

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

Seventeenth Congress
First Regular Session
House Bill No: **5229**



Introduced by REP. MERCEDES "DIDI" CAGAS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to declare Passig Islet of Barangay Bato in the Municipality of Star Cruz, Province of Davao del Sur as An aqua-ecotourism site.

The Passig Islet, an aqua-eco park resort is one of the most sought-after tourist destinations in the province because of its serene environment, clear water and white sand. Being an archipelago, it is not uncommon in the Philippines to find little islets situated near bigger islands, but Davao del Sur's petite paradise will give you a surprise with its beauty and unique terrain.

Little is known about this treasure, the islet which stretches for about a hectare was first occupied by coastguards and served as a hang out place of the locals. Realizing its potential, the island was then turned by the local government to a small pocket of paradise by putting up cottages and surrounding it with tires packed with cement to keep the sand from eroding.

Currently, to reach the islet, visitors had to walk through a wooden bridge connecting the islet to the mainland. The walk to the end of the bridge is an experience to behold as it goes

through thick lush mangrove trees leading to the area where pump boats await. The boat ride is to be anticipated as well, as it gives a panoramic view of the sea, the islet and the mountains. Passig Islet, which boasts of an astonishing ambience of tropical leisure, could easily become a good choice for travelers and locals who want to engage in aqua-ecotourism activities such as nature viewing, bird watching, swimming, picnic, photography and camping.

The lack of allied infrastructure such as spa/massage therapy services and restaurants to support the Passig Islet however hinders the full socio-economic and environmental development of the area. There is still a need to enhance the facilities of the aqua-eco park resort as the cottages and bridge are already old. Developing this barangay into an aqua-ecotourism site will provide employment opportunities to the local residents and create influx of tourists.

In view of the policy of the State to promote a tourism industry that is ecologically sustainable, responsible, participative, a culturally sensitive, economically viable and ethically and socially equitable for local communities, as declared in Republic Act 9593, otherwise known as "The Tourism Act of 2009," the approval of this bill is intently recommended.


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**AN ACT DECLARING PASSIG ISLET OF BARANGAY BATO IN THE
MUNICIPALITY OF STA. CRUZ, PROVINCE OF DAVAO DEL SUR AS AN AQUA-
ECOTOURISM SITE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

SECTION 1. Title. - This Act shall be known as “Passig Islet Aqua-ecotourism Act.”

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote a tourism industry that is ecologically sustainable, responsible, participative, culturally sensitive, economically viable, and equitable for local communities.

SECTION 3. Passig Islet Aqua-ecotourism Site. – Passig Islet of Barangay Bato in the Municipality of Star Cruz, Province of Davao del Sur is hereby declared an aqua-ecotourism site. Its development shall be prioritized by the Department of Tourism (DOT) and shall be subject to the rules and regulations governing the development of the aqua-ecotourism site.

The DOT shall prepare a development plan that ensures the preservation and conservation of the natural resources of the area. The plan should also include construction and maintenance of necessary facilities to enhance the aqua-ecotourism area and ensure optimum utilization of assets and resources available.

SECTION 4. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – It shall be the responsibility of DOT to promote Passig Islet as an aqua-ecotourism destination in all its national, regional and local promotion programs. DOT, in consultation with the province of Davao Del Sur and the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA) shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SECTION 5. Appropriations. – The funding of this act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act and internally generated funds of DOT, the year following its enactment into law and thereafter.

SECTION 6. Repealing Clause. – All laws, rules, regulations, proclamations, executive orders, proclamations and administrative regulations, or any part or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 7. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a national newspaper of general circulation.

Approved.