

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

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session



H.B. No. **7022**

Introduced by HON. LORD ALLAN JAY Q. VELASCO

EXPLANATORY NOTE

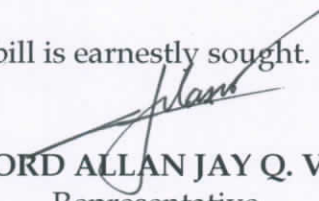
The Philippines has always been endowed with natural wonders, such as the Island of Boracay, the well-known Chocolate Hills and the Rice Terraces. These wonders made this country a viable and suitable destination for tourists all over the world. Thus, the policy of the State has been to promote tourism in the country and at the same time, create jobs, improve the lives of local communities and develop the natural wonders located here.

In this regard, cities and provinces in this country have welcomed and hoped the creation of new and more ecotourism zones. Certainly, these zones brought new jobs and possessed great potential to improve the economy, both local and national.

One of the areas in Marinduque, the Municipality of Santa Cruz, has been a famous tourist destination. The Maniwaya Island is, in fact, situated in this municipality and it never failed to amaze people with its white beach and sand bar. Moreover, the Bagumbungan Cave is also located in this municipality.

In light of the huge potential of the Municipality of Santa Cruz to become a top tourist destination, it is hereby sought that the Municipality of Santa Cruz in the Province of Marinduque be declared as an Ecotourism Zone. The consequent declaration would create new jobs, improve the local livelihood and will be beneficial for the economy.

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


HON. LORD ALLAN JAY Q. VELASCO
Representative
Lone District, Marinduque

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**AN ACT DECLARING THE MUNICIPALITY OF STA. CRUZ IN THE PROVINCE
OF MARINDUQUE AS AN ECOTOURISM ZONE 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 “*Santa Cruz Ecotourism Act of 2017.*”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote a sustainable and effective ecotourism industry to attract tourists, both local and foreign. Towards this end, the country should rationalize all efforts to make the tourism industry a major source of livelihood and an avenue for economic development. Moreover, measures should be taken to ensure that tourism development would be done with a view on the preservation of the existing ecosystem and natural environment.

SEC. 3. *The Municipality of Santa Cruz, Marinduque as an Ecotourism Zone.* – By virtue of the many tourist spots and destinations in the locality, the Municipality of Santa Cruz in the Province of Marinduque is hereby declared as an Ecotourism Zone. As such, it shall be accorded priority development by the Department of Tourism, hereinafter

referred to as the DOT, and shall be subject to the rules and regulations governing the development of tourist zones.

In particular, these areas will be given focus by DOT, the concerned government agencies and also the Municipality of Santa Cruz, Province of Marinduque, to wit:

- a) The famous Santa Cruz Church;
- b) The islands of Maniwaya, Mongpong and Polo;
- c) The Bagumbungan Cave; and
- d) The Busay Falls situated in Barangay Pag-asa and Kawa-kawa Falls in Barangay Bangcuangan.

SEC. 4. *Creation of the Santa Cruz Ecotourism Governing Board.* – For purposes of fostering the desired policy of the State and this Act, an Ecotourism Board is hereby established and shall be known as the “*Santa Cruz Ecotourism Governing Board.*” This Governing Board shall be created within one (1) year from the approval of this Act.

The Santa Cruz Ecotourism Governing Board shall be composed of the following:

- a) The Mayor of the Municipality of Santa Cruz, as Chairperson;
- b) The Secretary of the Department of Tourism (DOT) or a duly-authorized representative;
- c) The Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) or a duly-authorized representative;
- d) A member of a non-governmental organization whose advocacy is environmental preservation;
- e) A member of the academe;
- f) A representative from the business sector; and
- g) The Representative of the Lone District of Marinduque.

The Governing Board shall prepare the rules and regulations necessary for the implementation by the local government unit of Santa Cruz of the provisions of this Act and shall, whenever necessary, amend, modify or revise such rules and regulations to meet existing needs.

SEC. 5. *Tourism Development Plan.* - The DOT, in coordination with the local government unit of Santa Cruz, the Representative of the Lone District of Marinduque and other concerned government agencies, shall, within one (1) year after the approval of this Act, prepare a development plan involving the construction, installation and maintenance of such appropriate facilities and infrastructure which shall enhance tourism in the municipality, particularly in the abovementioned areas: *Provided*, That the said development plan shall ensure the preservation and conservation of the natural beauty and indigenous nature of the locality.

SEC. 6. *Implementation of the Plan.* The DOT shall take immediate steps in implementing the tourism development plan that will suit the natural characteristics of the area and shall incorporate the same in its overall development plans and programs for national implementation.

SEC. 7. *Appropriations.* The DOT shall include in the Department's program the implementation of this Act, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act and internally-generated funds of the DOT.

SEC. 8. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act shall be held unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not otherwise affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 9. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations and other issuances, or any part thereof, which are inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SEC. 10. *Effectivity Clause.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,