



Seventeenth Congress  
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 5072

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**Introduced by Honorable Arcadio H. Gorriceta**

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### **EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Section 16, Article II (*Declaration of Principles and State Policies*), of the 1987 Constitution states:

*“Sec. 16. 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.”*

This bill seeks to declare the Bucari Area in the Municipalities of Leon and Alimodian, Province of Iloilo as ecotourism zone.

Ecological tourism focuses on maintaining pristine, unspoiled natural environments and providing direct financial benefits for conservation and empowerment for local people, it also promotes the social, cultural and economic well-being of travel destinations and local communities across the globe.

Republic Act No. 9593, otherwise known as the “Tourism Act of 2009” governs the establishment of the tourism enterprise zones (TEZs). This is the main vehicle for development at a local level within the priority destinations. The Tourism Industrial and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA) designates the TEZs, upon the recommendation of any local government unit (LGU), private entity or through joint venture of private and public sectors.

This bill proposes to declare the Bucari Area in the Province of Iloilo as ecotourism zone, to be known as Bucari Ecotourism Zone. The Bucari Area

consists of fourteen barangays located in the Municipality of Leon and seven barangays located in the Municipality of Alimodian.

In order to promote viable and sustainable development of the environment simultaneously with the right of the people to a balanced ecology, the Bucari Development Task Force (BDTF) was created on August 26, 1996 by virtue of Executive Order No. 170 issued by Iloilo Provincial Governor, Arthur D. Defensor, Sr. The aim of the task force was to develop and promote Bucari as the summer capital of the Province of Iloilo. It has a temperature comparable to that of Baguio City and vast areas of forests consisting mainly of pine trees. It is endowed with breathtaking scenery – 21 waterfalls, beautiful flora and fauna and numerous mini rice terraces. Moreover, Bucari was the seat of the Civil Resistance Government of Iloilo in World War II under Gov. Tomas Confessor. Bucari is not just scenery but a place “*where nature, legend and history meet.*”

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

ARCADIO H. GORRICETA

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AN ACT

DECLARING THE BUCARI AREA IN THE MUNICIPALITIES OF  
LEON AND ALIMODIAN, PROVINCE OF ILOILO AS ECOTOURISM  
ZONE, ESTABLISHING FOR THE PURPOSE THE BUCARI  
ECOTOURISM COUNCIL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

*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 the “*Bucari  
Ecotourism Zone Act.*”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of  
the State to protect the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology  
and to promote a viable and sustainable ecotourism industry in order to attract  
local and foreign tourists that will generate employment and investment  
opportunities for local communities while ensuring environmental protection  
and preservation of the area.

Towards this end, fourteen barangays in the Municipality of Leon and  
seven adjoining barangays in the Municipality of Alimodian, Province of Iloilo  
shall be accorded priority development as ecotourism zone.

1           SEC. 3.     *Bucari Ecotourism Zone.* – The Bucari Area consisting of  
2 fourteen (14) barangays in Leon namely: Bobon, Bucari, Bulwang, Camandag,  
3 Cabunga-an, Caboloan, Bacolod, Lampaya, Maliao, Danao, Cagay, Inggay,  
4 Tagsing and Igcadios; and seven (7) barangays of Alimodian namely:  
5 Uminggan, Lico, Dao, Cabacanan Rizal, Cabacanan Proper, Manasa and Tabug,  
6 in the Province of Iloilo, is hereby declared as ecotourism zone, to be known as  
7 Bucari Ecotourism Zone. The Tourism Development Plan of the Municipalities  
8 of Leon and Alimodian shall be incorporated in the overall National Tourism  
9 Development Plan of the Department of Tourism (DOT) pursuant to Republic  
10 Act No. 9593, otherwise known as the “*Tourism Act of 2009*,” and shall be  
11 jointly implemented by the two municipalities and the Tourism Infrastructure  
12 and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA).

13           The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), in  
14 coordination with the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority and  
15 the Municipalities of Leon and Alimodian, shall delineate well-defined  
16 geographic areas within the Bucari Ecotourism Zone and coordinate the  
17 integrated development of the area for the optimum use of natural assets and  
18 attractions. The development shall ensure the preservation of the flora and  
19 fauna and perpetuate the historic significance of the identified tourist attractions.

20           SEC. 4.     *Bucari Ecotourism Council.* – There is hereby created an  
21 ecotourism council, to be known as the Bucari Ecotourism Council, which is  
22 composed of the following:

- 1 (a) Representative from the Office of the Governor of Iloilo, as  
2 chairperson;
- 3 (b) Representative from the Office of the Congressman of 2<sup>nd</sup> District,  
4 Iloilo;
- 5 (c) DOT Regional Director for Region VI, as vice chairperson;
- 6 (d) DENR Regional Director for Region VI, as co-vice chairperson;
- 7 (e) Representative from the Office of the Mayor of the Municipality of  
8 Leon;
- 9 (f) Representative from the Office of the Mayor of the Municipality of  
10 Alimodian;
- 11 (g) Representative from the Office of the Barangay Chairperson of  
12 Barangay Bucari;
- 13 (h) One (1) representative from accredited non-government organizations  
14 and people's organizations engaged in ecotourism;
- 15 (i) Representative from the academe;
- 16 (j) Representative from the business sector; and
- 17 (k) Representative from the private sector; as members.

18 **SEC. 5. *Bucari Ecotourism Zone Administration.*** – The Bucari  
19 Ecotourism Zone Council shall appoint an Administrator who shall serve as its  
20 executive officer in exercising its powers and functions and in implementing the  
21 plans, programs, and projects approved by the Council pursuant to the  
22 objectives of this Act.

1           SEC. 6.     *Powers and Functions of the Council.* – The Council shall  
2 exercise the following powers and functions:

3           (a) Appoint an Administrator;

4           (b) Study, adopt, and from time to time update an Ecotourism Master Plan  
5           and supervise the implementation of the corresponding programs and  
6           activities therein;

7           (c) Assess and evaluate the potential impact of development to the  
8           environmental safety and well-being of the Bucari Ecotourism Zone;

9           (d) Conduct consultations with the local residents of the Bucari  
10          Ecotourism Zone to be affected by ecotourism development to  
11          assimilate their cultural values and beliefs in the master plan and other  
12          programs;

13          (e) Provide technical and financial assistance to communities in the  
14          Bucari Ecotourism Zone;

15          (f) Perform such other functions as may be necessary to carry out the  
16          objectives of this Act.

17          SEC. 7.     *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The Department of  
18 Tourism, in consultation with the Department of Environment and Natural  
19 Resources and the Municipalities of Leon and Alimodian, shall promulgate the  
20 necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

21          SEC. 8.     *Appropriations.* – The amount of Fifty million pesos  
22 (P50,000,000.00) is hereby authorized to be appropriated out of any funds in the

1 National Treasury not otherwise appropriated to carry out the mandate of this  
2 Act. It shall be utilized in such manner and subject to such conditions and  
3 limitations as may be prescribed by the Department of Budget and  
4 Management. Thereafter, such sum as may be necessary for the continued  
5 implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual budget of the  
6 Department of Tourism.

7       SEC. 9.     *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, orders, decrees, rules and  
8 regulations and other issuances, or parts thereof which are inconsistent with this  
9 Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

10       SEC. 10.   *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after  
11 its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

12       Approved,