

TWENTIETH CONGRESS)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

HOUSE BILL NO. 2937

Introduced by Honorable Celso G. Regencia

EXPLANATORY NOTE

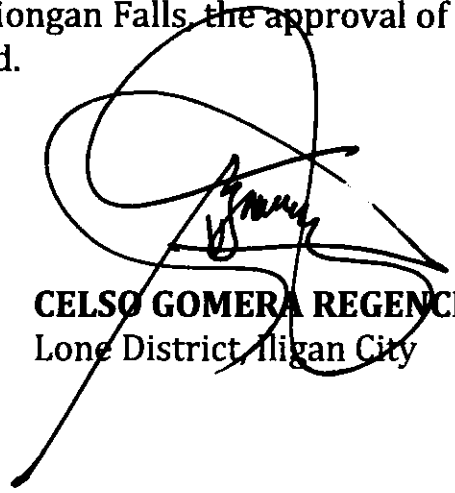
This bill seeks to declare Dodiongan Falls, located in Barangay Bonbonon, Iligan City, Lanao del Norte, as a protected tourist and eco-tourism site.

Known as Iligan’s “Angel-Winged Falls,” Dodiongan is a 20-meter high cascade nestled 14 kilometers from the city proper. Once a pristine source of clean water for nearby residents, Dodiongan has long served not only as a natural attraction, but also as a lifeline for surrounding communities.

However, its condition is now rapidly deteriorating. The unchecked operations of the Iligan City Material Recovery Facility (CMRF), along with persistent deforestation in the area, have led to the alarming degradation of the falls and its watershed. Residents who once relied on Dodiongan for drinking water can no longer do so, as its quality has visibly and dangerously declined.

Immediate legislative intervention is essential to prevent irreversible loss. Declaring Dodiongan Falls as a protected eco-tourism site will enable stronger regulation, conservation, and rehabilitation efforts. It will help preserve the area’s biodiversity, prevent further ecological harm, and enable the sustainable development of local tourism. With proper guidance from concerned agencies, this initiative can also generate livelihood opportunities and contribute to the local economy —without compromising environmental integrity.

In light of the urgent threats facing Dodiongan Falls, the approval of this bill is earnestly and respectfully recommended.

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Celso Gomera', is written over the printed name and title.

CELSO GOMERA REGENCIA
Lone District, Iligan City

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AN ACT
DECLARING DODIONGAN FALLS IN BARANGAY BONBONON, ILIGAN CITY,
AS AN ECO-TOURISM PROTECTED SITE, PROVIDING FOR ITS
DEVELOPMENT AND CONSERVATION, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. Title. – This Act shall be known as the “**Dodiongan Falls Eco-Tourism Protected Site Act.**”

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote sustainable tourism that is culturally sensitive, environmentally sound, and community-oriented.

In line with this, the State shall pursue the development and conservation of Dodiongan Falls in Barangay Bonbonon, Iligan City, as an eco-tourism protected site to help spur local development while ensuring the preservation of its natural and cultural integrity.

SECTION 3. Declaration as an Eco-Tourism Protected Site. — Dodiongan Falls, located in Barangay Bonbonon, Iligan City, is hereby declared an eco-tourism protected site. As such, its development shall be guided by principles of ecological sustainability, cultural preservation, and inclusive local participation.

SECTION 4. *Development Plan.* – Within three (3) months from the effectivity of this Act, the City Government of Iligan shall take the lead in formulating a tourism development plan for Dodiongan Falls, in coordination with the Department of Tourism (DOT), the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP), and other concerned agencies.

The development plan shall cover the construction, installation, and maintenance of appropriate facilities and infrastructure that will enhance eco-tourism, promote public safety, and ensure the preservation of the site's environmental and cultural integrity.

SECTION 5. *Community Participation.* – The City Government of Iligan, in coordination with concerned national agencies, shall ensure the active participation of local communities in the planning, development, management, and promotion of Dodiongan Falls as an eco-tourism protected site.

If indigenous peoples are present in the area, their rights shall be respected and their participation shall be ensured in accordance with the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) and applicable laws.

Priority shall likewise be given to local residents in employment, livelihood opportunities, and capacity-building programs related to site operations, guided tours, cultural preservation, and environmental stewardship.

SECTION 6. *Environmental Protection.* – All development and tourism-related activities within the Dodiongan Falls eco-tourism protected site shall be conducted in accordance with existing environmental laws, rules, and regulations.

The DENR, in coordination with the City Government of Iligan, shall ensure that appropriate environmental impact assessments are undertaken and that ecological sustainability is maintained at all stages of development and operation.

SECTION 7. *Prohibited Acts.* – To protect the ecological, cultural, and tourism value of Dodiongan Falls and its surrounding areas, the following acts shall be strictly prohibited within the eco-tourism protected site:

1. Littering, dumping, or disposal of any form of waste that may harm the environment or degrade the natural beauty of the area;

2. Unauthorized construction, alteration, or expansion of structures, including roads, buildings, or commercial establishments, without prior approval from the City Government of Iligan and relevant agencies;
3. Cutting, damaging, or destroying trees and other vegetation, or gathering flora and fauna, whether for personal, commercial, or recreational purposes, without proper permits;
4. Hunting, trapping, or harming wildlife, including disturbing natural habitats;
5. Mining, quarrying, or any form of resource extraction within or near the protected area;
6. Vandalism or defacement of natural formations, signage, cultural markers, or public facilities within the site;
7. Conducting tourism or commercial activities without proper accreditation or clearance from the City Government and concerned agencies;
8. Any other activity that may compromise the ecological integrity, safety, or cultural significance of the area, as determined by the City Government or relevant authorities.

SECTION 8. Penalties. -- Any person found violating the provisions of this Act shall be penalized in accordance with applicable laws, including but not limited to the following:

1. Republic Act (RA) No. 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000,
2. RA No. 7586 or the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) Act of 1992, as amended by Republic Act No. 11038 or the Expanded NIPAS Act of 2018,
3. RA No. 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act,

4. RA No. 10066 or the National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009, and

5. Relevant local ordinances and environmental regulations.

Civil, criminal, and administrative sanctions shall be imposed, as provided under these laws, without prejudice to the filing of separate actions for damages, injunctions, or other remedies under existing laws.

SECTION 9. *Funding.* – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the available funds of the City Government of Iligan and concerned national government agencies. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued development, management, and conservation of Dodiongan Falls shall be included in the annual budgets of the implementing agencies, subject to the usual budgetary processes.

SECTION 10. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions shall not be affected and shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SECTION 11. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,