

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 1904



Introduced by Honorable Richard I. Gomez, DPA

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Despite all the challenges in most recent years, the Philippine Tourism Industry remains one of the cornerstone industries in the Philippines. For decades, the industry has consistently contributed 8-9% of the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and 12% of national employment. However, the COVID-19 pandemic of recent memory proved to be a most formidable challenge because for the first time in twenty years, Tourism's GDP contribution fell below 5.6%.

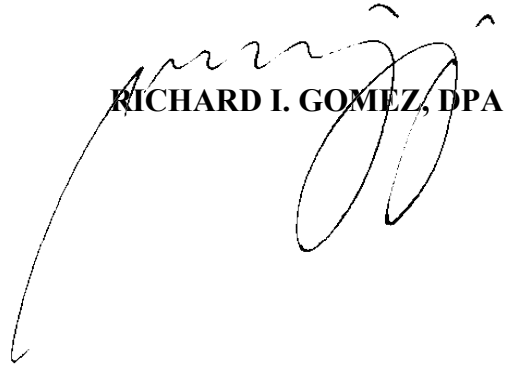
This bill, to be known as the "Philippine Tourism Sustainability Act," aims to strengthen the industry in the face of threats, such as health emergencies, environmental degradation, natural disasters and medium- to long-term effects of climate change, so that it can continue to be an engine for countryside development.

This bill calls for the assembly of a Philippine Tourism Sustainability Council, to be composed of relevant government and private stakeholders, with the goal of establishing policies and procedures to achieve industry resilience from the above-mentioned threats. The industry's ordeal with the temporary closure of Boracay not-so-long ago proved that without synchronized policies and procedures among national agencies, LGUs and industry players, implementing environmental sustainability and resilience to health emergencies and natural disasters will remain in question.

As our country incrementally recovers from the economic decline due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to plan for the sustainable development of the Tourism Industry. This means that industry growth plans would integrate the principles of "People, Planet and Profit" – wherein each pillar is equally valued. This means that while we push for tourism's share in our economic growth, we make sure that our environment is preserved and maintained, and that the

welfare of tourists and local residents is top priority. This also means that the industry would grow using climate resilient infrastructure, as well as health safeguards in place.

In light of this, the immediate approval of this bill is earnestly requested.



RICHARD I. GOMEZ, DPA

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AN ACT
INTEGRATING AND ESTABLISHING PERTINENT POLICIES AND REGULATIONS
TO ENSURE THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PHILIPPINE TOURISM INDUSTRY

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 “Philippine Tourism Sustainability Act.”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – The State recognizes tourism as one of the key drivers of the national economy. It is, therefore, crucial to enhance the industry’s policies, operation and coordination among major national agencies and industry players to ensure its sustained contributions to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by upholding the principles of People-Planet-Profit.

Towards this end, the State shall seek to:

1. Strengthen tourism’s role in countryside development through air, sea and land infrastructure development in underserved cities and municipalities;
2. Develop the industry’s resilience to health emergencies and epidemics through structural, operational and policy safeguards;
3. Develop the industry’s resilience to natural disasters, including super typhoons, earthquakes, tsunamis, and medium- to long-term effects of climate change; and
4. Develop a holistic and coordinated approach to preserving environmental integrity in the face of tourism development.

SEC. 2. *Creation of Philippine Tourism Sustainability Council.* – The responsibility of achieving and maintaining “Tourism Sustainability” shall be given to qualified representatives of all relevant stakeholders of the tourism industry. An assembly of such stakeholder representation shall be immediately convened and called the “Philippine Tourism Sustainability Council.”

Stakeholders for representation shall include, but shall not be limited to:

- (a) Department of Tourism
- (b) Department of Environment and Natural Resources
- (c) Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority
- (d) Department of Public Works and Highways
- (e) Department of Health
- (f) Department of Trade and Industry
- (g) Department of Economy, Planning, and Development
- (h) Department of the Interior and Local Government
- (i) Department of National Defense
- (j) Department of Finance
- (k) Department of Budget and Management
- (l) Local Government Units
- (m) National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council
- (n) Climate Change Commission
- (o) Direct and Indirect Tourism Enterprises/Operators, including Small and Medium Operators
- (p) Power, Water, Telecommunications and other Utilities Service Providers
- (q) Tourism Supply Chain Providers
- (r) Tourism-related Non-Government Organizations
- (s) Tourism-related Civil Society Organizations
- (t) Local Communities of Tourism Development Areas

SEC. 3. *Objectives.* – The Philippine Tourism Sustainability Council shall be tasked to accomplish the following:

- (1) Establish a unified definition of “Tourism Sustainability,” taking into consideration the policies in Section 2 of this Act;
- (2) Establish goals to achieve and maintain “Tourism Sustainability;”
- (3) Integrate all existing laws pertaining to the tourism industry in various areas that influence the sustainability of the industry. These areas include, but are not limited to, the following: environmental stewardship, public health, infrastructure development, inclusive socio-economic growth, local government regulation and enforcement, and tourism development;
- (4) Create new and necessary policies and regulations to achieve our national “Tourism Sustainability” goals;

(5) Institute a system for accountability for violations for the effective implementation of this Act; and

(6) Generate procedures for mainstreaming “Tourism Sustainability” laws and their enforcement at all levels, from national agencies to local governments.

SEC. 4. *Philippine Tourism Sustainability Laws.* – The Philippine Tourism Sustainability Council shall compile a set of Philippine Tourism Sustainability laws in accordance with the results of the council proceedings.

SEC. 5. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The Department of Tourism shall promulgate not later than thirty (30) days upon the approval of this Act, all the necessary rules and regulations for its effective implementation.

SEC. 6. *Separability Clause.* – If any section or part of this Act is held unconstitutional or invalid, the other sections or provisions not otherwise affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 7. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, issuances or any part thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SEC. 8. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication either in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,