

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **4002**



Introduced by **Representative RAYMOND ADRIAN SALCEDA**

AN ACT
DECLARING MOUNT QUIASOG LOCATED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF LIBON,
PROVINCE OF ALBAY, AN ECOTOURISM SITE, PROVIDING FOR ITS
CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Municipality of Libon in the Province of Albay is strategically located on the western flank of the Bicol Peninsula, with a diverse landscape that stretches from coastal fishing communities along the Lagonoy Gulf and Pantao coast to fertile inland plains and upland ridges. Rising prominently within this landscape is Mount Quiasog, a natural highland feature long known to local residents for its panoramic views, watershed function, and cultural significance.

Mountains like Quiasog serve as critical ecological frontiers. They are watershed catchments, ensuring steady freshwater supply for downstream communities and farms, and they harbor biodiversity that is increasingly threatened by human activity. For Libon, a predominantly agricultural municipality, the conservation of Mount Quiasog's forest and watershed is directly tied to sustaining irrigation and domestic water needs in the lowlands.

At the same time, Mount Quiasog possesses ecotourism potential. Its ridge and forest environment can support regulated hiking, trekking, and camping activities, while its vantage points offer sweeping views of the Quinale Plains, the West Philippine Sea, and neighboring municipalities. In recent years, community-based trekking and eco-adventure activities in other parts of Albay — such as the Quitinday Hills in Camalig and Buhawi Hills in Pio Duran — have demonstrated how upland natural sites, if properly managed, can generate livelihood, attract visitors, and build environmental awareness.

Yet Mount Quiasog remains without a clear legal framework for protection and development. Without intervention, the mountain faces risks from illegal logging, unsustainable farming, hunting, and unregulated visitor access. These activities can degrade

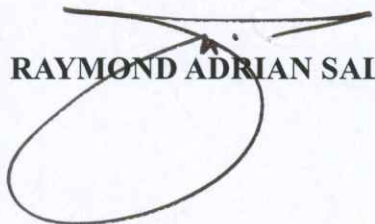
biodiversity, diminish watershed functions, and erode the very ecological and cultural values that give the mountain its importance.

National policy strongly supports the declaration of ecotourism areas. Republic Act No. 9593, the *Tourism Act of 2009*, directs the Department of Tourism to develop tourism areas that are ecologically sustainable and community-based. Republic Act No. 7586, the *National Integrated Protected Areas System Act of 1992* as amended, and Republic Act No. 9147, the *Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act*, provide the legal framework for protecting watersheds, biodiversity, and habitats in sensitive upland areas. Executive Order No. 111 institutionalizes the National Ecotourism Strategy, emphasizing low-impact tourism and community participation.

This bill therefore seeks to declare Mount Quiasog in Libon, Albay as an ecotourism site. It mandates the Department of Tourism, in coordination with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Department of Public Works and Highways, the Provincial Government of Albay, and the Municipal Government of Libon, to prepare a Sustainable Ecotourism Development and Management Plan. This plan will ensure that visitor facilities are consistent with carrying capacity, protect the mountain's watershed and biodiversity, regulate recreational activities, and establish benefit-sharing mechanisms so that local communities directly gain from ecotourism.

By declaring Mount Quiasog an ecotourism site, this measure will help secure Libon's watershed, create sustainable livelihood opportunities, and strengthen western Albay's position as an eco-adventure corridor — alongside Trinity Islands in Oas, Batong Langoyon in Ligao City, and Buhawi Hills in Pio Duran.

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



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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 “Mount Quiasog Ecotourism Act.”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote ecotourism as an engine of inclusive economic growth while conserving biodiversity, preserving cultural heritage, and protecting watersheds. Towards this end, the State shall ensure that Mount Quiasog is developed and managed in accordance with the principles of environmental integrity, cultural preservation, and community participation.

SEC. 3. *Ecotourism Site Declaration.* The Mount Quiasog, located in the Municipality of Libon, Province of Albay, is hereby declared an ecotourism site.

SEC. 4. *Development and Management.* The Department of Tourism (DOT), in coordination with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), the Provincial Government of Albay, and the Municipal Government of Libon, shall prepare and implement a Sustainable Ecotourism Development and Management Plan for Mount Quiasog.

The plan shall include, but not be limited to:

(a) the protection and conservation of the mountain’s watershed, forest cover, and biodiversity;

(b) the establishment of eco-friendly infrastructure such as trails, view decks, signage, sanitation systems, and interpretive centers consistent with carrying capacity;

(c) the regulation of hiking, camping, and tourism activities to prevent environmental degradation;

(d) the preservation of cultural practices and indigenous knowledge associated with the mountain; and

(e) the creation of community-based enterprises, such as guiding services, homestays, and handicrafts, to ensure that residents of Libon directly benefit from ecotourism.

SEC. 5. *Prohibited Acts.* The following acts shall be prohibited within the Mount Quiasog ecotourism area:

(a) dumping of waste and pollutants;

(b) illegal logging, slash-and-burn farming, quarrying, or mining;

(c) hunting or collection of wildlife species in violation of existing laws;

(d) unregulated construction of permanent structures inconsistent with the ecotourism plan; and

(e) any activity that degrades biodiversity or endangers the watershed.

Violators shall be subject to penalties under existing laws, including Republic Act No. 7586 (*National Integrated Protected Areas System Act, as amended*), Republic Act No. 9147 (*Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act*), and Republic Act No. 9003 (*Ecological Solid Waste Management Act*).

SEC. 6. *Funding.* The amount necessary to implement this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act under the budget of the DOT, DENR, and DPWH. The Provincial Government of Albay and the Municipal Government of Libon shall provide counterpart funds.

SEC. 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DOT, DENR, DPWH, the Provincial Government of Albay, and the Municipal Government of Libon shall jointly promulgate the rules and regulations necessary for the implementation of this Act.

SEC. 8. *Separability Clause.* If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 9. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,