

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL No. 2509



Introduced by REP. RAMIL L. HERNANDEZ

AN ACT
MAKING THE POSITION OF TOURISM OFFICER MANDATORY IN THE
MUNICIPAL CITY AND PROVINCIAL LEVELS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE
REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7160, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE
"LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF 1991," AS AMENDED

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines, with its breathtaking islands and rich cultural heritage, possesses immense potential as a global tourism powerhouse. In 2019, the tourism industry significantly contributed to the nation's prosperity, with tourist arrivals surging by **15.24% to over 8.26 million** and generating **P482.15 billion in visitor receipts**—an impressive 18.80% increase from the previous year. This robust growth translated to tourism's **12.7% share of the country's gross domestic product**. Furthermore, the industry proved to be a powerful job creator, employing an estimated **5.71 million Filipinos in 2019**, accounting for **13.5% of total national employment**. (Sources: Department of Tourism, Philippine Statistics Authority).

The Tourism Act of 2009 (Republic Act No. 9593) recognized this potential, tasking local government units (LGUs) with maximizing tourism for local growth, explicitly stating that, "[e]very province, city or municipality in which tourism is a significant industry shall have a permanent position for a tourism officer." However, many LGUs are not able to comply because the Local Government Code of 1991 (Republic Act No. 7160) lacks an explicit provision for this role.

This bill aims to amend R.A. No. 7160 to mandate the appointment of a dedicated Tourism Officer in provincial, city, and municipal LGUs where tourism is a significant industry.

A permanent Tourism Officer is a strategic investment that can meaningfully improve local tourism, drive employment, and accelerate economic growth by:

- **Driving Strategic Tourism Development & Promotion:** Leading the creation and execution of local tourism plans and marketing efforts.

- **Enhancing Destination Competitiveness & Management:** Ensuring sustainable asset management and an improved visitor experience.
- **Catalyzing Local Employment:** Connecting local businesses to tourism, generating new jobs and livelihoods.
- **Stimulating Economic Growth:** Increasing visitor receipts and local revenues for community reinvestment.
- **Improving Stakeholder Coordination:** Centralizing tourism initiatives and fostering collaboration.

This measure was previously filed in the 19th Congress as House Bill No. 1727 by Rep. Ruth Mariano-Hernandez. Given the importance of a dedicated Tourism Officer in each LGUs in the country's tourism industry, the approval of this proposed bill is sought.

Approved,

RAMIL L. HERNANDEZ
2nd District, Laguna

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

Section 1. Section 443, Book III, Title Two, Chapter 2 of of Republic Act No. 7160, as amended, is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SECTION 443. Officials of the Municipal Government. – (a) There shall be in each municipality a municipal mayor, a municipal vice-mayor, Sangguniang Bayan members, a secretary to the Sangguniang Bayan, a municipal treasurer, a municipal assessor, a municipal accountant, a municipal budget officer, a municipal planning and development coordinator, a municipal engineer/building official, a municipal health officer, [and] a municipal civil registrar [.] A municipal cooperatives development officer (CDO) shall also be appointed: Provided, That the municipality has the option to appoint a full-fledged CDO or merge related such position to an existing position or official in an office, unit or department in the municipal government: Provided, further, That if the municipality shall appoint a full-fledged CDO, the municipality has the option to set the rank, remuneration and other emoluments of the municipal CDO subject to existing laws, rules, and regulations.

A MUNICIPAL TOURISM OFFICER (MTO) SHALL ALSO BE APPOINTED; PROVIDED, THAT IN MUNICIPALITIES WHERE TOURISM IS A SIGNIFICANT INDUSTRY, THE APPOINTMENT OF AN MTO SHALL BE MANDATORY, PROVIDED FURTHER, THAT THE MUNICIPALITY HAS THE OPTION TO SET THE RANK, REMUNERATION AND OTHER EMOLUMENTS OF THE MTO SUBJECT TO EXISTING LAWS, RULES, AND REGULATIONS.

“(b) x x x

“(c) x x x

“(d) x x x

“(e) x x x.”

Section 2. Section 454, Book III, Title III, Chapter 2 of Republic Act No. 7160, as amended, is hereby amended to read as follows:

“SECTION 454. Officials of the City Government. – (a) There shall be in each city a mayor, a vice-mayor, Sangguniang Panlungsod members, a secretary to the Sangguniang Panlungsod, a city treasurer, a city assessor, a city accountant, a city budget officer, a city planning and development coordinator, a city engineer, a city health officer, a city civil registrar, a city administrator, a city legal officer, a city veterinarian, a city social welfare and development officer, [and] a city general services officer[.], A city CDO shall also be appointed: Provided, That the municipality has the option to appoint a full-fledged CDO or merge related such position to an existing position or official in an office, unit or department in the municipal government: Provided, further, That if the municipality shall appoint a full-fledged CDO, the municipality has the option to set the rank, remuneration and other emoluments of the municipal CDO subject to existing laws, rules, and regulations.

A CITY TOURISM OFFICER (CTO) SHALL ALSO BE APPOINTED; PROVIDED, THAT IN CITIES WHERE TOURISM IS A SIGNIFICANT INDUSTRY, THE APPOINTMENT OF A CTO SHALL BE MANDATORY, PROVIDED FURTHER, THAT THE CITY HAS THE OPTION TO SET THE RANK, REMUNERATION AND OTHER EMOLUMENTS OF THE CTO SUBJECT TO EXISTING LAWS, RULES, AND REGULATIONS.

“(b) x x x

“(c) x x x

“(d) x x x

“(e) x x x.”

Section 3. Section 463 Book III, Title Four, Chapter 2 of Republic Act No. 7160, as amended, is hereby amended to read as follows:

“SECTION 463. Officials of the Provincial Government. – (a) There shall be in each province a governor, a vice-governor, members of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan, a Secretary to the Sangguniang Panlalawigan, a provincial treasurer, a provincial assessor, a provincial accountant, a provincial engineer, a provincial budget officer, a provincial planning and development coordinator, a provincial legal officer, a

provincial administrator, a provincial health officer, a provincial social welfare and development officer, a provincial general services officer, a provincial agriculturist, [and] a provincial veterinarian, [.] A provincial CDO shall also be appointed: Provided, That the municipality has the option to appoint a full-fledged CDO or merge related such position to an existing position or official in an office, unit or department in the municipal government: Provided, further, That if the municipality shall appoint a full-fledged CDO, the municipality has the option to set the rank, remuneration and other emoluments of the municipal CDO subject to existing laws, rules, and regulations.

A PROVINCIAL TOURISM OFFICER (PTO) SHALL ALSO BE APPOINTED: PROVIDED, THAT IN PROVINCES WHERE TOURISM IS A SIGNIFICANT INDUSTRY, THE APPOINTMENT OF A PTO SHALL BE MANDATORY, PROVIDED, FURTHER, THAT THE PROVINCE HAS THE OPTION TO SET THE RANK, REMUNERATION AND OTHER EMOLUMENTS OF THE PTO SUBJECT TO EXISTING LAWS, RULES, AND REGULATIONS.

“(b) x x x

“(c) x x x

“(d) x x x

“(e) x x x.”

Section 4. A new provision shall be inserted in Book III, Title V of Republic Act No. 7160, as amended to read as follows:

**ARTICLE XXI
THE TOURISM OFFICER**

SEC. 490-A. APPOINTMENT, QUALIFICATIONS, POWERS, AND DUTIES. –

(A) NO PERSON SHALL BE APPOINTED AS TOURISM OFFICER UNLESS SUCH PERSON IS A CITIZEN OF THE PHILIPPINES, A RESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNIT CONCERNED, OF GOOD MORAL CHARACTER, HAS NEVER BEEN CONVICTED OF ANY ELECTION OFFENSE OR A CRIME PUNISHABLE BY MORE THAN SIX (6) MONTHS, A HOLDER OF A RELEVANT BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN TOURISM, BUSINESS, ECONOMICS, MARKETING, PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION OR OTHER RELATED FIELDS FROM A RECOGNIZED COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY, AND A FIRST GRADE CIVIL SERVICE ELIGIBLE OR ITS EQUIVALENT. HE/SHE MUST HAVE ACQUIRED AT LEAST FIVE (5) YEARS OF SUBSTANTIAL WORK EXPERIENCE AND INVOLVEMENT IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY. THE APPOINTMENT OF A TOURISM OFFICER IS MANDATORY FOR THE PROVINCIAL, CITY AND MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS WHERE TOURISM IS A SIGNIFICANT

INDUSTRY. LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS WITH EXISTING TOURISM OFFICERS PRIOR TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS ACT WILL BE GIVEN THREE (3) YEARS TO COMPLY WITH THE AFOREMENTIONED REQUIREMENTS.

(B) THE TOURISM OFFICER SHALL TAKE CHARGE OF THE OFFICE FOR TOURISM AND SHALL HAVE THE FOLLOWING FUNCTIONS:

- 1) PREPARE, IMPLEMENT, COORDINATE, MONITOR, AND UPDATE LOCAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PLANS;**
- 2) ENSURE THE PROPER ENFORCEMENT OF TOURISM STANDARDS, LAWS, RULES AND REGULATIONS;**
- 3) PROVIDE REGULAR REPORTS ON THE STATUS OF TOURISM PLANS AND PROGRAMS, TOURIST ARRIVALS, EMPLOYMENT, OCCUPANCY RATES, INVESTMENTS AND TOURIST PRODUCTS, AMONG OTHERS, TO THE LOCAL CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TO THE DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM (DOT);**
- 4) COORDINATE WITH THE DOT AND ITS ATTACHED AGENCIES AND CORPORATIONS, AND PRIVATE ENTITIES, WITH REGARD TO THE DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION OF TOURISM IN THE LOCALITY; AND**
- 5) ESTABLISH PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL AGENCIES AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN PROMOTING THE TOURISM OF THEIR CONCERNED MUNICIPALITIES, CITIES, AND PROVINCES ON A NATIONAL AND GLOBAL SCALE.**

(C) EXERCISE AND PERFORM SUCH OTHER POWERS, DUTIES, AND FUNCTIONS AS MAY BE PRESCRIBED BY LAW OR ORDINANCE.

Section 5. Separability Clause. – If any provision of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in force and effect.

Section 6. Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or amended 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,