

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

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4041



Introduced by **Representative RAYMOND ADRIAN SALCEDA**

**AN ACT
DECLARING THE TRINITY ISLANDS LOCATED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF
OAS, PROVINCE OF ALBAY, AN ECOTOURISM SITE, PROVIDING FOR ITS
DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Municipality of Oas, Albay, is situated on the western coast of the Bicol Peninsula and is home to rich coastal and marine resources that remain underdeveloped for tourism and conservation. Among its most notable natural assets are the **Trinity Islands**, a small cluster of offshore islets lying off the coast of Oas, which feature clear waters, coral reefs, and diverse marine life. Known locally to fisherfolk and divers, the Trinity Islands have the potential to become a premier **marine ecotourism destination** in Albay.

At present, however, the Trinity Islands lack a formal management and protection framework. Without clear regulation, the islands and surrounding waters are exposed to threats such as destructive fishing, unregulated tourism, and marine pollution. These risks not only endanger biodiversity but also undermine the long-term livelihoods of coastal communities that depend on healthy marine ecosystems.

National policy strongly supports the development of ecotourism areas that balance environmental protection with local economic growth. Republic Act No. 9593, or the *Tourism Act of 2009*, mandates the Department of Tourism to promote sustainable tourism anchored on ecological integrity and community participation. Republic Act No. 8550, or the *Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998*, as amended, together with Republic Act No. 9147 (*Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act*) and Republic Act No. 9003 (*Ecological Solid Waste Management Act*), provide the framework for conserving marine biodiversity and regulating resource use in coastal waters.

This bill therefore seeks to **declare the Trinity Islands in Oas, Albay as an ecotourism site**. It mandates the Department of Tourism, in coordination with the Department

of Environment and Natural Resources, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, the Provincial Government of Albay, and the Municipal Government of Oas, to prepare and implement a **Sustainable Ecotourism Development and Management Plan** for the islands. This plan will include the designation of mooring areas to prevent reef damage, zoning for diving and snorkeling activities, the installation of sanitation and visitor facilities, marine biodiversity monitoring, and the creation of community-based livelihood programs for fisherfolk and coastal residents.

The formal recognition of the Trinity Islands as an ecotourism site will secure their conservation while positioning Oas and western Albay within the **eco-marine tourism circuit** of the Bicol Region, together with Pantao Port in Libon, Batong Langoyon in Ligao City, and Buhawi Hills in Pio Duran. This integrated approach will enhance inclusive local development, strengthen coastal resource management, and showcase Albay's natural and cultural wealth to the nation and the world.

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 “Trinity Islands Ecotourism Act.”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* It is declared the policy of the State to promote ecotourism as a tool for sustainable economic growth, environmental protection, and cultural preservation. Towards this end, the State shall ensure that the development of the Trinity Islands is consistent with biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, and community empowerment.

SEC. 3. *Ecotourism Site Declaration.* The Trinity Islands, located in the Municipality of Oas, Province of Albay, are 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 Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), the Provincial Government of Albay, and the Municipal Government of Oas, shall prepare and implement a Sustainable Ecotourism Development and Management Plan for the Trinity Islands. The plan shall:

(a) conserve and protect marine biodiversity, coral reefs, mangroves, and surrounding waters;

(b) regulate visitor access and diving, snorkeling, and boating activities consistent with carrying capacity;

(c) establish eco-friendly infrastructure such as mooring buoys, sanitation facilities, and interpretive centers;

(d) promote sustainable livelihoods for fisherfolk and coastal residents, including guiding, homestays, and handicrafts; and

(e) integrate climate change adaptation measures such as coastal resource monitoring and disaster preparedness systems.

SEC. 5. *Prohibited Acts.* To preserve the ecological and cultural integrity of the Trinity Islands, the following acts shall be prohibited within the ecotourism area:

(a) dumping of waste and pollutants into the water or surrounding areas;

(b) destructive fishing practices, including dynamite fishing, cyanide fishing, and the use of fine-mesh nets;

(c) quarrying, illegal logging, or other extractive activities;

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

(e) any activity that degrades biodiversity or threatens the marine ecosystem.

Violators shall be subject to penalties under existing laws, including Republic Act No. 8550 (*Philippine Fisheries Code*), Republic Act No. 9147 (*Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act*), Republic Act No. 9003 (*Ecological Solid Waste Management Act*), and Republic Act No. 7586 (*National Integrated Protected Areas System Act, as amended*).

SEC. 6. *Funding.* The amount necessary to implement this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act. The DOT, DENR, BFAR, and concerned LGUs may also mobilize resources from ecotourism fees, grants, donations, and partnerships with the private sector.

SEC. 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DOT, DENR, BFAR, the Provincial Government of Albay, and the Municipal Government of Oas 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,