

Republic of the Philippines  
House of Representatives  
Quezon City, Metro Manila

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS  
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 6192

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

## EXPLANATORY NOTE

The municipality of Loon in the province of Bohol, consisting of 67 barangays, has been bestowed with rich marine paradise, natural lakes, waterfalls and mangrove gardens, among others. The Cabillao and Sandingan islands, located in Loon, are considered favorite tourist destinations. With the development of an international cruise port in Catagbacan, Loon is viewed as an emerging giant in Bohol's eco-cultural tourism industry.

The entire islands of Cabillao (766 hectares) and Sandigan (569 hectares) were proclaimed as Mangrove Swamp Forest Reserves under Proclamation No. 2152 in 1981. This was confirmed upon the passage of Republic Act 7586, or the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) Act of 1992.

However, only the barangay of Caniguan and a portion of Calayugan of Sandingan Island and Lake Danao in Barangay Pantulan of Cabillao Island have actual mangroves worthy to be protected and covered under the NIPAS Act. A big percentage of these islands remain agricultural, residential and with very few commercial establishments. These islands which have remained idle and unproductive for a long time, once reclassified, will open the opportunity for tourism, business and economic developments. These islands, like Panglao, will undoubtedly be hailed as one of the world's famous tourist destinations and another addition to Philippines' pride once developed as it boasts of beautiful diving spots sought after by diving enthusiasts. Panglao is among the disestablished islands under the NIPAS Act.

Section 5 (4) of the NIPAS Act mandates that within three (3) years from effectivity, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) shall study and review each area composing the system as to its suitability or non-suitability for preservation as protected area. However, more than twenty (20) years had elapsed, the DENR has yet to submit a study and a review on the suitability or non-suitability of the two (2) islands to be included in the system.

With the steady influx of tourists to these areas in recent years, demands for transportation and accommodation complete with facilities must be met. Thus, it is the desire of the local government that the inclusion of these islands under the NIPAS Act be modified and limited to mangrove areas and natural lakes where migratory birds are seen and unique species of fish are found. This will allow development of the area and the improvement of transportation to the benefit of the constituents and tourists.



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**“AN ACT EXEMPTING THE ISLANDS OF CABILAO AND SANDINGAN IN  
THE MUNICIPALITY OF LOON, PROVINCE OF BOHOL, FROM THE  
COVERAGE OF THE MANGROVE FOREST RESERVES UNDER THE NIPAS  
ACT OF 1992 AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”**

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

**SECTION 1.** Dis-establishment as Protected Area. – Certain portions of the islands of Cabilao and Sandingan with total areas of Seven Hundred Sixty Six Hectares (766 has) and Five Hundred Sixty Nine hectares (569 has), respectively, in the municipality of Loon, Bohol, are hereby excluded from the coverage of protected areas under the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) Act of 1992, thereby, causing the Lifting of the Ban in Titling of Lots of the islands, as provided under Rule 8 of DENR Administrative Order No. 2008-26.

**SECTION 2.** Correct Delineation of the Protected Areas in the Islands of Cabilao and Sandingan. – The inclusion of these islands under the NIPAS Act will be modified and limited to the actual mangrove areas and the natural lake where migratory birds are seen and unique species of fish are found.

**SECTION 3.** Implementing Rules and Regulations. – Within three (3) months following the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of the DENR shall issue the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

**SECTION 4.** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,

Under the NIPAS Act, disestablishment of a protected area under the System or modification of its boundary shall take effect pursuant to an Act of Congress. Hence, this proposed legislation seeks to exclude certain portions of the islands of Cabila and Sandangan from the coverage of protected areas under the NIPAS Act and to lift the ban in the titling of lots of the two islands which is greatly disadvantageous to the lot owners, prejudicial to the welfare of its constituents, and counter productive to the economic development of the islands.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is sought.

RENE LOPEZ RELAMPAGOS

