



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

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 605



Introduced by Rep. Edwin C. Ongchuan

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Pinusilan Blue Lagoon, located in the Municipality of Mapanas, Second District of Northern Samar, is a picturesque natural attraction known for its turquoise waters passing through various natural tunnels from the Pacific Ocean.

In line with the objectives of Republic Act No. 9593, otherwise known as the *Tourism Act of 2009*, which mandates the development and promotion of sustainable tourism programs that enhance environmental protection, cultural heritage, and inclusive growth, this proposed measure seeks to declare the Pinusilan Blue Lagoon as an ecotourism site.

The proposed measure aims to attract investment that will pave the way for the establishment of ecotourism facilities, which in turn will create employment opportunities for local communities, foster greater public appreciation of natural heritage, and promote the conservation of biodiversity. It will also pave the way for national government support, resource mobilization, and capacity-building initiatives.

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

EDWIN C. ONGCHUAN
Representative
Second District, Northern Samar



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**AN ACT DECLARING THE PINUSILAN BLUE LAGOON, LOCATED IN THE
MUNICIPALITY OF MAPANAS, PROVINCE OF NORTHERN SAMAR, AN
ECOTOURISM SITE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Pinusilan Blue Lagoon Ecotourism Act.”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote a sustainable and effective ecotourism industry to attract tourists, both local and foreign. Towards this end, the country shall rationalize all efforts to make the tourism industry a major source of livelihood and an avenue for economic development, and measures shall be taken for the development and promotion of sustainable tourism programs that enhance environmental protection, cultural heritage, and inclusive growth.

SECTION 3. *Ecotourism Site.* – The Pinusilan Blue Lagoon located in the Municipality of Mapanas, Province of Northern Samar, is hereby declared an ecotourism site. As such, its development shall be prioritized by the Department of Tourism (DOT) and other concerned agencies and shall be subject to the rules and regulations governing the development of ecotourism sites.

SECTION 4. *Tourism Development Plan.* - Within one (1) year from the effectivity of this Act, the DOT, in coordination with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), municipal government of Mapanas, and other concerned agencies of the government, shall prepare a tourism development plan involving the construction, installation, and maintenance of such appropriate facilities and infrastructure which shall enhance tourism in the ecotourism site: *Provided*, that the said tourism development plan shall ensure the preservation and conservation of the natural beauty and resources of the area.

The DOT shall take immediate steps to implement the tourism development plan, with due consideration for the natural characteristics of the Pinusilan Blue Lagoon, and incorporate the same in its overall National Tourism Development Plan (NTDP), pursuant to Republic Act No. 9593, otherwise known as “The Tourism Act of 2009”. The DOT shall ensure that the Pinusilan Blue Lagoon is included in all its relevant national, regional and local promotion programs.

SECTION 5. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of the DOT, in consultation with the concerned local government units, the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA), and other agencies of the government, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the proper implementation of this Act.

SECTION 6. *Appropriations.* - 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 augmented by internally generated funds of the DOT.

SECTION 7. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act shall be held unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not otherwise affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 8. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, and other issuances, or any part thereof which are inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

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

Approved,