

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF THE REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL No. **7518**



Introduced by HON. MANUEL F. ZUBIRI

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Tourism contributes largely to our gross domestic product, having generated 10.5% of our gross domestic product in 2015¹. Given the Department of Tourism's effort and investment into marketing the Philippines as a palatable destination for both locals and foreigners alike, the country managed to capitalize on its archipelagic features and tropical climate by developing the capacity of our beaches, mountains, and caves to accommodate activities peculiar to their respective locations. Though the sector has managed to considerably develop, the basic services reducing the risk of accidents, medical or not, have not been amply provided.

Just recently, Karen Davila reported her son figured in an accident in Siargao, incurring wounds he would not have otherwise suffered had the surfing instructor been accredited by the Department of Tourism. To add salt to injury, there were no available first aid personnel, no life guards present, the nearest hospital was 45 minutes away via travel by vehicle, and there were no vaccines available in the hospital for tetanus, a common health risk in coral-laden beaches. Her child – a special needs child at that – had to endure an hour without medical attention or treatment.

This is not an isolated case. Last year, two Czech nationals drowned in Kayangan Lake² in Coron. The lake did not have the requisite number of lifeguards, public display signs that tell visitors do's and don't's, and divers which can form search and rescue teams. Just this year, another tourist from Hong Kong perished because a boat's propeller fatally hit his head while he was diving³. These are accidents which may have been mitigated or prevented if proper protocols were in place and if medical services were readily available

¹ Villegas, Bernardo, "Tourism: Next engine of growth", Manila Bulletin, <http://2016.mb.com.ph/2016/05/01/tourism-next-engine-of-growth/>, Accessed 2 April 2018

² Philippine News Agency, "Coron suspends tourism operations in Kayangan Lake", <https://news.mb.com.ph/2017/03/17/coron-suspends-tourism-operations-in-kayangan-lake/>, Accessed 2 April 2018

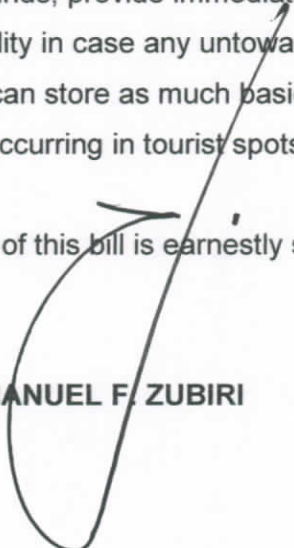
³ Chiu, Peace, "Hong Kong tourist dies after being hit by boat in dive spot", South China Morning Post, <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/health-environment/article/2133749/hong-kong-tourist-dies-after-being-hit-boat-while>, Accessed 2 April 2018

within the area. In 2015, a local tourist was pronounced dead on arrival after possibly having stepped on a stonefish in Coron, Palawan⁴.

These accidents clearly highlight a need for the (1) stricter enforcement of protocol already in place and (2) a facility which provides medical services within the proximity of major tourist spots where tourists are exposed to all kinds of physical and medical risk. A saying goes: Prevention is better than cure. There are times, however, when risk cannot fully be prevented either due to negligence or fortuitous event.

A clinic that can treat a full array of common injuries due to accidents will help in providing immediate medical care especially in activities where risk cannot be eliminated, such as surfing, diving, spelunking, bungee jumping, whitewater rafting, trekking, swimming, etc. Though barangays have their respective rural health units, these are rarely near tourist attractions where injuries sought to be prevented usually happen. Nearby clinics will help provide materials to disinfect any wounds, provide immediate treatment to the injured, and provide both locals and tourists a facility in case any untoward incidents occur. This will prove to be advantageous as clinics can store as much basic and necessary materials and medicine to treat injuries commonly occurring in tourist spots.

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



MANUEL F. ZUBIRI

⁴ Abadicio, Camille, "Death of tourist in Palawan raises questions on safety", CNN Philippines, <http://cnnphilippines.com/regional/2015/08/20/Coron-Palawan-tourist-death-Siete-Picados.html>, Accessed 2 April 2018

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **7518**

Introduced by Representative MANUEL F. ZUBIRI

**AN ACT REQUIRING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PERMANENT CLINIC FOR EVERY
MAJOR TOURIST ATTRACTION AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

1 **SECTION 1. Declaration of Policy.** – It is the policy of the State to protect and
2 promote the right to health and instill health consciousness among them. It is also the policy
3 of the State to promote a tourism industry that is responsible and favorable to the local and
4 international communities, strengthening the country's attraction as a tourism destination
5 and eventually paving the way for other benefits that may result from a global view of the
6 country.

7 In line with the policy to protect the people's right to health and to ensure a robust
8 tourism industry, the State shall make it mandatory for local government units to establish
9 clinics near major tourist attractions.

10
11 **SECTION 2. Definition of Terms.** – As used in this Act, the following terms shall
12 mean:

13 (a) "DILG" shall refer to the Department of Interior and Local Government;

14 (b) "DOH" shall refer to the Department of Health;

15 (c) "DOT" shall refer to the Department of Tourism;

16 (d) "Emergency Medical Services" shall refer to a network of services coordinated to
17 provide aid and medical assistance from the scene to the most appropriate and
18 definitive health facilities, involving personnel trained in stabilization,
19 transportation, and treatment of trauma or medical cases in the pre-hospital
20 setting;

21 (e) "Major tourist attraction" shall refer to a tourist attraction mandated to have a
22 clinic, as determined by the DOT on the basis of the number of visiting tourists,
23 the number of accidents and casualties in the tourist attraction, the nature of
24 activities conducted or hosted in the tourist attraction, and the risk involved in
25 such activities conducted in the said tourist attraction.

26 (f) "Tourist attraction" shall refer to a place of interest where tourists visit for its
27 inherent or exhibited natural or cultural value, historical significance, natural or
28 built beauty, offering leisure or amusement;

29

1 **SECTION 3. Establishment of Clinics.** – Each city or municipality where a major
2 tourist attraction is located shall be required to establish a permanent clinic within 500
3 meters to one kilometer of the major tourist attraction. Such clinics shall provide medical
4 care peculiar to the risks and injuries which may occur in the major tourist attraction, as well
5 as emergency medical services.

6
7 **SECTION 4. Notice.** – Each major tourist attraction shall indicate the following
8 details through signs near its entrance and two conspicuous places:

9 (a) Directions to the clinic;

10 (b) Its distance from the clinic;

11 (c) The contact number of the clinic.

12 The signs shall be in both the Filipino and English languages.

13
14 **SECTION 5. Information Dissemination.** – The city or municipality where the
15 major tourist attraction is located shall likewise create an information campaign to ensure
16 the local and foreign tourists are duly apprised of the location of the clinic.

17
18 **SECTION 6. Inspection.** – The DOT shall conduct an annual inspection to
19 ascertain whether major tourist attractions comply with the notice requirements and whether
20 they implement the DOT's prescribed safety and security protocol. It shall also ascertain
21 whether the city or municipality where the major tourist attraction is located continuously
22 implements the information campaign relating to the existence of the clinic and the services
23 offered thereby.

24
25 **SECTION 7. Appropriations.** – The Secretaries of the DOH, DOT, and the DILG
26 shall include in their respective Department's programs the implementation of this Act, the
27 funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act and from
28 internally generated funds of the DOH.

29
30 **SECTION 8. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – The DOH, in consultation
31 with the DOT and DILG, shall issue the necessary rules and regulations to implement this
32 Act.

33
34 **SECTION 9. Repealing Clause.** – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders,
35 memoranda, rules and regulations contrary or inconsistent with the provisions of this
36 Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

37
38 **SECTION 10. Separability Clause.** – If any portion or provision of this Act is
39 declared unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity and effectivity of the other
40 provisions not affected thereby.

41
42 **SECTION 11. Repealing Clause.** – All laws, parts of laws, decrees, presidential
43 issuances, proclamations, orders, ordinances, and administrative regulations in conflict with
44 the provisions of this Act are hereby amended, modified or repealed accordingly.

1
2 SECTION 12. **Effectivity.** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
3 publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.
4
5

6 *Approved,*
7
8