

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Philippines

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 2944



Introduced by Representative Kathryn Joyce F. Gorriceta, M.D.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Second District of Iloilo is endowed with a wealth of historical landmarks, cultural treasures, natural landscapes, and vibrant communities. These attributes, if harnessed effectively, have the potential to significantly uplift the economic and social development of the district through sustainable tourism. However, despite this promising potential, the tourism sector in the district remains largely underdeveloped. This can be attributed to fragmented planning, limited infrastructure support, and a glaring absence of a coordinated and strategic promotional framework.

This legislative measure is borne out of insights and advocacies that emerged from the Youth Forum on Heritage for Segundo Distrito Iloilo, conducted in partnership with the National Commission on Culture and the Arts (NCCA) last May 20–22, 2024. During this event, young stakeholders were given the opportunity to engage in cultural mapping activities, which revealed significant yet underrecognized historical and cultural assets spread across our municipalities. These findings underscored a crucial gap: the lack of public awareness and systematic recognition of our district's unique cultural heritage, which limits its potential to be appreciated and developed as part of a broader tourism framework.

Thus, this bill proposes the creation of the Second District Tourism Development Program, which shall serve as a legal and institutional mechanism to ensure the sustainable, inclusive, and culturally grounded development of the district's tourism sector. The program aims to integrate local planning,

establish clear standards for infrastructure and tourism activities, and foster multi-sectoral collaboration among local governments, communities, cultural agencies, and the private sector.

More importantly, this initiative is envisioned not just as a means of promoting tourism for economic gain, but as a platform to preserve and celebrate our heritage, create jobs, open livelihood opportunities, and foster a stronger sense of pride and identity among the people of the Second District.

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


Kathryn Joyce B. Gorriceta, M.D.

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AN ACT ESTABLISHING A COMPREHENSIVE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION PROGRAM IN THE SECOND DISTRICT OF ILOILO, CREATING THE SECOND DISTRICT TOURISM DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. This Act shall be known as the “**Second District of Iloilo Tourism Development Act of 2025.**”

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. It is the declared policy of the State to:

- a. Promote sustainable tourism as a driver of inclusive economic growth;
- b. Enhance the competitiveness of tourism destinations;
- c. Conserve and protect cultural, historical, and environmental heritage;
- d. Develop tourism infrastructure and facilities compliant with national and international standards;
- e. Encourage private sector participation and investment in local tourism.

SECTION 3. Definition of Terms. As used in this Act:

- a. **Tourism Development** – refers to strategic planning, infrastructure development, product creation, promotion, and management of tourism resources.
- b. **Second District of Iloilo** – refers to the municipalities of Alimodian, Leganes, Leon, San Miguel, Sta. Barbara, New Lucena, Pavia, Zarraga, as defined by law.
- c. **Tourism Enterprise** – any business engaged in providing tourism-related goods or services, including but not limited to accommodation, transport, tours, events, food and beverage, crafts, and souvenirs.
- d. **Sustainable Tourism** – tourism that meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future.

SECTION 4. Creation of the Second District Tourism Development Council (SDTDC):

A Second District Tourism Development Council (SDTDC) is hereby established, which shall serve as the primary planning, coordinating, and implementing body for tourism development in the district.

Composition

The SDTDC shall be composed of:

- The District Representative of the Second District of Iloilo, as Chairperson;
- The Provincial Governor of Iloilo, as Vice-Chairperson;
- The Municipal Mayors of the Second District of the Province of Iloilo;
- The Regional Director of the Department of Tourism (DOT) Region VI;
- The Regional Director of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) Region VI;
- The Regional Director of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Region VI;
- A maximum of three representative from each of the following sectors:
 - a. Private tourism enterprises
 - b. Cultural heritage organizations
 - c. Indigenous Peoples' organizations (if applicable)
 - d. Academe with programs related to tourism
 - e. Local chambers of commerce and industry

The SDTDC may invite technical experts or representatives from other agencies as resource persons as necessary.

SECTION 5. Powers and Functions of the SDTDC. The SDTDC shall:

a. Formulate a **Second District Tourism Development Master Plan** covering:

- Site inventory and assessment;
- Infrastructure requirements;
- Tourism circuits and thematic routes;
- Investment promotion strategies;
- Cultural heritage and environmental protection measures;
- Community involvement and livelihood programs.

b. Identify, prioritize, and recommend infrastructure projects to relevant national agencies for funding and implementation, including:

- Roads and access improvements;
- Tourism support facilities (e.g., rest areas, signage, visitor/pasalubong centers);
- Preservation, restoration, and maintenance of heritage and/or cultural sites.

c. Establish standards and guidelines for sustainable tourism practices consistent with national laws and international conventions.

d. Undertake marketing and promotional campaigns in partnership with the Department of Tourism and the private sector.

e. Facilitate training and capacity-building for local tourism stakeholders, including tour guides, local artisans, and entrepreneurs.

f. Monitor and evaluate tourism projects to ensure compliance with national standards and sustainability principles.

g. Prepare an annual report on the status of tourism development in the district for submission to the House of Representatives and the Department of Tourism.

SECTION 6. Second District Tourism Development Master Plan. Within twelve (12) months from the effectivity of this Act, the SDTDC shall prepare and submit to the Department of Tourism a **Second District Tourism Development Master Plan** containing:

- a. Comprehensive tourism resource inventory;
- b. Market analysis and competitive positioning;
- c. Infrastructure and logistics plans with cost estimates;
- d. Proposed tourism products, circuits, and experiences;
- e. Investment opportunities for public-private partnerships;
- f. Community participation mechanisms;
- g. Environmental impact assessments and mitigation measures;
- h. Implementation timelines and funding requirements.

The Master Plan shall be reviewed and updated every five (5) years.

SECTION 7. Creation of the Second District Tourism Development Fund. There is hereby established a **Second District Tourism Development Fund**, which shall be used exclusively for:

- a. Preparation and updating of the Tourism Development Master Plan;
- b. Implementation of infrastructure projects prioritized under the Plan;
- c. Conduct of capacity-building programs for tourism stakeholders;

- d. Tourism marketing and promotions;
- e. Environmental conservation measures related to tourism sites.

SECTION 8. Funding Source. The Fund shall be sourced from:

- a. Annual appropriations under the General Appropriations Act (GAA);
- b. Contributions or counterpart funds from the Provincial Government of Iloilo and constituent municipalities;
- c. Grants, donations, or endowments from domestic or international entities;
- d. Proceeds from tourism activities and services initiated under this Act;
- e. Public-Private Partnerships, where applicable.

SECTION 9. Initial Appropriation. The amount of 10 Million Pesos (₱10,000,000.00) is hereby appropriated for the initial implementation of this Act. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary shall be included in the annual GAA.

SECTION 10. Implementing Rules and Regulations. Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Tourism, in coordination with the SDTDC and relevant government agencies, shall issue the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) necessary for the effective implementation of this Act.

SECTION 11. Separability Clause. If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 12. Repealing Clause. All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules, and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 13. Effectivity. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,