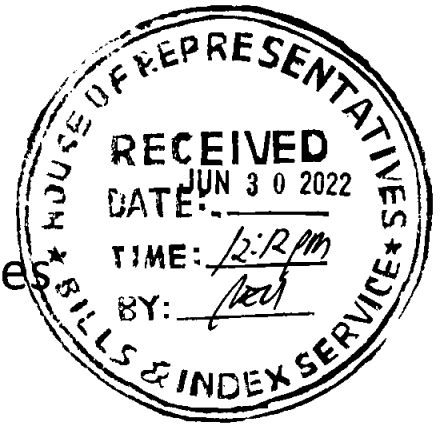




Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila



Nineteenth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **36**

Introduced by HON. LORD ALLAN JAY Q. VELASCO

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines has been blessed with spectacular natural wonders, such as the majestic limestone cliffs of Coron, the Chocolate Hills of Bohol and the rugged hills of Batanes. These wonders make this country a much sought-after destination for tourists all over the world. Thus, the Philippines has consistently sought to promote tourism in the country in order to create jobs, improve the lives of local communities, and preserve and develop our natural wonders.

The Municipality of Santa Cruz in the Province of Marinduque has a great potential to become one of the top tourist destinations in the country. It has plenty of natural wonders which remain unheralded. A beach of powdery and white sand with very clear and blue waters surrounds the island of Maniwaya. A newly-found cave, the Bagumbungan Cave, dubbed as one of the best caves for spelunking in the Philippines since its founding, is also found in the Municipality of Santa Cruz. These are but some of the many destinations which tourists should visit in the Municipality of Santa Cruz.

Accordingly, the establishment of the Municipality of Santa Cruz as an Ecotourism Zone is appropriate to conserve and preserve its natural beauty while promoting it as a top tourist destination in the country. It would generate investment and enhance socio-economic activity in the area. This would be very beneficial not only for the Municipality of Santa Cruz, but for the whole country as well.

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


LORD ALLAN JAY Q. VELASCO



Republic of the Philippines
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HOUSE BILL NO. 36

Introduced by HON. LORD ALLAN JAY Q. VELASCO

**AN ACT DECLARING THE MUNICIPALITY OF STA. CRUZ, PROVINCE OF
MARINDUQUE, AN ECOTOURISM SITE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR**

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the “Santa Cruz Ecotourism Act.”

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 shall rationalize all efforts to make the tourism industry a major source of livelihood and an avenue for economic development. Moreover, measures shall be taken to ensure that tourism development is consistent with the national policy of protecting and conserving the natural environment.

Sec. 3. Santa Cruz Ecotourism Zone. – The Municipality of Santa Cruz, located in the Province of Marinduque, is hereby declared an ecotourism zone. As such, its development shall be prioritized by the Department of Tourism (DOT) and other concerned agencies, subject to the rules and regulations governing the development of ecotourism zones.

In particular, the development of the following areas shall be given focus by the DOT, other concerned government agencies, and the municipal government of Santa Cruz:

- a) Islands of Maniwaya, Mongpong, and Polo;
- b) Bagumbungan Cave;

- c) Busay Falls in Barangay Pag-asa;
- d) Kawa-kawa Falls in Barangay Bangcuangan; and
- e) Santa Cruz Church

Sec. 4. Ecotourism Governing Board. – Within one (1) year from the approval of this Act, there shall be created the Santa Cruz Ecotourism Governing Board, to be composed of the following:

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

The Board shall prepare the necessary rules and regulations necessary for the proper implementation of this Act and shall, when necessary, amend, modify or revise such rules and regulations to meet existing needs.

The Provincial Government of Marinduque shall provide a Secretariat for the Board including the funding necessary to cover expenses for the performance of its official functions and activities.

Sec. 5. Ecotourism Development Plan. – Within one (1) year from the approval of this Act, the DOT, in coordination with the municipal government of Santa Cruz, the Representative of the Lone District of Marinduque, and other concerned government agencies, shall prepare an ecotourism development plan containing among others the construction, installation, and maintenance of such appropriate facilities and infrastructure that shall enhance tourism in the Municipality of Santa Cruz, particularly in the Islands of Maniwaya, Mongpong, and Polo; Bagumbungan Cave; Busay Falls in Barangay Pag-asa; Kawa-kawa Falls in Barangay Bangcuangan; and Santa Cruz Church: *Provided*, that 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 and incorporate the same in its overall development plans and programs for national implementation.

Sec. 7. 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 from 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, rules, regulations, presidential decrees, and other issuances inconsistent with any of the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

Sec. 10. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,