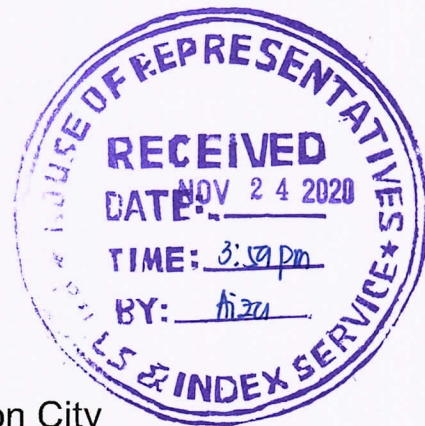




Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Constitution Hills, Batasan Complex, Quezon City



EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 8069

Introduced by **ALFEL M. BASCUG**, Representative,
1ST Legislative District of Agusan del Sur.

**“AN ACT DECLARING LAKE HIMBANG IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF
TALACOGON, PROVINCE OF AGUSAN DEL SUR AS AN
ECOTOURISM SITE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”**

Explanatory Note

This bill seeks to declare Lake Himbang as an ecotourism site in the Municipality of Talacogon, Province of Agusan del Sur.

Agusan del Sur is a must-see biodiversity hotspot and a promising paradise found in the northeastern part of Mindanao. It is a land of hundreds of lakes and rivers which are fishing enclaves and a land of plains, rolling terrain and mountain ranges producing varied and abundant mineral deposits. Situated also in this paradise land is the famous Agusan Marsh which is known to be the largest marshland in the Philippines.

Lake Himbang located in the Municipality of Talacogon is one of the never-forgotten and breath-taking sceneries in Agusan del Sur. It is just more than hour's drive from the Philippine-Japan Friendship Highway to Talacogon. The lake is an alternative destination to Agusan Marsh. The thrills of riding on a pumpboat or a dug-out canoe while admiring the breath-taking lakeshore scenery and Manobo floating huts are some of

the attractions offered by this hidden paradise.

This hidden gem has been a tourist attraction to locals but has never been publicly exposed to other tourists in the Philippines and the world. With the lack of needed development and promotion, the tourism potential of the place has been curtailed. Thus, in order for this gem to be developed and become a fully grown tourism destination, it should be declared as an ecotourism site. The development of Lake Himbang into an ecotourism site will not just enhance its aesthetic value but will also boost local government income and create employment opportunities for the people of Agusan del Sur.

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



ALFELM. BASCUG



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

SECTION 1. Title. This Act shall be known as the Lake Himbang Ecotourism Act.”

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. As mandated in the 1987 Philippine Constitution, the State shall protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature. Further, 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. The Lake Himbang Ecotourism Site. The Lake Himbang located in the Municipality of Talacogon, Province of Agusan del Sur is hereby declared as an ecotourism site. 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 sites.

SECTION 4. *Tourism Development Plan.* The DOT, in coordination with the concerned local government units as well as with the other concerned government agencies, shall prepare a tourism development plan for Lake Himbang which shall be incorporated in the overall National Tourism Development Plan (NTDP), pursuant to Republic Act No. 9593, otherwise known as "The Tourism Act of 2009" and which shall also include the construction, installation and maintenance of appropriate infrastructure and facilities in the area; Provided, That said development plan shall ensure the preservation and conservation of the scenery and resources of the area.

SECTION 5. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* Within sixty (60) days after the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of the DOT, in consultation with the concerned local government units, the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA) and other agencies, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SECTION 6. *Appropriations.* The Secretary of 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.

SECTION 7. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act or the application of such provision to any person or circumstance is declared unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act or the application of such provision to other person or circumstance shall not be affected by such declaration.

SECTION 8. *Repealing Clause.* -All laws, decrees, letters of instructions, executive orders and rules and regulations and other issuances or parts thereof in consistent or in conflict with any provision of this Act.

SECTION 9. *Effectivity Clause.* -This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,