



Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

**TWENTIETH CONGRESS**  
First Regular Session

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1459**



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Introduced by

**HON. ATTY. GERVILLE “JINKY BITRICS” R. LUISTRO**

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#### **EXPLANATORY NOTE**

The Verde Island Passage is a must-see-and-visit diving spot, not just in the country, but the entire planet. It is referred to as "The Center of the Center of Marine Shore Fish Biodiversity of the World". The passage is the strait that separates the Island of Mindoro from Luzon. This 1.14-million-hectare strait is where over 500 species of reef building corals and a third of the world's coral-reef fish reside.

The dive sites are just half-an-hour to an hour away from Anilao, Mabini, Batangas and from Mindoro. It has been a favorite destination of tourists, both foreign and local, who are marine enthusiasts and diving professionals.

The strait is, however, not just a tourist destination. It is also utilized as the passageway for commercial travel from batangas to Mindoro. And, as it is rich in marine life, it is likewise the main source of livelihood of local and commercial fishermen. These economic activities, along with irresponsible tourism, may contribute to the degradation of the passage.

This bill seeks to declare the Verde Island Passage as an ecotourism zone. Its development shall be prioritized by the Department of Tourism (DOT). The DOT shall prepare and incorporate the development plan for Verde Island Passage in the overall National Tourism Development Plan (NTDP).

The plan shall be implemented jointly with the concerned provincial governments, the local Protected Area Management Board (PAMB), and the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA). These agencies shall identify well-defined geographic areas within the Verde Island Passage ecotourism zone and coordinate the integrated development of the areas for

the optimum utilization of natural assets and attractions, as well as existing infrastructures and facilities. The development shall ensure the preservation of the biodiversity, scenery, and historical significance of the identified tourist attractions.

With this bill, we would promote a tourism industry that is ecologically stable, responsible, participative, culturally sensitive, economically viable, and equitably beneficial to local communities.

It is in this regard that the immediate consideration and passage of this proposed measure is earnestly sought.



**HON. ATTY. GERVILLE "JINKY BITRICS" R. LUISTRO**



Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

**TWENTIETH CONGRESS**  
Third Regular Session

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1459**

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Introduced by  
**HON. ATTY. GERVILLE "JINKY BITRICS" R. LUISTRO**

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**AN ACT DECLARING THE VERDE ISLAND PASSAGE IN THE PROVINCES OF  
BATANGAS, MARINDUQUE, OCCIDENTAL MINDORO, ORIENTAL MINDORO,  
AND ROMBLON, AS AN ECOTOURISM ZONE, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR,  
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

*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 "Verde Island Passage Ecotourism Act"

**Section 2. Declaration of Policy.** - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote a tourism industry that is ecologically stable, responsible, participative, culturally sensitive, economically viable, and equitably beneficial to local communities.

**Section 3. Declaration as Ecotourism Zone.** - The Verde Island Passage in the Provinces of Batangas, Occidental Mindoro, Oriental Mindoro, Marinduque, and Romblon is hereby declared an ecotourism zone. Its development shall be prioritized by the Department of Tourism (DOT) and shall be subject to the rules and regulations governing the development of ecotourism zones.

The DOT shall prepare and incorporate the development plan for Verde Island Passage in the overall National Tourism Development Plan (NTDP), pursuant to Republic Act No. 9593, otherwise known as "The Tourism Act of 2009". The plan shall be implemented jointly with the Provincial Governments of Batangas, Occidental Mindoro, Oriental Mindoro, Marinduque, and

Romblon, the local Protected Area Management Board (PAMB), and the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA).

The DOT, in coordination with the Provincial Governments of Batangas, Occidental Mindoro, Oriental Mindoro, Marinduque, and Romblon; the PAMB; the TIEZA; and other concerned agencies and instrumentalities of the government, shall identify well-defined geographic areas within Verde Island Passage ecotourism zone and coordinate the integrated development of the areas for the optimum utilization of natural assets and attractions, as well as existing infrastructures and facilities; Provided, that the development shall ensure the preservation of the biodiversity, scenery and historical significance of the identified tourist attractions.

**Section 4. Implementation.** - Within sixty (60) days after the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of Tourism, in consultation with the Provincial Governments of Batangas, Occidental Mindoro, Oriental Mindoro, Marinduque, and Romblon; the PAMB, the TIEZA and other tourism stakeholders, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the proper implementation of this Act.

**Section 5. Appropriations.** - The Secretary of Tourism shall include in the Department's program the implementation of this Act, the funding of which shall be included in the General Appropriations Act and internally generated funds of the DOT.

**Section 6. Repealing Clause.** - All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees, rules and regulations and other issuances contrary or inconsistent with this Act shall be deemed repealed or modified accordingly.

**Section 7. Effectivity.** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,