

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

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session

House Bill No. **6389**



Introduced by Magdalo Party-List Representatives
Hon. Francisco Ashley L. Acedillo and Hon. Gary C. Alejano

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Article II, Section 16 of the Philippine Constitution provides, "The State shall protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature."

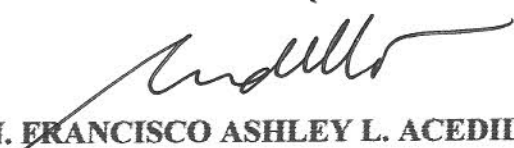
Further, Article XII, Section 2 of our Constitution mandates the State to protect the nation's marine wealth in its archipelagic waters, territorial sea and exclusive economic zone and reserve its use and enjoyment exclusively for Filipino citizens.

Pag-Asa island is an island-barangay and the political seat of power of Palawan's Municipality of Kalayaan¹. It is situated in the West Philippine Sea and is located west of Palawan. The Municipality of Kalayaan covers an approximate area of sixty-four thousand nine hundred seventy six (64,976) square miles of water and total land area of two hundred ninety (290) square kilometers. Based on NAMRIA, there are a total of ninety five (95) islands, cays, shoals and reefs within the area covered by PD 1596².

The Kalayaan Island Group is endowed with rich and diverse natural resources, most especially its marine ecosystem. Recent study shows that the waters around Pag-asa island remains a potential fishery ground, in terms of fishery resources, and offers superb diving environment, which is worthy of conservation in order to sustain the long term benefit that we are supposed to gain from it³.

In recognition of the importance that the Pag-Asa island and its adjoining islands of Parola, Kota, and Panata provides with regard to biodiversity in the Municipality of Kalayaan in Palawan, this proposed measure seeks to declare the aforementioned areas as an ecological tourism area. This bill creates the Pag-Asa Island Ecotourism Cluster Governing Board which shall rationalize all efforts pertaining to environmental protection and making the tourism industry a major source of livelihood and an avenue for the generation of employment.

For the foregoing reasons, the expeditious approval of this bill is earnestly requested.


HON. FRANCISCO ASHLEY L. ACEDILLO


HON. GARY C. ALEJANO

¹ Data retrieved from <http://www.rappler.com/nation/93563-feature-pagasa-residents-philippines> on Oct. 21, 2015.

² Data retrieved from http://www.kalayaanpalawan.gov.ph/about_the_municipality/municipal_background.html on Oct. 21, 2015.

³ Ibid

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AN ACT
DECLARING PAG-ASA ISLAND CLUSTER IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF
KALAYAAN, PROVINCE OF PALAWAN AS AN ECOTOURISM DESTINATION AND
PROTECTED AREA, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES

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

1 **SECTION 1. Declaration of Policy.** - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to
2 promote a sustainable ecotourism industry to attract local and foreign tourists to secure the
3 country's share in the world tourism market and to make it an avenue for generation of
4 employment while ensuring the environmental protection and preservation of the area.

5
6 **SECTION 2. The Pag-asa Island Ecotourism Cluster and Protected Area.** - The Pag-
7 asa island and its adjoining islands of Parola, Kota and Panata are hereby declared an ecotourism
8 destination and the islands of Parola, Kota and Panata are hereby declared as protected areas
9 under the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS). The Department of Environment
10 and Natural Resources (DENR) shall within ninety (90) days after the approval of this Act, make
11 inventory of the existing flora and fauna in Pag-asa Island Cluster that shall serve as the basis for
12 the creation of the master plan as provided in this Act.

13
14 For the purpose of this Act, ecotourism shall refer to a form of sustainable tourism within
15 a natural and cultural heritage area where community participation, protection and management
16 of natural resources, culture and indigenous knowledge and practices, environmental education

1 and ethics as well as economic benefits are fostered and pursued for the enrichment of host
2 communities and satisfaction of visitors.

3
4 **SECTION 3. Pag-asa Island Ecotourism Cluster Governing Board.** - For the purpose
5 of Section 2 of this Act, an ecotourism governing board, to be known as the Pag-asa Island
6 Ecotourism Cluster Governing Board, is hereby created. The Board shall be composed of the
7 following:

- 8 (a) Governor of Palawan as Chairperson;
- 9 (b) Congressional Representative of the First District of Palawan as Co-Chairperson;
- 10 (c) DENR Regional Executive Director for Region IV-B as Vice Chairperson;
- 11 (d) Department of Tourism (DOT) Regional Director for Region IV-B as Co-Vice
12 Chairperson;
- 13 (e) Mayor of the Municipality of Kalayaan;
- 14 (f) Barangay Chairperson of Pag-asa Island;
- 15 (g) Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Western Command Commander;
- 16 (h) One (1) member of a nongovernment organization whose advocacy is environmental
17 preservation;
- 18 (i) One (1) member of the academe;
- 19 (j) One (1) representative of the business sector; and
- 20 (k) One (1) representative of the private sector.

21
22 The governing board shall prepare the rules and regulations necessary for the full
23 implementation by the concerned local government unit of the provisions of this Act and shall, as
24 the need arises, amend, modify or revise such rules and regulations to meet the needs of
25 changing times.

26
27 **Section 4. Pag-asa Island Cluster Ecotourism Master Plan.** - The Pag-asa Island
28 Ecotourism Cluster Governing Board, in coordination with the Tourism Infrastructure and
29 Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA), shall within one hundred twenty (120) days from approval
30 of this Act, prepare, develop and implement the Ecotourism Master Plan to be approved by the
31 President of the Republic of the Philippines.

1 **Section 5. Appropriation.** - The Secretary of the DOT shall include in the Department's
2 program the implementation of this Act, and the amount necessary to carry out the provisions of
3 this Act shall be taken from the current appropriation of the Department and shall be included in
4 the General Appropriations Act of the year following its enactment into law and thereafter.

5
6 **Section 6. Repealing Clause.** - All laws, rules, regulations, executive orders, presidential
7 decrees or any other issuance contrary to or inconsistent with any of the provisions of this Act
8 are hereby deemed repealed or modified accordingly.

9
10 **Section 7. Separability Clause.** - If any section or provision of this Act or any part
11 hereof be declared unconstitutional or invalid, the same shall not affect the remaining sections
12 and/or provisions otherwise considered as valid and legal.

13
14 **Section 8. Effectivity.** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete
15 publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation in the
16 Philippines.

Approved,