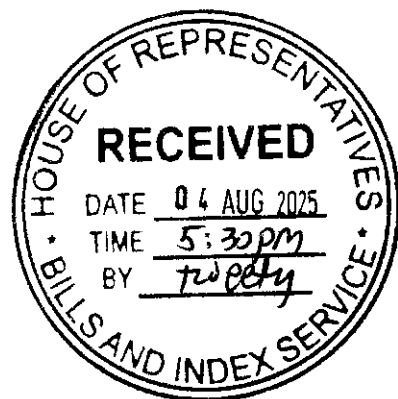




Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 2997



Introduced by Representative Carlos Andes Loria

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to declare the Rapu-Rapu Island in the Municipality of Rapu-Rapu, Province of Albay, an ecotourism site and appropriate funds for its development.

Republic Act No. 9593, otherwise known as the "*The Tourism Act of 2009*," declares tourism as an indispensable element of the national economy and an effective tool for fostering economic growth, generating employment, and promoting environmental and cultural preservation. The law mandates the development of ecologically sustainable, culturally sensitive, economically viable, and socially equitable tourism programs and projects throughout the country.

Rapu-Rapu Island, located in the Municipality of Rapu-Rapu in the Province of Albay, is home to a wealth of natural attractions that make it a prime candidate for ecotourism development. The island features stunning coastal beaches such as Rizal Beach, Igang Beach, and Mangal Beach, as well as unique natural formations including Pototan Cave and Saltahan Falls. Panoramic views from Binanderahan and the scenic landscapes of Babat Point and Barangay Mananao further add to its appeal as an unspoiled destination for nature-based tourism.

Despite its potential, the island remains underdeveloped and requires strategic support to enhance its tourism infrastructure, protect its environment,

and uplift the welfare of its local communities. While the local government has made efforts to promote the area, national government support is needed to ensure the implementation of a sustainable and inclusive tourism development plan that will maximize the island's potential without compromising its ecological integrity.

The proposal to declare Rapu-Rapu Island as an ecotourism site includes directing the Municipality of Rapu-Rapu, in coordination with the Department of Tourism (DOT), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), and other relevant agencies, to develop a tourism master plan for the island within one year from the effectivity of the Act. The plan shall prioritize the construction and maintenance of appropriate infrastructure and tourism facilities, while ensuring the conservation of natural resources and the participation of local communities.

Likewise, the DOT and its attached agencies shall include Rapu-Rapu Island in all domestic and international tourism promotion programs and provide technical and financial assistance to the local government. Funding for the implementation of the Act shall be sourced from the Municipality's internal revenue allotment and, when necessary, from the internally generated funds of the DOT.

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



CARLOS ANDES LORIA



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **2997**

Introduced by Representative Caloy Andes Loria

AN ACT
DECLARING THE RAPU-RAPU ISLAND IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF
RAPU-RAPU, PROVINCE OF ALBAY, AN ECOTOURISM SITE AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. The Rapu-Rapu Island in the Municipality of Rapu-Rapu, Province of Albay is declared an ecotourism site. Its development shall be prioritized by the Municipality of Rapu-Rapu, subject to the rules and regulations governing the development of ecotourism sites issued by the Department of Tourism (DOT), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and other government agencies.

SEC. 2. Within one (1) year after the approval of this Act, the Municipality of Rapu-Rapu shall, in coordination with the DOT, DENR, and

concerned agencies of the government, prepare a tourism development plan that includes the construction, installation and maintenance of appropriate infrastructure and facilities to enhance tourism in the area: *Provided*, That the development plan must ensure the preservation and conservation of the natural beauty and resources in the area.

SEC. 3. The DOT and its attached agencies shall take immediate steps to supervise and assist the Municipality of Rapu-Rapu in the implementation of the development plan with due consideration to the natural characteristics of the Rapu-Rapu Island and incorporate the same in its tourism development program for the calendar year immediately succeeding the approval of this Act. It shall also include the Rapu-Rapu Island in all its international, national, regional, and local promotion programs.

SEC. 4. The amount necessary for the effective implementation of this Act shall be charged against the annual internal revenue allotment for the development projects of the Municipality of Rapu-Rapu and augmented, if necessary and available, by the internally generated funds of the DOT.

SEC. 5. All laws, rules, regulations, proclamations, executive orders or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are repealed, amended, or revised accordingly.

SEC. 6. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,