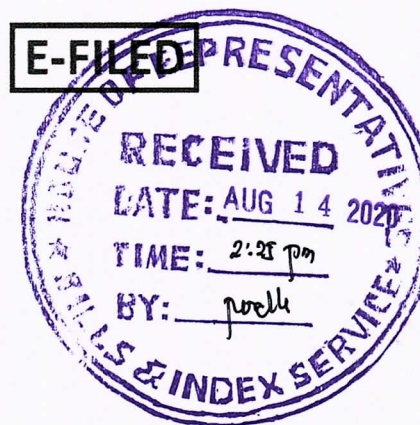


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 7388



Introduced by
Representatives ALYSSA SHEENA TAN and ED CHRISTOPHER S. GO

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The province of Isabela was named in honor of “Her Royal Highness Queen Isabela II” of Spain.¹ Isabela is the second largest province of the Philippines and the largest in Luzon in terms of land area. Also, the province is known as the “Rice and Corn Granary of Luzon,” and is considered the trade and industrial center of Northeastern Luzon. However, a lot of work still needs to be done to develop accessibility to eco-tourism sites in the whole province.

Occupying the central section of the Cagayan Valley region in Luzon, Isabela is bordered by Cagayan to the north, Kalinga to the northwest, Mountain Province to the central-west, Ifugao and Nueva Vizcaya to the southwest, and Quirino and Aurora to the south. To the east lies the Philippine Sea, making the province one of the most typhoon-prone provinces in the country.

Isabela is home to Magat High Rise Dam and Tourism Complex known to be the highest and biggest dam in Asia at the time of its construction. The province of Isabela comprises an aggregate land area of 10,665 square kilometers, representing almost 40 percent of the regional territory.²

Tourism is an important sector for Philippine economy. The tourism industry around the globe is expanding rapidly and the trends are extremely changing. The tourism industry has a potential to stimulate the economy and accelerate the growth of the local communities. Both local and international,

¹ <http://www.region2fun.ph/isabela-province/>

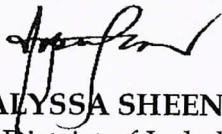
² <https://provinceofisabela.ph/index.php/general-info/geography>

tourism plays a vital role in generating employment opportunities and result in revenue generation for the tourist destinations.

This bill seeks to declare identify various Tourism Development Areas in the Province of Isabela and the creation of Isabela Tourism Council. This will pave the way for the formulation of a Tourism Development Plan for the Province and its incorporation into the Department of Tourism's National Tourism Development Plan and the development of support facilities and infrastructure that will greatly enhance the Province's tourism sector, boost the provincial economy and improve the quality of life of its residents.

With the assistance of the Department of Tourism, the province of Isabela will be given a chance to achieve its maximum potential as an attractive and viable tourism destination.

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



ATTY. ALYSSA SHEENA TAN
4th District of Isabela



REP. ED CHRISTOPHER S. GO
2nd District of Isabela

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EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
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HOUSE BILL NO. 7388

Introduced by
Representatives ALYSSA SHEENA TAN and ED CHRISTOPHER S. GO

AN ACT
IDENTIFYING TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AREAS IN THE PROVINCE
OF ISABELA, ORGANIZING THE ISABELA TOURISM COUNCIL AND
MANDATING SUPPORT FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE
PROVINCE OF ISABELA, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

SECTION 1. *Declaration of Policy.* It is hereby declared that it is 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. It shall promote and develop certain areas and sites identified as tourist destinations or attractions or having potential for tourism in order to drive and propel inclusive growth throughout the country.

SECTION 2. *Scope and Coverage.* The Tourism Development Area of the Province of Isabela shall include all areas within the province endowed with environmental beauty or historical and cultural significance, with either existing or potential integrated leisure facilities developed for one or more tourism purposes, including cultural heritage tourism, health and wellness tourism, eco-tourism, and general leisure tourism.

SECTION 3. *Identification and Declaration of Ecotourism Sites.* Areas in the Province of Isabela that have potential for tourism shall be declared as eco-tourism, cultural heritage tourism, health and wellness tourism, general leisure tourism, or mixed use tourism sites after consultation with the Department of Tourism; *Provided*, that areas in environmentally protected

areas shall not be declared without additional consultation with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

The survey of the areas and their verification shall be conducted by the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority in coordination with the Provincial Government of Isabela, and their declaration as tourism sites will be by the Isabela Tourism Council.

SECTION 4. *Isabela Tourism Council.* There is hereby created the Isabela Tourism Council, hereinafter referred to as "the Council," which shall be the primary policy-making, planning, and coordinating body in the development of tourism in Isabela and administration of ecotourism sites therein. The Council shall be composed of:

- a) The Provincial Governor of Isabela, as Chairperson;
- b) The municipal mayors of all the municipalities and cities of Isabela, who shall elect from among themselves a Vice Chairperson;
- c) A member of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Isabela, duly designated by such body; and
- d) Two representatives from the private sector, appointed by the Chairperson of the Council, who shall serve for a period of two years.

SECTION 5. *Functions of the Council.* The Council shall have the following functions:

- a) Formulate programs and recommendations to develop local tourism facilities and attractions tapping local resources and funds;
- b) Assist in the regulation and supervision of tourism-oriented establishments thereby ensuring wholesome and clean tourism activities;
- c) Assist in monitoring the implementation of the Local Government Code on the matter of licensing of tourism establishments in the locality to ascertain safe and enjoyable stay of travelers;
- d) Strictly enforce health and sanitary standards in public restrooms frequented by public utility vehicles and tourist transport services, i.e. gasoline stations and restaurants along main highways and bus stops; and
- e) Any other duties in accordance with the Department of Interior and Local Government's Guidelines.

SECTION 6. *Tourism Development Plan of Isabela.* The Tourism Development Plan of the Province of Isabela shall be incorporated in the Department of Tourism's overall National Tourism Development Plan pursuant to Republic Act No. 9593, otherwise known as the "National Tourism Act of 2009," and shall be jointly implemented with the local government units concerned and the Isabela Tourism Council.

The concerned local government unit, in coordination with the Department of Tourism, the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and other concerned agencies of the government, shall delineate well defined geographic areas within the tourism sites and coordinate the integrated development of these sites for the optimal use of natural assets and attractions, as well as existing facilities; Provided, that said development plan shall ensure the preservation of the ecological balance and natural beauty of the area.

The Department of Public Works and Highways, in coordination with the Department of Tourism and the Isabela Tourism Council, shall set in place the necessary construction and improvement of roads and other infrastructure upon the promulgation of this Act and incorporate the same in its infrastructure program.

SECTION 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* The Isabela Tourism Council, after due consultation with the Department of Tourism, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Department of Public Works and Highways, the Department of Transportation, the National Economic and Development Authority, together with other stakeholders, shall promulgate the rules and regulations for the proper implementation of this Act within sixty days after its effectivity.

SECTION 8. *Appropriations.* The Department of Tourism, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Department of Public Works and Highways, the Department of Transportation, and the local government units shall include in its Annual Investment Programs the implementation of this Act, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 9. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, and issuances, proclamations, rules and regulations, and other issuances contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act shall be deemed amended accordingly.

SECTION 10. *Separability Clause.* If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 11. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect fifteen days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,