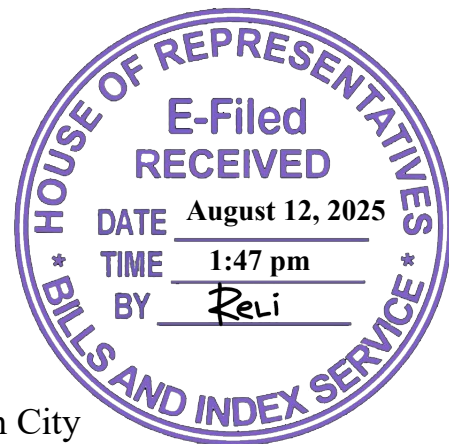




Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Constitution Hills, Batasan Complex, Quezon City



TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **3568**

Introduced by Representatives **ALFEL M. BASCUG** and **EDDIEBONG G. PLAZA**

AN ACT
DECLARING THE LAKE HIMBANG LOCATED IN THE
MUNICIPALITY OF TALACOGON, PROVINCE OF AGUSAN DEL
SUR AS AN ECOTOURISM SITE

Explanatory Note

This bill seeks to declare Lake Himbang in the Municipality of Talacogon, Province of Agusan del Sur as an ecotourism site

Agusan del Sur is a must-see biodiversity hotspot and a promising paradise found in the northeastern part of Mindanao. It is a land of hundreds of lakes and rivers which are fishing enclaves and a land of plains, rolling terrain and mountain ranges producing varied and abundant mineral deposits. Situated also in this paradise land is the famous Agusan Marsh which is known to be the largest marshland in the Philippines.

Lake Himbang located in the Municipality of Talacogon is one of the never-forgotten and breath-taking sceneries in Agusan del Sur. It is just more than hour's drive from the Philippine-Japan Friendship Highway to Talacogon. The lake is an alternative destination to Agusan Marsh. The thrills of riding on a pump boat or a dug-out canoe while admiring the breath-taking lakeshore scenery and Manobo floating huts are some of the attractions offered by this hidden paradise.

This hidden gem has been a tourist attraction to locals but has never been publicly exposed to other tourists in the Philippines and the world. With the lack of needed development and promotion, the tourism potential of the place has been curtailed. Thus, in order for this gem to be developed and become a fully grown tourism destination, it should be declared as an ecotourism site. The development of Lake Himbang into an ecotourism site will not just enhance its aesthetic value but will also boost local government income and create employment opportunities for the people of Agusan del Sur.

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



ALFEL M. BASCUG
1ST District, Agusan del Sur



EDDIEBONG G. PLAZA
2ND District, Agusan del Sur



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

SECTION 1. The Lake Himbang located in the Municipality of Talacogon, Province of Agusan del Sur, is hereby declared an ecotourism site. Pursuant thereto, its development shall be prioritized and supported by the Department of Tourism (DOT), subject to the rules and regulations governing the development of ecotourism sites.

SEC. 2. Within one (1) year after the approval of this Act, the municipal government of Talacogon shall, in coordination with the DOT, Department of Environment and Natural Resources 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 area: Provided, That said development plan shall ensure the preservation and conservation of the natural beauty and resources of the area: *Provided, further,* That the implementation of the tourism development plan shall

be included in the budget of the municipal government of Talacogon.

SECTION 3. The DOT shall assist the municipal government of Talacogon in the implementation of the tourism development plan by providing technical assistance in tourism capacity building. It shall also include the Lake Himbang in its national and regional promotion programs.

SECTION 4. The funding for the implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual budget of the municipal government of Talacogon. The DOT may augment such allocation with internally-generated funds.

SECTION 5. Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the municipal government of Talacogon shall, in consultation with the DOT and concerned agencies of the government, promulgate rules and regulations to implement this Act.

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

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

Approved,