



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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **4481**



INTRODUCED BY REP. STEPHEN JAMES T. TAN

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Cathedral Cave in the Municipality of Matuginao, Province of Samar stands out as a significant natural treasure. Its expansive chambers, distinctive rock formations, and rich biodiversity offer stunning natural beauty and avenues for both ecological and cultural discovery. However, despite its promise, thus potentially major tourist attraction remains largely untapped. This Bill proposes to declare Cathedral Cave located in Brgy. Mabuligon, Municipality of Matuginao as a nature-based tourism destination.

By declaring Cathedral Cave a nature-based tourism destination, the State seeks to ensure the preservation of its ecological integrity while promoting it as a sustainable tourism site. This initiative will not only showcase the Municipality of Matuginao's natural wonders but will also create livelihood opportunities, strengthen community involvement, and support the province's broader eco-tourism strategy.

Promoting this site as a nature-based tourism destination will bring greater visibility to Samar and allow the province to showcase its natural beauty.

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

REP. STEPHEN JAMES T. TAN

Republic of the Philippines
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TWENTIETH CONGRESS
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HOUSE BILL NO. 4481

INTRODUCED BY REP. STEPHEN JAMES T. TAN

**AN ACT DECLARING CATHEDRAL CAVE IN BARANGAY MABULIGON,
MUNICIPALITY OF MATUGINAO, A NATURE-BASED TOURISM DESTINATION**

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 “*Cathedral Cave Nature-based Tourism Destination Act.*”

SECTION 2. *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 infrastructures for sustainable tourism development. It shall promote and develop certain areas and sites identified as tourist destinations or attractions or having potential for tourism to drive and propel inclusive growth throughout the country.

SECTION 3. *Cathedral Cave as Nature-based Tourism Destination.* – Cathedral Cave in Barangay Mabuligon, Municipality of Matuginao is hereby declared as a nature-based tourism destination. This site shall be developed and promoted for its ecological significance, cultural value, and recreational potential, with tourism activities designed to highlight its natural beauty while ensuring environmental protection and sustainability. Their development shall be incorporated in the Department of Tourism’s (DOT) National Tourism Development Plan (NTDP) successor plan for 2023–2028 and shall be jointly implemented with the Municipal Government of Matuginao and the Provincial Tourism Office of Samar. The construction and maintenance of infrastructure facilities in the area shall be a shared responsibility of the DOT and the concerned local government units, with emphasis on sustainable development and resource management.

SECTION 4. *Appropriations.* - The DOT, DENR, DPWH, and LGU shall include in its Annual Investment Program (AIP) the implementation of this Act, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 5. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - The Samar Tourism Council, after due consultation with the DOT, DENR, DPWH, LGUs, and other stakeholders, shall promulgate the rules and regulations for the proper implementation of this Act within sixty (60) days after its effectivity. Provided, That the law shall take effect after sixty (60) days with or without the IRR.

SECTION 6. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 7. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, and issuances, proclamations, rules and regulations, and other issuances contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act shall be deemed amended accordingly.

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

Approved,