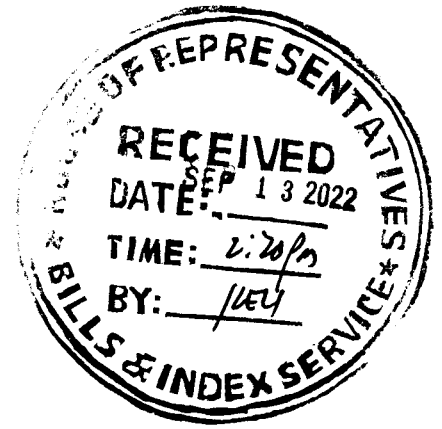


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4755



Introduced by Representative Alan I B. Ecleo

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The proposed bill aims to declare the Mount Redondo Natural Bonsai Forest, located in Barangay Santiago in the Municipality of Loreto, Province of Dinagat Islands, a tourist destination.

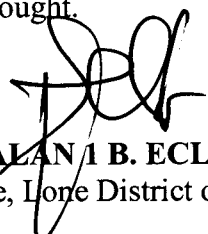
With a high level of endemism, the Province of Dinagat Islands has a distinctive faunal and floral composition. Mount Redondo, located in the municipality of Loreto, is one of the two highest points of the province at an elevation of 800 meters above sea level. It houses the famed Bonsai Forest, otherwise known as the Pygmy Forest, covering an area of approximately 100 hectares.

The forest is covered in naturally growing shrub-like trees that are between one and three meters tall, and provides a habitat for a number of local wildlife species. The entire area, which is regarded as an emerging tourism magnet, is a spectacular ecotourism destination for its unique floral composition and because it provides a complete panoramic perspective of the Island Province from the mountaintop to the seashore.

At present, the Mount Redondo Natural Bonsai Forest is under the management of the local government unit of Loreto and the mining holder of the Mineral Production Sharing Agreement (MPSA). However, the fiscal limitations of the local government have rendered proper maintenance and management of the Bonsai Forest severely difficult. In addition, the large-scale mining activities and land conversion threaten the area surrounding the forest which negatively affects its biodiversity.

Thus, in order to guarantee the sufficiency of funds necessary for the management of the Mount Redondo Natural Bonsai Forest, as well as ensure that its maintenance as an ecotourism spot is prioritized, it is deemed best to have it be declared as a tourist destination, effectively bringing the same under the direct leadership and supervision of the Department of Tourism (DOT). Doing so would aid in boosting the tourism industry in the Island Province as a whole while simultaneously minimizing the risks on the natural resources of the area.

In view thereof, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


ALAN I B. ECLEO
Representative, Lone District of Dinagat Islands

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4755

Introduced by Representative Alan 1 B. Ecleo

**AN ACT DECLARING THE MOUNT REDONDO NATURAL BONSAI
FOREST LOCATED IN BARANGAY SANTIAGO IN THE
MUNICIPALITY OF LORETO, PROVINCE OF DINAGAT ISLANDS A
TOURIST DESTINATION, PROVIDING FOR ITS DEVELOPMENT,
AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

SECTION 1. The Mount Redondo Natural Bonsai Forest in Barangay Santiago in the Municipality of Loreto, Province of Dinagat Islands is hereby declared a tourist destination. As such, the Department of Tourism (DOT) shall prioritize its development and subject the same to the rules and regulations governing tourist destinations.

SECTION 2. Within one (1) year from the approval of this Act, the DOT, in collaboration with the concerned local government units and agencies of the government, shall prepare a tourism development plan that complements the natural qualities of the Mount Redondo Natural Bonsai Forest: *Provided*, That said development plan shall take into account the preservation and conservation of the natural beauty and resources of the area: *Provided, further*, That any and all activities and developments to be implemented in the area shall conform with the guidelines for ecotourism development jointly issued by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the DOT.

SECTION 3. The DOT and its concerned attached agencies shall take immediate steps in order to implement the tourism development plan. It shall also include the Mount Redondo Natural Bonsai Forest in all its national, regional, and local promotion programs.

SECTION 4. The Secretary of Tourism shall include in the Department's program the construction, installation, and maintenance of appropriate facilities in the Mount Redondo Natural Bonsai Forest, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in the Official Gazette or in any two national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,