

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session

House Bill No. **6064**



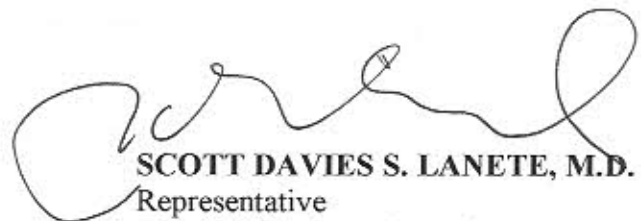
Introduced by HONORABLE SCOTT DAVIES S. LANETE, M.D.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Unknown to many but are exponentially gaining attention, the Island of Nagarao and its surrounding islands are full of tourist and economic potential. Situated at the developing municipality of Placer in the Province of Masbate, the Island of Nagarao and its surrounding islands are naturally gifted with pristine white sand beaches, virgin coral reefs filled with colorful fauna and flora, wide-ranging sand bars, and most of all, extremely warm-welcoming people.

Despite these natural treasures, the Island of Nagarao and its surrounding islands remain undiscovered and undeveloped. The lack of progress in the area can be traced to non-existent attention coming from the national government. Worse, the area has and continues to fall prey to unscrupulous entities engaged in illegal fishing thereby causing massive and irreversible destruction to the area.

Considering that it is a policy of the State to undertake the sustainable development of the environment simultaneously with the right of the people to a healthy and balanced ecology, it is imperative that the national government provide the needed care and attention to the Island of Nagarao and its surrounding islands. In order to achieve these goals, the Island of Nagarao and its surrounding islands should be declared as an ecotourism spot wherein an ecotourism council will be established to steer the area to fame and progress while maintaining the sanctity of its natural resources. Hence, the passage of this bill is urgently sought.



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

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

**AN ACT DECLARING THE ISLAND OF NAGARAO AND ITS SURROUNDING
ISLANDS AS AN ECOTOURISM ZONE, ESTABLISHING THE NAGARAO
ECOTOURISM COUNCIL, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR,
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

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

Section 1. Short Title. This Act shall be known as "Nagarao Ecotourism Act."

Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* It is hereby declared the policy of the State to ensure the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology through the promotion of activities designed for environmental protection and conservation.

Sec. 3. *The Nagarao Ecotourism Zone.* In accordance with the foregoing declared policy, there is hereby established an ecotourism zone, to be known as the Nagarao Ecotourism Zone, hereinafter known as the Zone, which shall cover the entire area embraced by the Island of Nagarao and its surrounding islands located in the Municipality of Placer, Province of Masbate.

Sec 4. *The Nagarao Ecotourism Council.* There is hereby created an ecotourism council, to be known as the Nagarao Ecotourism Council, hereinafter known as the Council to be composed of one representative each from accredited non-government organizations and people's organizations engaged in ecotourism, one recognized indigenous people's federation, reputable travel organizations, the academe, and the local chief executive of the Municipality of Placer who shall sit as the chairman of the Council.

Placer's local legislative body shall appoint the members of the Council for a term of five (5) years, renewable for one term.

The Department of Tourism and Department of Environment and Natural Resources shall assist the Council in its task of pursuing the objectives of this Act.

Sec. 5. *Functions and Responsibilities of the Council.* The Council shall be responsible for the following:

- a. Study, adopt, and from time to time update an Ecotourism Master plan and supervise the implementation of the corresponding programs and activities therein;
- b. Assess and evaluate the potential impact of development to the environmental safety and well-being of the Zone;
- c. Conduct consultations with the local residents of the Zone to be affected by ecotourism development to assimilate their cultural values and beliefs in the master plan and other programs;
- d. Provide technical and financial assistance to communities in the Zone;
- e. Formulate rules and regulations which shall prohibit illegal fishing and related activities;
- f. Perform such other functions as may be necessary to carry out the objectives of this Act.

Sec. 6. *Ecotourism Fund.* To carry out the purposes of this Act, there shall be created a special fund called the Nagarao Ecotourism Fund, which shall be sourced from at least 40% of the environmental fee, which shall be collected by the Council from all visiting tourists.

Sec. 7. *Separability Clause.* – If any part or provision of this Act shall be held unconstitutional or invalid, other provisions, which are not affected thereby, shall continue to be in full force and effect.

Sec. 8. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Sec. 9. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.