

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Constitution Hills, Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 3547

Introduced by Rep. FAUSTINO 'BOJIE' G. DY III

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The province of Isabela was named in honor of "Her Royal Highness Queen Isabella II" of Spain. Isabela is the second largest province of the Philippines and the largest in Luzon in terms of land area at 10,665 square kilometers. The province is known as the "Rice and Corn Granary of Luzon," and is considered the trade and industrial center of Northeastern Luzon.

Aside from agriculture, the tourism sector is also a source of economic growth and opportunity in Isabela. The province is home to the following tourist destinations: Aguinaldo Shrine, Bonsai Forest, Camp Samal, Crocodile Sanctuary of San Mariano, Dibulo Falls, Dicotcotan Beach, Fuyot Springs National Park, Giant Butaka, Honeymoon Island, Landmark of Heroes, Maconaon Falls, Magat Dam Tourism Complex, Mororan River, Palanan Rainforest, and Sinavulluan Caves.¹

There are a lot of other areas in the province with tourism potential. However, government support is needed to develop these areas and to provide access to local and foreign tourists. Hence, this measure.

This bill seeks to identify various Tourism Development Areas in the Province of Isabela and the creation of the Isabela Tourism Council. This will pave the way for the formulation of a Tourism Development Plan for the Province and its incorporation into the Department of Tourism's National Tourism Development Plan and the development of support facilities and infrastructure that will greatly enhance the Province's tourism sector, boost the provincial economy, and improve the quality of life of its residents.

With the assistance of the Department of Tourism, the province of Isabela will be given a chance to achieve its maximum potential as an attractive and viable tourism destination.

¹ <http://provinceofisabela.ph/index.php/tourism/attractions-and-tourist-destinations?showall=&limitstart=>

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


FAUSTINO 'BOJIE' G. DY III

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AN ACT
IDENTIFYING TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AREAS IN THE PROVINCE OF
ISABELA, MANDATING SUPPORT FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT,
CREATING THE ISABELA TOURISM COUNCIL, AND APPROPRIATING
FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. Declaration of Policy. – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote a tourism industry that is ecologically sustainable, responsible, participative, culturally sensitive, economically viable, and equitable for local communities. To this end, the State shall endeavor to provide the proper mechanisms and infrastructure for sustainable tourism development. It shall develop and promote certain areas and sites identified as tourist destinations or attractions in order to drive and propel inclusive growth throughout the country.

Pursuant thereto, all areas within the Province of Isabela endowed with natural beauty or historical and cultural significance, with either existing or potential integrated leisure facilities developed for one or more tourism purpose, shall be considered tourism development areas.

SECTION 2. Identification and Declaration of Tourism Sites. – Areas in the Province of Isabela that have potential for tourism shall be declared as ecotourism, cultural heritage tourism, health and wellness tourism, general leisure tourism, or mixed use tourism sites after consultation with the Department of Tourism (DOT): Provided, That areas in environmentally protected areas shall not be declared tourism sites without consultation with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The survey and verification of the areas shall be conducted by the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority, in coordination with the Provincial Government of Isabela.

SECTION 3. Isabela Tourism Council. – There is hereby created the Isabela Tourism Council, hereinafter referred to as Council, which shall be the primary policy-making, planning and coordinating body in the development of tourism in the Province of Isabela and the administration of tourism sites therein. It shall be composed of the following members:

- a) Provincial Governor of Isabela, as Chairperson;
- b) Municipal Mayors of all the municipalities and cities of the Province of Isabela, who shall elect from among themselves the Council's Vice Chairperson;
- c) Member of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Isabela, duly designated by such body; and
- d) Two (2) representatives from the private sector, appointed by the Chairperson of the Council, who shall serve for a period of two (2) years.

The Provincial Government of Isabela shall provide a Secretariat for the Council including the funding necessary to cover expenses for the performance of its official functions and activities.

SECTION 4. Functions of the Council. – The Council shall have the following functions:

- a) Identify and declare areas as tourism sites;
- b) Formulate programs and recommendations and manage local resources and funds to develop local tourism facilities and attractions;
- c) Assist in the regulation and supervision of tourism-oriented establishments, thereby ensuring wholesome and clean tourism activities;
- d) Assist in monitoring the implementation of the Local Government Code on the licensing of tourism establishments in the locality to ascertain safe and enjoyable stay of travelers;
- e) Strictly enforce health and sanitary standards in public restrooms frequented by public utility vehicles and tourist transport services, i.e., gasoline stations and restaurants along main highways and bus stops; and
- f) Perform any other duties in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Department of the Interior and Local Government.

SECTION 5. Isabela Tourism Development Plan. – The DOT shall, in coordination with the Council and concerned local government units (LGUs) and agencies of the government, prepare a tourism development plan for the Province of Isabela and incorporate the same in its overall tourism development plan pursuant to Republic Act No. 9593, otherwise known as the "Tourism Act of 2009". The development plan shall be jointly implemented with the concerned LGUs and the Council.

The concerned LGUs shall, in coordination with the DOT, DENR, the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority and other concerned agencies of the government, delineate well defined geographic areas within the tourism sites and coordinate the integrated development of these sites for the optimal use of natural assets and attractions, as well as of existing facilities: Provided, That said development plan shall ensure the preservation of the ecological balance and natural beauty of the areas.

Upon the promulgation of this Act, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) shall, in coordination with the DOT and the Council, implement the construction and improvement of roads and other infrastructure necessary in the development of tourism sites and shall incorporate the same in its infrastructure program.

SECTION 6. Appropriations. – The Secretaries of DOT, DPWH, DENR and Department of Transportation (DOTr) shall include in their respective Department's program the implementation of this Act, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act and shall augment such allocation with internally generated funds of the DOT.

SECTION 7. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Council shall, in consultation with the DOT, DENR, DPWH, DOTr, the National Economic and Development Authority and other concerned government agencies and stakeholders, promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the proper implementation of this Act.

SECTION 8. Separability Clause. – If any provision of this Act shall be declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 9. Repealing Clause. – All laws, rules, regulations, executive orders, proclamations, presidential decrees and other issuances inconsistent with any of the provisions of this Act are hereby deemed repealed or amended accordingly.

SECTION 10. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,