

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL No. **10349**



Introduced by Representative CAMILLE A. VILLAR

AN ACT MANDATING ALL TOURISM SITES AS PERSONS WITH DISABILITY AND
SENIOR CITIZENS-FRIENDLY AREAS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND
FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The 1987 Constitution provides that the family has the duty to care for its elderly members but the State may also do so through just programs of social security.¹ Additionally, Section 10 of the Declaration of Principles and State Policies provides that the State shall provide social justice in all phases of national development.² Further, Article XIII, Section 11 of the 1987 Constitution provides that the State shall adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development which shall endeavor to make essential goods, health and other social services available to all the people at affordable cost. There shall be priority for the needs of the underprivileged, sick, elderly, disabled, women and children.

The United Nation World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) estimated that over 1 billion persons with disabilities, as well as more than 2 billion people, such as spouses, children and caregivers of persons with disabilities, representing almost a third of the world's population, are directly affected by disability. While this signifies a huge potential market for travel and tourism, it still remains vastly under-served due to inaccessible travel and tourism facilities and services, as well as discriminatory policies and practices.³

Accessible tourism enables all people to participate in and enjoy tourism experiences. More people have access needs, whether or not related to a physical

¹ Article XV, Section 4 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution

² Article II of the 1987 Philippine Constitution

³ <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/issues/promoting-accessible-tourism-for-all.html>

condition. For example, older and less mobile people have access needs, which can become a huge obstacle when traveling or touring. Thus, accessible tourism is the ongoing endeavor to ensure tourist destinations, products and services are accessible to all people, regardless of their physical limitations, disabilities or age. This includes publicly and privately owned tourist locations, facilities and services.⁴

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) was adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 2006. On April 15, 2008, the Philippines officially ratified the CRPD. Article 9 of CRPD on Accessibility calls for State Parties to take appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities have equal access to the physical environment, information, transportation and other facilities and services open or provided to the public. It also calls for the elimination of obstacles and barriers to accessibility, including all transportation and facilities. Furthermore, Article 30 on Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport also calls for State Parties to ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy the benefits of tourism.⁵

Accessibility is also an important aspect of realizing the rights of the world's ageing population. As we grow older, our chance of experiencing a permanent or temporary disability is increased. A focus on accessibility can therefore ensure that we are able to participate fully in our societies well into our older years. Accessibility also benefits pregnant women and persons who are temporarily rendered immobile.⁶

This bill seeks to make tourism sites accessible to all, especially to persons with disabilities and senior citizens. It is in recognition of the preferred and valued place in our society of persons with disabilities and senior citizens. At the same time, this Representation hopes that this bill can improve participation to promote sustainable tourism, increase livelihood opportunities in the area and contribute to economic growth.

Thus, the approval of this bill is earnestly requested.


CAMILLE A. VILLAR

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ *Id.*

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “PWD and Senior Citizen-Friendly Tourism Sites Act of 2024”.

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to give full support to the improvement of the total well-being of persons with disabilities and senior citizens and their integration into the mainstream of society. Additionally, it is a policy of the State to promote the accessibility of tourism sites to persons with disability (PWD) and senior citizens (SC).

SECTION 3. *Scope and Coverage.* – As used in this Act, tourism sites refer to cultural or natural heritage sites, museums, national parks, agro-industrial and ecotourism sites, wildlife areas, and all tourism sites or spots declared by or pursuant to existing laws.

SECTION 4. *PWD and Senior Citizen-Friendly Tourism Sites.* – The Department of Tourism (DOT), in coordination with the Department of Public Works and Highways, National Council on Disability Affairs, National Commission of Senior Citizens, entities having jurisdiction over tourism sites, and relevant stakeholders, shall ensure that:

a) All tourism sites are equipped with physical infrastructure facilities that are PWD and Senior Citizen-friendly. All facilities to be constructed, rehabilitated or repaired shall comply with the infrastructure standards set forth in this Act, or

other applicable laws;

- b) Physical infrastructure includes components within and outside the tourism sites. This includes but is not limited to signages, accessible entrances, corridors, toilets with grab bars, switches and controls ramps, elevators, accessible information desks, water taps, emergency exits as well as outdoor facilities like roads and footpaths necessary to reach the tourism areas;
- c) There shall be regular awareness programs, seminars and trainings of professional staff capable of informing and advising about accessibility issues and concerns; and
- d) PWD and Senior Citizen-friendly activities are included in all tourism policies, programs and plans of the DOT.

SECTION 5. *Tourism Development Plan.* – The DOT and entities having control, supervision or administration of tourism sites shall prepare a development plan involving the construction, installation, and maintenance of such appropriate facilities and infrastructure which shall provide or enhance PWD and SC-friendly tourism sites. Provided, that such plan shall preserve and conserve the natural beauty of the tourism sites.

SECTION 6. *Non-impairment Clause.* – Nothing in this Act shall be construed as to diminish, impair, or repeal rights recognized, granted, or made available to disadvantaged, marginalized, or specific sectors under existing laws.

SECTION 7. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged to the appropriations of the Department of Tourism. Thereafter, such sum as may be necessary for its continued implementation shall be included in the General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 8. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within six (6) months from the effectivity of this Act, the DOT, in coordination with the Department of Public Works and Highways, National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA), National Commission of Senior Citizens, National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and other relevant stakeholders, shall promulgate rules and regulations necessary for its implementation.

SECTION 9. *Separability Clause.* – Should any provision or part of this Act be declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions and parts thereof, insofar as they are separable from the invalid ones, shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 10. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, memoranda, circulars, and other issuances, or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with the Act, are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 11. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen days (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,