

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Constitution Hills, Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL No. **6164**



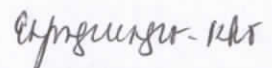
Introduced by **REPRESENTATIVE ELISA T. KHO, M.D.**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Bat-ongan Underground River in the Municipality of Mandaon, Province of Masbate is found about 120 meters away from the Bat-ongan cave and is famous for its length of about 10 kilometers of cavernous and beautiful rock formations along the river system. The underground river offer tourist a daring and adventurous experience.

This bill would seek to declare the Bat-ongan Underground River to be an eco-tourism zone for its preservation and maintenance as a tourism site.

In view of the importance of this matter, we urgently ask for the passage of this bill.


HON. ELISA T. KHO, M.D.

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AN ACT
DECLARING THE BAT-ONGAN UNDERGROUND RIVER IN THE MUNICIPALITY
OF MANDAON, PROVINCE OF MASBATE AS AN ECO-TOURISM ZONE,
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. State Policy — It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote sustainable tourism industry. Towards this end, the state shall rationalize all efforts pertaining to environmental protection and make the tourism industry a major source of livelihood and an avenue for the generation of employment. Henceforth, aggressive measures seeking to restore the country's share in the global tourism market shall be consistent with the preservation of the existing ecosystem and natural environment.

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy — Pursuant to the declared policy of the State, the Bat-ongan Underground River in the Municipality of Mandaon, Province of Masbate is hereby declared as an eco-tourism zone.

SECTION 3. Eco-Tourism Master Plan — The Provincial Government of Masbate, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Department of Tourism shall jointly prepare an Eco-Tourism Master Plan for the Bat-ongan Underground River in the Municipality of Mandaon and promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to be implemented by the local government in coordination with concerned government agencies.

SECTION 4. Appropriations — The Department of Tourism shall include in the Department's programs the amount necessary for the implementation of this Act, the funding of which shall be included in the Annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 5. Repealing Clause. — All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees, rules or regulations, and issuances contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act shall be deemed repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 6. Effectivity. - This Act shall be effective fifteen (15) days following the completion of its publication in the Official Gazette or a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved