

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

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 5179



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

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks the immediate completion of the construction of the International Cruise Ship Port in Catagbacan Norte, Loon, Province of Bohol through funding support from the government. Needless to say, the development and expansion of the Catagbacan Port as a Cruise Ship Port is envisioned to address the limited berthing space and shallow seabed of Tagbilaran Bay; thereby, expanding its capacity to accommodate more cruise ships, increasing tourist arrivals.

Section 2 of RA 9593 provides that "The State declares 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."

The Catagbacan Port in the Municipality Loon, has been identified by the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) for development as an International Cruise Port in view of its strategic location in relation to the ports in nearby island provinces and the Chocolate Hills of Bohol. It was also identified as a possible cargo port maintaining the Tagbilaran City Port solely as a tourist passenger port.

PPA is presently undertaking the Phase 1 of the construction and development of the Catagbacan Port as an International Cruise Ship Port. The PPA and the Department of Tourism (DOT) through the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA), shall prioritize the early completion of said project by providing funds and by enhancing the present masterplan for the development of its infrastructure and appropriate facilities.

Bohol continues to draw foreign tourists from across the globe from top-of-the-line international luxury cruise ships. These include M/S Minerva, M/S Hanseatic, M/S Silver Shadow and M/S Europa which docked, on several occasions, in Bohol for the past five years, each bringing hundreds of foreign visitors to savor Bohol's tourist spots. M/S Europa 2, an international cruise ship of Europe-based Hapag-Lloyd Cruises, a subsidiary of Hapag Lloyd AG, the world's fifth largest container carrier in terms of vessel capacity. A couple or more cruise ships are expected to have Tagbilaran as their port of call in the coming months. The visitors take at least four tour circuits Bohol is known for: Tagbilaran-Baclayon-Loboc-Chocolate Hills.

According to the Department of Tourism (DOT), sea tourist arrivals, mostly via cruises, rose to 52,820 passengers in 2014 from 41,624 in 2013 and 23,857 in 2012. Cruise tourism is one of the strategic tourism products identified under DOT's National Tourism Development Plan.

The establishment of an international cruise ship port in Catagbacan Norte would accommodate more international cruise ships traveling around the Asia-Pacific Region, making Bohol more competitive as a world-class tourism hub and creating a favorable image of the Philippines within the international community, thereby strengthening the country's attraction as a tourism destination and eventually paving the way for other benefits that may result from a positive global view of the country.

Taking into account the points raised, immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


RENE LOPEZ RELAMPAGOS

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**“AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN INTERNATIONAL CRUISE SHIP PORT AND
APPROPRIATE FACILITIES IN CATAGBACAN, LOON, PROVINCE OF
BOHOL”**

*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 “*An Act Establishing An
International Cruise Ship Port in Catagbacan Norte, Loon, Bohol.*”

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is the policy of the State to foster and
promote sustainable tourism throughout the country. Being one of the country’s leading
destinations when it comes to cruise-ship tourism, Bohol shall be accorded priority
development by the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) and the Department of Tourism
(DOT).

SECTION 3. Construction, Installation and Maintenance of Infrastructure and
Facilities. – The PPA, the DOT, in coordination with the Tourism Infrastructure and
Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA) and other concerned government agencies, shall
give construction priority to Catagbacan International Cruise Ship Port project for its
immediate completion. It shall enhance the project’s current master plan including the
plans and designs for the accompanying infrastructure and facilities to cater to new
generation of wide-bodied, state-of-the-art luxury cruise ships and to enhance the
cruise-ship industry in the province of Bohol.

SECTION 4. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – The PPA and the DOT
shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations relevant to the construction and
maintenance of the international cruise ship port in Catagbacan Norte.

SECTION 5. Appropriations. – The PPA and the DOT shall include in their respective Department's program the implementation of this Act, the funding of which shall be included in their respective annual budgets for the immediate completion of the international cruise ship port in Catagbacan Norte, Loon, Bohol.

SECTION 6. Separability Clause. – If any provision of this Act shall be held unconstitutional, any other provisions not otherwise affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 7. Repealing Clause. – All laws, executive orders, rules and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby amended, repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 8. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect after its complete publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,