Clause. All laws, rules, regulations, proclamations, executive orders or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby modified or amended accordingly.

SEC. 8. - Effectivity Clause. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,