

Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
CONGRESS OF THE PHILIPPINES  
Quezon City, Metro Manila

**TWENTIETH CONGRESS**  
First Regular Session

**House Bill No. 2679**



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**Introduced by Honorable ALFONSO V. UMALI JR.**

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

This bill seeks to declare the Verde Island Passage as Marine Protected Area (MPA) and Eco-Tourism Zone.

The Province of Oriental Mindoro is bestowed with various natural aquatic treasures, one of which is known as the “Verde Island.” Meanwhile, the “Verde Island Passage,” which is about one hundred (100) kilometers in length and about twenty (20) kilometers across its narrowest point, accomodates spectacular reef formations of more than three (300) species of corals and underwater rock canyons and serve as home to more than half of the world’s known shore fish species. As such, the Verde Island Passage has been described as the “Center of the World’s Marine Biodiversity.”

Cognizant of its potential for eco-tourism development, being an economic pump-primer, and, more importantly, the indubitable urgency of protecting, conserving and promoting the sustainable use of the Verde Island Passage, the undersigned strongly recommend the enactment of this bill.

Thus, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alfonso V. Umali, Jr.", written over a horizontal line.

**ALFONSO V. UMALI, JR.**  
Representative  
Second District, Oriental Mindoro

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**AN ACT**  
**DECLARING THE VERDE ISLAND PASSAGE**  
**AS MARINE PROTECTED AREA AND AN ECO-TOURISM ZONE**

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

**SECTION 1. Statement of Policy.** – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect its natural resources and to promote sustainable tourism industry. Towards this end, the State shall formulate effective strategies to conserve our resources and to rationalize all efforts pertaining to environment protection while creating an enabling eco-tourism industry especially in the countryside.

**SECTION 2. Declaration.** - The Verde Island Passage is hereby declared as a Marine Protected Area (MPA) and Eco-tourism Zone. Accordingly, it shall be subject to the rules and regulations governing MPAs and Eco-Tourism Zones.

**SECTION 3. Marine Protected Area and Eco-tourism Master Plan.** – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), in coordination with the Department of Tourism, the concerned Local Government Units, and with other concerned offices and agencies of the government, shall formulate and prepare the “Marine Protected Area and Eco-tourism Master Plan” (MPAEMP) for the Verde Island Passage within a year from the approval of this Act, and to strengthen the existing local structural frameworks for support and cooperation to facilitate smooth implementation of the MPAEMP.

**SECTION 4. Appropriation.** – The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be taken from the appropriation of the General Appropriations Act of the year following its enactment into law and thereafter.

**SECTION 5. Separability Clause.** – Should any provision herein be declared unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity of other provisions of this Act.

**SECTION 6. Repealing Clause.** – All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations, or parts thereof, inconsistent with Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

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

*Approved.*