



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

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **813**



Introduced by Representative LORDAN G. SUAN

AN ACT
DECLARING THE MACAHAMBUS GORGE AND ITS IMMEDIATE
ENVIRONS, LOCATED IN BARANGAY LUMBIA, CITY OF CAGAYAN DE
ORO, PROVINCE OF MISAMIS ORIENTAL, AN ECOTOURISM ZONE

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Macahambus Gorge and its environs is a spectacular scene located in Barangay Lumbia of Cagayan de Oro City. It is a popular destination for travelers and adventurers who want to experience breathtaking adventures with panoramic scenery. The gorge is surrounded by lush tropical rainforest, which is home to a diverse range of species, flora, and fauna.

In addition to its natural beauty, Macahambus Gorge also has historical significance. In June 1900, the Battle of Macahambus was fought between Filipino and American forces during the Philippine-American War. The Filipinos won the battle, which is considered one of the few victories and it was said that the Macahambus battle was the *only known major victory by Filipino forces in Mindanao* during the war.

As tourism in the Philippines continues to grow, Macahambus Gorge is expected to see an increase in visitors. By declaring Macahambus Gorge and its environs as an Ecotourism Zone, would allow the city to better manage tourism, protect the environment, and create jobs and opportunities for local residents.

Macahambus Gorge is a truly captivating and special place. It is a must-visit destination for anyone who loves nature and adventure.

In light of the preceding, this bill's approval is fervently sought.



LORDAN G. SUAN

Cagayan de Oro City – 1st District



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

1 **SECTION 1. *Short Title.*** – This Act shall be known as the “Macahambus
2 Gorge Ecotourism Zone Act.”
3

4 **SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** – It is the policy of the State to promote a
5 tourism industry that is ecologically sustainable, responsible, participative,
6 culturally sensitive, economically viable, and equitably beneficial to local
7 communities.

8 To this end, the State shall endeavor to provide the proper mechanisms
9 and infrastructure for sustainable tourism development. It shall develop and
10 promote areas and sites identified as tourism destinations in order to drive
11 and propel inclusive growth throughout the country.
12

13 **SEC. 3. *Macahambus Gorge Ecotourism Zone.*** – The Macahambus
14 Gorge and its immediate environs, located in Barangay Lumbia, City of
15 Cagayan de Oro, Province of Misamis Oriental, are hereby declared as
16 ecotourism zone. Pursuant thereto, the development of the Macahambus
17 Gorge and its immediate environs shall be prioritized and supported by the
18 Department of Tourism (DOT), subject to the rules and regulations governing
19 the development of ecotourism zones.
20

21 **SEC. 4. *Scope and Coverage.*** – This Act shall cover the Macahambus
22 Gorge and its immediate environs including the Macahambus cave, hill, and
23 stream.

24 The setting of the technical boundaries of the ecotourism zone shall
25 be undertaken by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources
26 (DENR) and other concerned agencies of the government.

27 **SEC. 5. *Definition of Terms.*** – As used in this Act:

28 (a) *Ecotourism* refers to a form of sustainable tourism within
29 a natural area where community participation, protection and
30 management of natural resources, cultural and indigenous
31 knowledge and practices, environmental education and ethics,
32 as well as economic benefits, are fostered and pursued for the
33 enrichment of host communities and satisfaction of visitors; and

34 (b) *Community-based ecotourism* refers to a form of tourism
35 where the local community and its residents have substantial
36 control over the development and management of the local
37 tourism industry wherein the greater portion of the economic
38 gains remains within the community.

39 **SEC. 6. *Development Strategies.*** – To accomplish the development
40 of the Macahambus Gorge and its immediate environs as an ecotourism
41 zone, the State shall:

42 (a) Develop and promote responsible, community-based
43 ecotourism as the core management strategy in the
44 development of the ecotourism zone;

45 (b) Ensure the conservation of the biodiversity and the
46 preservation of the said ecotourism zone;
47

48 (c) Develop tourism products and programs that will generate
49 employment and livelihood for the local residents concerned,
50 consistent with the preservation and maintenance of the natural
51 resources;

52 (d) Guarantee that the financial and economic benefits of the
53 tourism industry are equitably shared by and distributed among
54 the local residents concerned by giving preference and support
55 to community- and home-based micro- and small tourism

enterprises, such as food and fruit stands, and other similar tourism-oriented businesses and activities;

(e) Ensure that the quality of local tourism programs and activities are educational and enriching for tourists and visitors through the provision of orientation, educational and tour programs by local tour operators, non-government organizations, concerned local government units (LGUs), DOT, and DENR; and

(f) Guarantee that in the development and promotion of the local tourism industry, the concerned LGUs shall ensure the adequate provision of water supply, food, energy, and transportation for the needs of the local residents and communities.

SEC. 7. *Tourism Development Plan.* – Within one (1) year after the approval of this Act, the city government of Cagayan de Oro shall, in coordination with the DOT, DENR, and concerned agencies of the government, prepare a tourism development plan that shall include the construction, installation and maintenance of such appropriate facilities and infrastructure 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: *Provided, further, That* the implementation of the tourism development plan shall be included in the budget of the city government of Cagayan de Oro.

SEC. 8. *Role of the DOT* – The DOT shall assist the city government of Cagayan de Oro in the implementation of the tourism development plan by providing technical assistance in tourism capacity building. It shall also include the Macahambus Gorge and its immediate environs in its national and regional promotion programs.

SEC. 9. *Appropriations.* – The funding for the implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual budget of the city government of Cagayan de Oro.

The DOT through the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA), if necessary, may include such allocation in the TIEZA's program.

92 **SEC. 10. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – Within sixty (60)
93 days from the effectivity of this Act, the city government of Cagayan de Oro
94 shall, in consultation with the DOT and concerned agencies of the
95 government, promulgate the rules and regulations to implement this Act.

96 **SEC. 11. *Separability Clause.*** – If any provision of this Act shall
97 be declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not affected
98 thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

99 **SEC. 12. *Repealing Clause.*** All laws, rules, regulations, executive
100 orders, proclamations, presidential decrees, and other issuances
101 inconsistent with any of the provisions of this Act are hereby deemed
102 repealed or amended accordingly.

103 **SEC. 13. *Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after
104 its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

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Approved,