

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

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 7883

Introduced by REP. RAUL "BOBOY" C. TUPAS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

**AN ACT DECLARING THE SICOOGON ISLAND IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF CARLES,
PROVINCE OF ILOILO AS AN ECOTOURISM ZONE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR**

The travel and tourism sector contributed a total of Php 3.35 trillion to the Philippine economy in 2017, accounting for about 21% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP), according to the latest report from the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC). The sector also directly supported some 2.3 million jobs or about 5.8% of employment last year. This is expected to rise by 6.6% in 2018 and rise by 2.6% to 3.2 million jobs in 2028.¹

The Western Visayas Tourist Arrival Data from DOT Region VI show that a total of 5.9 million tourists visited the region in 2017 and spent a total of Php 128.46 billion in terms of tourist receipts. Of this, the Province of Iloilo hosted around 1.3 million tourists in 2017.²

Certainly, travel and tourism remains one of the largest economic sectors in the Philippines. The booming travel and tourism sector is currently driving the growth of many industries as it continues to create jobs, drive exports and generate prosperity for the country.

Pursuant to the policy of the State to promote sustainable tourism industry throughout the country, this bill seeks to declare the Sicogon Island in the Municipality of Carles, Province of Iloilo as an ecotourism zone with the goal of developing and promoting

¹ <https://www.wttc.org/-/media/files/reports/economic-impact-research/countries-2018/philippines2018.pdf>

² Official Western Visayas 2017 Tourist Arrivals Data

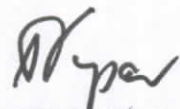
the island into a tourist destination, generating investments and creating job opportunities, and protecting the natural resources within the area.

Sicogon Island is one of the smaller islands in the northeastern tip of the Province of Iloilo. It has an estimated area of 1,160 hectares and politically located in the Municipality of Carles. The island has three barangays, namely, Alipata, Buaya, and San Fernando with an estimated population of 5,238.

Sicogon Island is one of the many beautiful attractions that grace the waters of Northern Iloilo. Sicogon became a popular tourist destination during the 70s and 80s because of the high-end resort suitably named "Sicogon Island Resort" operating in the island. At present, Sicogon Island is touted as the newest tourism hub and Gateway of Western Visayas.

This bill is in line with the National Tourism Development Plan of the government which supports the development of Philippine tourism product and raises the competitiveness of the Philippines as a tourism destination.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate consideration and passage of the bill is earnestly sought.


RAUL "BOBOY" C. TUPAS

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H. No. ~~7883~~

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AN ACT DECLARING THE SICOGON ISLAND IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF CARLES,
PROVINCE OF ILOILO 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 “Sicogon Island Ecotourism Zone 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 equitably beneficial to local communities.

SECTION 3. Sicogon Island Ecotourism Zone – The Sicogon Island consisting of three (3) barangays, namely, Alipata, Buaya, and San Fernando located in the Municipality of Carles, Province of Iloilo, is hereby declared as an ecotourism zone, to be known as Sicogon Island Ecotourism Zone. Its development shall be prioritized by the Department of Tourism (DOT) and shall be subject to the rules and regulations governing the development of ecotourism zones.

The DOT shall prepare the development plan for Sicogon Island and shall incorporate the same in the overall National Tourism Development Plan (NTDP), pursuant to Republic Act No. 9593, otherwise known as “The Tourism Act of 2009”. The plan shall be implemented jointly with the Municipality of Carles, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA).

The DOT, in coordination with the Municipality of Carles, the DENR, the TIEZA and other concerned agencies of the government, shall delineate well-defined geographic areas within the Sicogon Island Ecotourism Zone and coordinate the integrated development of the area for the optimum use of natural assets and attractions. The development shall ensure the preservation of the flora and fauna and perpetuate the historic significance of the identified tourist attractions.

SECTION 4. Appropriations- The Secretary of the Department of Tourism (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.

SECTION 5. *Implementing Rules and Regulations-* Within sixty (60) days after the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of the Department of Tourism (DOT), in consultation with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA) and the Municipality of Carles, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SECTION 6. *Repealing Clause-* All laws, orders, decrees, rules and regulations and other issuances, 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 at least two (2) newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,