



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



NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 761

Introduced by Representatives **ALFEL M. BASCUG** and **EDDIEBONG G. PLAZA**

**AN ACT DECLARING THE LAKE HIMBANG LOCATED IN THE
MUNICIPALITY OF TALACOGON, PROVINCE OF AGUSAN DEL
SUR, 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 slice of paradise found in the northeastern part of Mindanao. It is a land of hundreds of lakes and rivers, many of which are fishing enclaves, as well as plains, undulating terrain, and mountain ranges with abundant mineral deposits. This paradise is home to the famous Agusan Marsh, which is known for being the largest marshland in the Philippines.

Lake Himbang, located in the Municipality of Talacogon, is one of Agusan del Sur's awe-inspiring and breathtaking sceneries. It is just over an hour's drive from the Philippine-Japan Friendship Highway. The lake is an alternative destination to Agusan Marsh. One can be truly enthralled by its beauty by taking an easy tour by pump boats or a dug-out canoe around the lakeside scenery and the Manobo floating huts.

This hidden gem has been a tourist attraction for locals but has never been publicly exposed to other tourists in the Philippines or the world. Due to a lack of necessary development and promotion, the tourism potential of the place has been curtailed. Thus, for this spot to be developed and become a fully grown tourist 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 also increase local government revenue and create employment opportunities for the people of Agusan del Sur.

Notably, this measure has been previously filed in the 18th Congress. The House of Representatives approved it on 3rd Reading and the bill had been duly transmitted to the Senate.

The immediate passage of this bill is hereby earnestly sought.



ALFEL M. BASCUG
1ST District, Agusan del Sur



EDDIEBONG G. PLAZA
2nd District, Agusan del Sur



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

SECTION 1. The Lake Himbang located in the Municipality of Talacogon, Province of Agusan del Sur, is hereby declared an ecotourism site. As such, its development shall be prioritized by the Department of Tourism (DOT), subject to the rules and regulations governing the development of ecotourism sites.

SECTION 2. The technical description of the area to be declared as ecotourism site is as follows:

LAKE HIMBANG TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION		
Projection :	Universal Tansverse Mercator Zone 51 (N)	
Datum :	World Geodetic 1984 (WGS84)	
corner	easting	northing
1	804671	937414
2	804717	937418
3	804769	937402
4	804816	937406
5	804833	937436
6	804862	937419
7	804881	937383
8	804915	937357
9	804964	937319
10	805044	937264
11	805114	937249
12	805201	937230
13	805301	937212
14	805330	937174
15	805270	937051
16	805222	936996
17	805177	936953
18	805109	936928
19	805062	936952
20	805017	936976
21	804979	936997
22	804928	937015
23	804889	937045
24	804876	937092
25	804887	937129
26	804948	937102
27	804981	937140
28	804974	937168
29	804980	937184
30	804975	937198
31	804918	937231
32	804862	937237
33	804799	937249
34	804772	937302
35	804752	937361
36	804713	937394
37	804663	937393

SECTION 3. Within one (1) year after the approval of this Act, the DOT shall, in coordination with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and concerned local government units (LGUs) and agencies of the government, prepare a tourism development plan that shall include the construction, installation and maintenance of appropriate infrastructure and

facilities to enhance tourism in the area: *Provided*, That said development plan shall ensure the preservation and conservation of the natural beauty and resources of the area.

SECTION 4. The DOT and its concerned attached agencies shall take immediate steps to implement the development plan with due consideration to the natural characteristics of Lake Himbang, and shall incorporate the same in its tourism development program for the calendar year immediately succeeding the approval of this Act. It shall also include the Lake Himbang in all its national, regional and local promotion programs.

SECTION 5. 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 shall augment such allocation with internally generated funds of the Department.

SECTION 6. Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DOT shall, in consultation with the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority and concerned LGUs and government agencies, promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the proper implementation of this Act.

SECTION 7. If any provision of this Act shall be declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 8. All laws, rules, regulations, presidential decrees and other issuances inconsistent with any of the provisions of this Act are hereby deemed repealed or amended accordingly.

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

Approved,