



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

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 1826



Introduced by **Representative Francisco Jose F. Matugas II**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The tourism industry was greatly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. According to a report released by our own Congressional Policy and Budget Research Department in December 2021,¹ travel restrictions, border controls, and stringent community lockdowns halted the growth of the tourism industry. The tourism direct value added (TDGVA) declined by 61.2% in 2020 and the TDGVA as a percentage of GDP at 5.4% in 2020 was the lowest in 20 years.

As the country opens to foreign and local tourists, and as we aim to revive the tourism industry, we must focus more on developing, promoting and marketing various tourist destinations in the country. In order to attract tourists again to come into the country, we must make sure that their experience is pleasant, memorable, safe and secure.

This bill seeks to address the common misapprehension of tourists visiting or intending to visit the country - lack of reliable telecommunications facilities, the perception that the country is not safe for tourists, and locals are out to profit from them. It also addresses the concern that tourist destinations are not ready to address medical emergencies which may befall visitors.

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


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¹ <https://cpbrd.congress.gov.ph/2012-06-30-13-06-51/2012-06-30-13-36-50/1432-ff2021-81-impact-of-covid-19-crisis-on-the-tourism-sector>



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**AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE PROTECTION OF AND
ENHANCED SERVICES TO TOURISTS AND
PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

1 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the “**Tourist**
2 **Protection and Enhanced Services Act of 2022.**”

3 SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - The State recognizes tourism as a major
4 contributor to the country's economic growth. Towards this end, the State shall
5 protect tourists, both domestic and foreign, during their travel around the
6 country. Among, others, it shall ensure their safety and well-being by providing
7 health facilities that can attend to emergency and health-related crises.

8 SEC. 3. *Tourist Protection and Assistance Task Force.* - Within nine (9)
9 months after the approval of this Act, the Secretary of the Department of
10 Tourism shall establish an intergovernmental task force to be known as the
11 “Tourist Protection and Enhanced Services Task Force”, hereinafter referred
12 to as the “Task Force”.

13 SEC. 4. *Composition of the Task Force.* - The Task Force shall be
14 composed of the following:

1 (a) Secretary of the Department of Tourism ("DOT"), or the duly
2 designated representative, as Chairperson;

3 (b) Secretary of the Department of Interior and Local Government, or
4 the duly designated representative, as Vice Chairperson;

5 (c) Secretary of the Department of Transportation or the duly
6 designated representative;

7 (d) Secretary of the Department of Public Works and Highways or the
8 duly designated representative;

9 (e) Secretary of the Department of Information and Communications
10 Technology;

11 (f) Secretary of Health;

12 (g) Director General of the Philippine National Police or the duly
13 designated representative; and

14 (h) Such other representatives of other government agencies and
15 private sector entities as may be determined to be appropriate to the mission
16 of the Task Force by the Chairperson, as members.

17 (i) SEC. 5. *Functions of the Task Force.* - It shall be the duty of the
18 Task Force to facilitate, through the concerned national government agencies
19 and local government units (LGUs), the following:

20 (a) Adoption of uniform standards on signage for use throughout the
21 Philippines in order to facilitate travel in the country;

22 (b) Provision of directional signage in tourism facilities and
23 destinations, including airports, seaports, land border crossings, highways,
24 and bus, train, and other public transit locations;

25 (c) Preparation and dissemination of multilingual travel and tourism
26 information and promotional materials;

27 (d) Establishment of a toll-free telephone assistance system run by
28 multilingual operators to provide assistance to domestic and foreign tourists;

29 (e) Coordination with LGUs for the establishment of tourist help
30 desks in identified tourist destinations, *Provided That*, said help desks shall
31 provide free internet services to tourists;

1 (f) Institution of measures to prevent unlawful acts or harassment
2 committed on tourists including making illicit profits from tourists, scrambling
3 for customers, and insisting on or forcing customers to purchase goods or
4 services;

5 (g) Establishment of a system where tourists can file their complaints
6 against illegal and unlawful activities of tourism enterprises;

7 (h) Reinforcement of measures undertaken to prevent the use of
8 dangerous drugs in tourist destinations; and

9 (i) Establishment of health facilities in tourism destinations as
10 provided in Section 6 of this Act.

11 SEC. 6. *Establishment of Health Facilities in Tourism Destinations.* - The
12 Task Force, led by the Department of Health, shall identify tourist destinations
13 for the construction of tourism health facilities which shall have the minimum
14 capability to respond to emergency cases that are typical to their respective
15 sites and treat common illnesses and injuries: *Provided, That,* said tourism
16 health facilities shall be serviced by land and sea ambulances or airlift
17 helicopters, if necessary, to enable the transport of patients needing advanced
18 care or treatment to other health facilities.

19 In the construction of health facilities, priority shall be given to:

20 (a) prime tourist destinations;

21 (b) tourist destination with no existing health facilities within a five
22 (5)-kilometer radius; and

23 (c) tourist destinations with dilapidated health facilities.

24 The Task Force shall ensure that health personnel deployed in all
25 tourism health facilities shall be well-trained to respond to emergencies and
26 common illnesses and injuries, taking into consideration the peculiarities of
27 each tourist destination. In this regard, security forces, tour guides and other
28 tourism front liners shall also be trained in the basic knowledge and skills on
29 emergency preparedness and response.

1 SEC. 7. *Efficient and Reliable Communications Infrastructure.* – The
2 Task Force, led by the Department of Information and Communications
3 Technology, shall ensure the development of information and communications
4 technology (ICT) infrastructure that meets the high standards of speed and
5 reliability in each tourist destination. It shall ensure that affordable ICT
6 networks are available in said destinations.

7 SEC. 8. *Appropriations.* -Funds for the implementation of Section 6 of
8 this Act, including funds needed for the maintenance and operation of all
9 tourism health facilities shall be included in the appropriation of the
10 Department of Health while funds for the implementation of Section 7 of this
11 Act shall be included in the appropriations of the Department of Information
12 and Communications Technology.

13 Funds for the implementation of the other programs and projects
14 approved and adopted by the Task Force shall be included in the appropriation
15 of the implementing agency concerned.

16 SEC. 9. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision or part hereof is held
17 invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not
18 otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

19 SEC. 10. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, presidential decrees or issuances,
20 executive orders, letters of instruction, administrative orders, rules or
21 regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are
22 hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

23 SEC. 11. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
24 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

25 *Approved,*