



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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4484



INTRODUCED BY REP. STEPHEN JAMES T. TAN

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This Bill proposes to declare Sulpan Cave and Underground River located in Brgy. Barruz, Municipality of Matuginao as a nature-based tourism destination.

The Municipality of Matuginao is blessed with numerous natural resources that can serve as pillars of sustainable tourism. One of these is the Sulpan Cave and Underground River. The site features remarkable geological formations and a subterranean river system.

Sulpan Cave and its Underground River hold significant promise as a nature-based tourism spot, providing avenues for eco-tourism, scientific study, and cultural enrichment. By declaring Sulpan Cave and Underground River 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 be a driver of inclusive growth for the people of Matuginao and the entire Province of Samar.

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


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**AN ACT DECLARING SULPAN CAVE AND UNDERGROUND RIVER LOCATED
IN BARANGAY BARRUZ, 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 “*Sulpan Cave and
Underground River 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. *Sulpan Cave and Underground River as Nature-based
Tourism Destination.*** – Sulpan Cave and Underground River in Barangay Barruz,
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,