

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

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 608



Introduced by **HON. EDGAR M. CHATTO**
First District, Bohol

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The municipality of Loon in the province of Bohol, consisting of 67 barangays, has been bestowed with rich marine paradise, natural lakes, waterfalls and mangrove gardens, among others. The Cabilao and Sandingan islands, located in Loon, are considered favorite tourist destinations. With the development of an international cruise port in Catagbacan, Loon is viewed as an emerging giant of Bohol's eco-cultural tourism industry.

The entire islands of Cabilao (766 hectares) and Sandigan (569 hectares) were proclaimed as Mangrove Swamp Forest Reserves under Proclamation No. 2152 in 1981. This was confirmed upon the passage of Republic Act 7586, or the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) Act of 1992.

However, only the barangay of Canigaan and a portion of Calayugan of Sandingan Island and Lake Danao in Barangay Pantudlan of Cabilao Island have actual mangroves worthy to be protected and covered under the NIPAS Act. A big percentage of these islands remain agricultural, residential and with very few commercial establishments. These islands have remained idle and unproductive for a long time, once reclassified, will open the opportunity for tourism, business and economic developments. These islands, like Panglao, will undoubtedly be hailed as one of the world's famous tourist destinations and another addition to Philippines' pride once developed as it boasts of beautiful diving spots sought after by diving enthusiasts. Panglao is among the disestablished islands under the NIPAS Act.

Section 5 (4) of the NIPAS Act mandates that within three (3) years from the effectivity, the DENR shall study and review each area composing the system as to its suitability or non-suitability for preservation as protected area. However, more than twenty (20) years had elapsed, the DENR has yet to submit a study and a review on the suitability or non-suitability of the two (2) islands to be included in the system.

With the steady influx of tourists to these areas in recent years, demands for transportation and accommodation complete with facilities must be met. Thus, it is the desire of the local government that the inclusion of these islands under the NIPAS Act be modified and limited to mangrove areas and natural lakes where migratory birds are seen and unique species of fish are found. This will allow development of the area and the improvement of transportation to the benefit of the constituents and tourists.

Under the NIPAS Act, disestablishment of a protected area under the System or modification of its boundary shall take effect pursuant to an Act of Congress. Hence, this proposed legislation seeks to exclude certain portions of

the islands of Cabilao and Sandingan from the coverage of protected areas under the NIPAS Act and to lift the ban in the titling of lots of the two islands which is greatly disadvantageous to the lot owners, prejudicial to the welfare of its constituents, and counterproductive to the economic development of the islands.

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



EDGAR M. CHATTO

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“AN ACT
RECLASSIFYING CERTAIN PARCELS OF LAND LOCATED AT THE
ISLANDS OF CABILAO AND SANDINGAN IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF
LOON, PROVINCE OF BOHOL, INTO ALIENABLE AND DISPOSABLE
LANDS AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

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

SECTION 1. Reclassification as Alienable and Disposable Land.

– Certain portions of the islands of Cabilao and Sandingan in the municipality of Loon, Province of Bohol, with total areas of Seven Hundred Sixty Six Hectares (766 has) and Five Hundred Sixty Nine hectares (569 has), respectively, are hereby declared as alienable and disposable lands, thus, excluded from the coverage of protected areas under the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) Act of 1992 as provided under Rule 8 of DENR Administrative Order No. 2008-26.

The inclusion of these whole islands under the NIPAS Act will therefor be modified and limited to the actual mangrove areas and the natural lake where migratory birds are seen and unique species of fish are found.

SECTION 2. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – Within six (6) months following the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of the DENR shall issue the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SECTION 3. Effectivity. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,