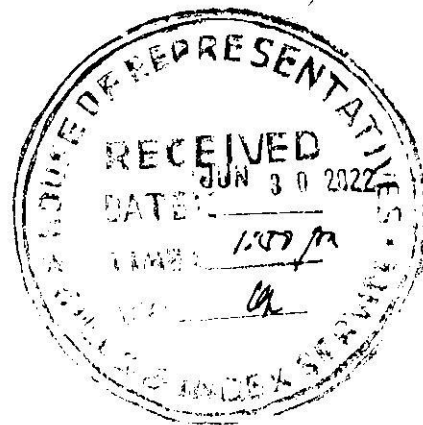




Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 181



Introduced by REPRESENTATIVE AURELIO "DONG" D. GONZALES, JR.

AN ACT DECLARING MT. ARAYAT, BORDERING THE MUNICIPALITIES OF ARAYAT AND MAGALANG, PROVINCE OF PAMPANGA AS A TOURIST DESTINATION, PROVIDING FOR ITS DEVELOPMENT AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Located at the heart of Kapampangan agricultural lands far and wide, the majestic Mt. Arayat, dominates the picturesque scenery with its towering height of 1,030 meters above sea level. The mountain is bordering two municipalities: the southern half lies within the municipality of Arayat, Pampanga, while the north half lies within Magalang.

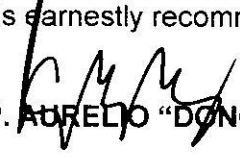
Considered as an inactive volcano, Mt. Arayat's crater has several peaks, thus suitable for mountain hiking and nature trekking. The mountain is also considered as one of the premier hiking destinations in the country because of its dominating presence in Central Luzon, making the view from its peaks truly breathtaking.

Aside from its natural magnificence, Mt. Arayat is also a cradle of the rich Kapampangan folklore. This mountain is revered by locals as sacred and mystical for it is the legendary home of *Apu Sinukuan*, the rival of *Namalyari* of Mt. Pinatubo.

Indeed, the delicate interplay with respect to the conservation of its natural resources, preservation of its cultural significance, and promotion of tourism and development calls for national attention. While tourism in the area is already being encouraged by the local government, it is undeniable that with the help from the national government, the tourism potential of the area will further be harnessed. This can be done without threatening the sanctity of the mountain's natural state and without disregarding the Kapampangan cultural beliefs and folklore.

This bill, therefore, aims to declare Mt. Arayat in the Municipalities of Arayat and Magalang, Pampanga, as a tourist destination, mandating the Department of Tourism, in coordination with the Department of Public Works and Highways, and in consultation with the concerned local government units, to come up with a comprehensive development plan for the improvement of Mt. Arayat, all areas attached to it, and all roads leading to and from it.

In view of the policy of the State to promote a tourism industry that is ecologically sustainable, responsible, participative, culturally sensitive, economically viable, and ethically and socially equitable for local communities, as declared in Republic Act No. 9593, otherwise known as "The Tourism Act of 2009", the approval of this bill is earnestly recommended.


REP. AURELIO "DONG" D. GONZALES, JR.
3rd District, Pampanga

Introduced by REP. AURELIO "DONG" D. GONZALES, JR.

AN ACT DECLARING MT. ARAYAT, BORDERING THE MUNICIPALITIES OF ARAYAT AND MAGALANG, PROVINCE OF PAMPANGA AS A TOURIST DESTINATION, PROVIDING FOR ITS DEVELOPMENT AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. Mount Arayat, located along the borders of the municipalities of Arayat and Magalang, Province of Pampanga is hereby declared a tourist destination. As such, its development shall be prioritized by the Department of Tourism (DOT), subject to the rules and regulations governing the development of tourist destinations.

SEC. 2. Within one (1) year after the approval of this Act, the DOT in coordination with the Department of Public Works and Highways, the provincial government of Pampanga, and the municipal governments of Arayat and Magalang, shall prepare a tourism development plan involving the construction, installation and maintenance of such appropriate facilities and infrastructure that shall promote ecotourism in the area and ensure its accessibility and the security of tourists: *Provided*, That said development plan shall preserve and conserve the natural beauty and resources of the area.

SEC. 3. The DOT, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and other concerned agencies shall take immediate steps to implement the tourism development plan that will cater to the natural characteristics of Mount Arayat and shall incorporate the same in its overall development plans and programs for national implementation.

SEC. 4. 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. 5. Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA), the Provincial Governor of Pampanga, and the Municipal Mayors of Arayat and Magalang, shall promulgate the necessary implementing rules and regulations (IRR) for the proper and effective enforcement, administration and implementation of this Act. For this purpose, they shall have the power and authority to create a Secretariat and Technical Working Group (TWG) to assist them in the drafting of the IRR: *Provided*, That the provincial government of Pampanga shall defray the necessary expenses of the Secretariat and the TWG for the performance of its official functions and activities.

SEC. 6. If, for any reason, any section or provision of this Act is declared to be unconstitutional or invalid, other sections or provisions thereof which are not affected thereby shall continue in full force and effect.

SEC. 7. All laws, decrees, executive orders and proclamations, or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are deemed repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 8. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,