



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

Twentieth Congress  
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **2088**



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**Introduced by Representative Antonio “Tonypet” T. Albano**

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

The Constitution mandates the State to protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature (Section 16, Article II).

This bill seeks to declare the Malasi Tree Park and Wildlife Sanctuary, located in Barangay San Antonio, Cabagan, Isabela, as an ecotourism zone. The area, previously declared a Critical Habitat under DENR Administrative Order No. 2012-01, is home to the endemic and threatened Philippine Wild Duck (*Anas luzonica*) and other migratory bird species that depend on the sanctuary’s lagoons and forested wetlands.

By declaring it an ecotourism zone, this measure strengthens the conservation, protection, and sustainable development of the sanctuary, while creating opportunities for community-based tourism that supports the local economy.

This bill has already been passed on Third Reading during the 19th Congress and represents the product of the collaborative efforts of the Committee on Tourism and relevant stakeholders. It incorporates provisions that ensure alignment with national biodiversity strategies and support for local participation.

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

  
**ANTONIO “TONYPET” T. ALBANO**



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**AN ACT**

**DECLARING THE MALASI TREE PARK AND WILDLIFE SANCTUARY  
LOCATED IN BARANGAY SAN ANTONIO, MUNICIPALITY OF CABAGAN,  
PROVINCE OF ISABELA, AN ECOTOURISM ZONE**

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

1       **SECTION 1.** The Malasi Tree Park and Wildlife Sanctuary  
2       located in Barangay San Antonio, Municipality of Cabagan, Province  
3       of Isabela, is hereby declared an ecotourism zone. Pursuant thereto,  
4       its development shall be prioritized and supported by the Department  
5       of Tourism (DOT), subject to the rules and regulations governing the  
6       development of ecotourism zones.

7       **SEC. 2.** The Malasi Tree Park and Wildlife Sanctuary  
8       Development Council, hereinafter referred to as the Council, is hereby  
9       created. It shall be composed of fifteen (15) members, as follows:

10       (a) *Ex Officio* Members

11       (1) Mayor of the Municipality of Cabagan, as Chairperson;

- (2) Head of the Municipal Tourism Office of the Municipality of Cabagan, as Vice-Chairperson;
- (3) Head of the Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office of the Municipality of Cabagan;
- (4) Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer of Isabela;
- (5) Barangay Chairperson of Barangay San Antonio;
- (6) Director of the Biodiversity Management Bureau;
- (7) Chief Operating Officer of the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority;
- (8) Regional Director of DOT-Region II;
- (9) Regional Director of DENR-Region II;
- (10) Regional Director of the Department of Public Works and Highways-Region II;
- (11) DENR Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer of Isabela; and
- (12) Chairperson of the Municipal Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Council of the Municipality of Cabagan.

(b) Members Who Shall Represent Sectoral Concerns

- (1) One (1) representative from an academic institution, preferably from a university or college in the Province of Isabela, with proven track record in or related to ecotourism and critical habitat management;

1           (2) One (1) representative from the private sector, preferably  
2           a resident of the Province of Isabela, who is distinguished  
3           in a profession or field of interest relevant to ecotourism  
4           and critical habitat management; and

5           (3) One (1) representative from either non-government  
6           organization (NGO) or people's organization (PO) duly  
7           accredited both by the DENR and the provincial  
8           government of Isabela. The NGO or PO represented  
9           should have been in existence for at least five (5) years  
10          with proven track record in or related to ecotourism or  
11          critical habitat management.

12          The *ex officio* elective members of the Council shall serve for the  
13          duration of their respective terms of office to which they are elected.

14          The *ex officio* appointive members of the Council shall serve for  
15          the duration of the period they hold the office to which they are  
16          appointed.

17          The sectoral members of the Council shall be selected by the *ex*  
18          *officio* members in a fair and transparent manner. They shall each  
19          serve a term of three (3) years and may be reappointed for another  
20          term.

21          The members of the Council shall serve without compensation,  
22          but shall be authorized to actual and necessary traveling and  
23          subsistence expenses incurred in the performance of their duties,  
24          either in their attendance in meetings of the Council or in connection  
25          with other official business authorized by a resolution of the Council,

1 subject to existing rules and regulations. Each member shall have the  
2 full capacity and accountability for decisions binding to the member's  
3 sector.

4 The municipal government of Cabagan shall provide a  
5 Secretariat for the Council and the necessary funds to defray the  
6 expenses to be incurred by the Secretariat in the performance of its  
7 duties and responsibilities.

8 **SEC. 3.** The Council shall have the following functions:

9 (a) Formulate and implement the Malasi Tree Park and Wildlife  
10 Sanctuary Development Plan, in consultation with the local  
11 residents, businesses and other stakeholders;

12 (b) Assess and evaluate the potential impact of the development  
13 to the environmental safety and well-being of the ecotourism  
14 zone, communities and enterprises;

15 (c) Provide technical and financial assistance to the  
16 communities within the ecotourism zone;

17 (d) Formulate rules and regulations in relation to the  
18 maintenance and security of the ecotourism zone; and

19 (e) Perform other functions as may be necessary to carry out  
20 the objectives of this Act.

21 **SEC. 4.** Within one (1) year after the approval of this Act, the  
22 Council shall prepare the Malasi Tree Park and Wildlife Sanctuary  
23 Development Plan to enhance tourism in the area and ensure that

1 the existing ecosystems, endemic wildlife species, as well as migratory  
2 species, and naturally occurring flora and fauna and their habitats,  
3 are preserved and protected. The Malasi Tree Park and Wildlife  
4 Sanctuary Development Plan shall be formulated and implemented in  
5 accordance with the Malasi Tree Park and Wildlife Sanctuary Critical  
6 Habitat Management Plan and pursuant to the provisions of Republic  
7 Act. No. 9147, also known as the *“Wildlife Resources Conservation*  
8 *and Protection Act.”*

9       **SEC. 5.** The joint responsibility over the management of the  
10 Malasi Tree Park and Wildlife Sanctuary Critical Habitat as mandated  
11 under DENR Administrative Order No. 2012-01 shall be transferred  
12 from the DENR Region II Office and the municipal government of  
13 Cabagan, to the Council. For this purpose, the DENR Region II Office  
14 and the municipal government of Cabagan shall coordinate with the  
15 Council and provide the necessary technical assistance to ensure the  
16 continued implementation of the Critical Habitat Management Plan.

17       The transfer of management of the Malasi Tree Park and  
18 Wildlife Sanctuary Critical Habitat shall include all applicable funds,  
19 records, property, assets, liabilities, equipment, and personnel:  
20 *Provided, That* all personnel presently employed by the DENR-Region  
21 II Office and the municipal government of Cabagan for the purpose  
22 shall continue their service without diminution of rank, base pay,  
23 allowance, and other benefits authorized under existing laws.

1           **SEC. 6.** The DOT shall assist the Council in the  
2 implementation of the development plan by providing technical  
3 assistance in tourism capacity building. It shall also include the  
4 Malasi Tree Park and Wildlife Sanctuary in its national and regional  
5 promotion programs.

6           **SEC. 7.** The funding for the implementation of this Act shall be  
7 included in the annual budget of the municipal government of  
8 Cabagan. The DOT may augment such allocation with internally-  
9 generated funds.

10          **SEC. 8.** Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act,  
11 the Council shall, in consultation with the municipal government of  
12 Cabagan, DOT, DENR and concerned agencies of the government,  
13 promulgate rules and regulations to implement this Act.

14          **SEC. 9.** If any part or provision of this Act is declared  
15 unconstitutional or invalid, the other parts or provisions not affected  
16 shall remain in full force and effect.

17          **SEC. 10.** All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees, rules  
18 and regulations or parts thereof contrary to or inconsistent with any  
19 of the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended  
20 accordingly.

1           **SEC. 11.** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its  
2 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general  
3 circulation.

Approved,