

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 2928



Introduced by REPRESENTATIVE ELEANDRO JESUS F. MADRONA

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Dubbed as the "Galapagos of Asia", the Sibuyan Island, located at the eastern side of the Province of Romblon, is home to hundreds of species of plants and wildlife, many of which are endemic to the island. Some of these are even mentioned in the *Red List of Threatened Species* of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.¹

Moreover, the island is also teeming with breath-taking landscapes and natural attractions, as well as cultural and historical landmarks. Many of these can be found in the Municipality of San Fernando, such as the following:

- Cresta de Gallo Island and Marine Sanctuary,
- Bontangigue Reef Marine Sanctuary,
- Lamao Lake,
- Cantingas River Resort ,
- Busay Falls,
- Bila-Bila Falls,
- Lagting Falls,
- Dagubdub Falls,
- Kweba Falls,
- Panas Falls,
- Olango Trail of Mt. Guiting-Guiting,
- Punta Cautit Lighthouse,
- Casa del San Fernando, and
- Nuestra Señora de Candelaria Church.

Hence, the town's worthiness to be developed as a world-class tourism destination.

¹ Lorenz Pasion. "FAST FACTS: Things to know about Sibuyan Island, the 'Galapagos of Asia.'" *Rappler.com*, 2023. <https://www.rappler.com/nation/luzon/things-to-know-sibuyan-island-romblon/#:~:text=Aside%20from%20Mt,and%20a%20marine%20protected%20area.>

Many local government units such as the Municipality of San Fernando strive hard to recover and rise from the economic onslaught of the pandemic. As tourism is known to create jobs and generate investments, it is seen as one of the means to uplift the lives of many Filipinos particularly the rural folks. Alongside the protection of, and the efficient conservation efforts for the environment, this Representation calls for the proper formulation and implementation of a tourism development plan; installation of necessary facilities and infrastructures in various tourism sites; capacity building of tourism officers, operators and stakeholders; and effective local and international promotions of destinations. With these in mind, the Province of Romblon, along with the Municipality of San Fernando, could become one of the sought after ecotourism destinations in the country, a vision this Representation has been looking forward to.

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



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AN ACT
DECLARING THE MUNICIPALITY OF SAN FERNANDO, PROVINCE OF
ROMBLON, A TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AREA

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

1 **SECTION 1.** The Municipality of San Fernando, Province of Romblon, is hereby
2 declared a tourism development area (TDA).

3 **SEC. 2.** The San Fernando TDA hereby includes the following areas within the
4 municipality, which are endowed with scenic landscapes and natural attractions, rich
5 biodiversity, and historical significance:

6 a) Cresta de Gallo Island and Marine Sanctuary;

7 b) Bontangigue Reef Marine Sanctuary;

8 c) Lamao Lake;

9 d) Cantingas River Resort;

10 e) Busay Falls;

11 f) Bila-Bila Falls;

12 g) Lagting Falls;

- h) Dagubdub Falls;
- i) Kweba Falls;
- j) Panas Falls;
- k) Olango Trail of Mt. Guiting-Guiting;
- l) Punta Cautit Lighthouse;
- m) Casa del San Fernando; and
- n) Immediate environs of Nuestra Señora de Candelaria Church.

Pursuant thereto, the development of these areas shall be prioritized and supported by the Department of Tourism (DOT), subject to the rules and regulations governing the development of tourism destinations.

SEC. 3. Within one (1) year after the approval of this Act, the Municipal Government of San Fernando shall, in coordination with the DOT, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), and concerned agencies of the government, prepare a tourism development plan that shall include the construction, installation, and maintenance of such appropriate infrastructure and facilities to enhance tourism in the Municipality of San Fernando, particularly in identified areas for tourism development: *Provided*, That said development plan shall ensure the preservation and conservation of the natural beauty and resources of the areas: *Provided further*, That the implementation of the tourism development plan shall be included in the budget of the Municipal Government of San Fernando.

SEC. 4. The DOT shall assist the Municipal Government of San Fernando in the implementation of the tourism development plan by providing technical assistance in tourism capacity building. It shall also include the Municipality of San Fernando in its national and regional promotion programs.

SEC. 5. The funding for the implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual budget of the Municipal Government of San Fernando.

1 The DOT through the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA),
2 if necessary, may include such allocation in the TIEZA's program.

3 **SEC. 6.** Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Municipal
4 Government of San Fernando shall, in consultation with the DOT and concerned agencies of
5 the government, promulgate rules and regulations to implement this Act.

6 **SEC. 7.** All laws, rules, regulations, presidential decrees, and other issuances
7 inconsistent with any of the provisions of this Act are hereby deemed repealed or amended
8 accordingly.

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

11 Approved,