

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Constitution Hills, Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **5542**



Introduced by: **REPRESENTATIVE ERIC L. OLIVAREZ**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Tourism is one of the key drivers of economic growth and a significant source of livelihood in the Philippines. It not only contributes to the national economy through employment, investment, and trade, but also enhances cultural exchange, community development, and environmental awareness. However, despite the country's vast potential and rich diversity of natural and cultural attractions, tourism development remains uneven- concentrated primarily in well-known destinations, while many cities and municipalities remain untapped and underdeveloped.

This bill seeks to institutionalize the **"One Town, One Tourist Attraction Program (OTAP)"** to promote inclusive and sustainable local tourism development. The program encourages every city and municipality to identify, develop, and promote at least one distinct tourist attraction that embodies its unique cultural heritage, natural beauty, or creative innovation. Through this initiative, local governments can strengthen community identity, generate employment, attract investments, and stimulate local enterprise.

The proposed measure mandates the Department of Tourism (DOT), in coordination with the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), and Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), to extend technical, financial, and infrastructure support to local government units (LGUs) in developing their tourism assets. The OTAP shall also provide marketing platforms, sustainability programs, and incentives to towns, individuals, and business owners who contribute to the program's objectives.

By ensuring that every town and city has at least one developed and marketable tourist attraction, the OTAP aims to decentralize tourism activity, balance economic growth across regions, and encourage responsible tourism practices that preserve both the environment and local culture.

In sum, this measure will serve as a catalyst for countryside development, community empowerment, and national economic recovery through tourism. Its implementation aligns with the goals of the Tourism Act of 2009 (Republic Act No. 9593) and supports the national agenda for sustainable and inclusive growth.

An equivalent measure has been filed in the **Senate**, signifying the shared legislative intent to institutionalize the One Town, One Tourist Attraction Program as a means to strengthen local tourism and drive national development.

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


ERIC L. OLIVAREZ

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AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A “ONE TOWN, ONE TOURIST ATTRACTION PROGRAM” TO
PROMOTE TOURISM AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the “One Town, One Tourist Attraction Program (OTAP) Act.”

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. – In cognizance of the role of tourism as an indispensable element of national economy and an industry of national interest and importance, it is the declared policy of the State to promote tourism through policies and programs that drive inclusive local economic activity and boost national economic growth. Towards this end, the State shall encourage all cities and municipalities to develop potential tourist destinations and attractions that showcase beautiful and bountiful natural resources, and man-made attractions in their locality.

SECTION 3. Objectives. – This Act aims to:

- (a) Help boost the local economy by developing at least one potential tourist destination per city or municipality;
- (b) Provide the necessary infrastructure to access and develop the tourist destination, including the development of access roads to nearby areas for other possible economic activities;
- (c) Provide a free platform to promote and showcase or market the tourist destination, including the creation of advertising or marketing materials and technical support when necessary;
- (d) Collaborate with tourism business owners in effectively marketing the tourist destination and highlighting its most attractive and innovative attributes;
- (e) Establish sustainability programs and institute mechanisms to preserve and protect tourist destinations;
- (f) Create town tourism business model guidelines for local governments; and
- (g) Provide incentive packages to towns, individuals and business owners to encourage participation and create measures and

strategies to entice tourists to visit local tourist destinations.

SECTION 4. One Town, One Tourist Attraction Program (OTAP). – There is hereby established a One Town, One Tourist Attraction Program (OTAP). OTAP is a stimulus program for the promotion and development of local tourism in the grassroots and countryside, through the creation of tourist destinations and cultural attractions, particularly in the city or municipality without a tourism program. Cities and municipalities with existing tourism programs are entitled to rehabilitation packages to maximize their tourism potential.

SECTION 5. Program Components. – The Department of Tourism (DOT), Department of Public Works and Highways (DWPH), Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), and Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), in partnership with the local government units, shall provide the following assistance to cities and municipalities:

- (a) Identification of tourist destinations and cultural attractions;
- (b) Creation of tourism action plan and program for the development of tourist destinations and cultural attractions;
- (c) Development of tourism roads leading to tourist destinations, including the development of surrounding road networks for future economic use;
- (d) Organization of workshops, seminars and capability building related to the potential and opportunities of tourism for the residents;
- (e) Assistance in securing permits, establishment of parameters and creation of a system to protect their environment and preserve the culture and way of life of the locals amid the influx of tourists; and
- (f) Provision of marketing tools and platforms for the promotion of the tourist destinations, both locally and internationally, including multimedia campaigns, and local and international travel fairs.

SECTION 6. Prioritization. – The DOT and other agencies implementing OTAP shall prioritize cities and municipalities without tourism programs. Cities or municipalities with natural tourist destinations such as caves, waterfalls, rock formations, beaches and sanctuaries and man-made structures with potential tourist appeal, or cities or municipalities with unique and interesting cultural events and practices such as unique fiesta celebrations, food hubs, and parades expressing local culture may also receive appropriate assistance under the OTAP.

SECTION 7. Duties of Tourism Officers. – The city or municipal tourism officer, in coordination with the city or municipal planning officer and city or municipal engineer shall:

- (a) Identify the potential tourist destination or cultural attraction that may be developed, improved, or rehabilitated;
- (b) Prepare a feasibility study and evaluation of the potential tourist destination or cultural attraction in terms of environmental safety, accessibility, marketability, cultural preservation, return of investment, and benefits or employment opportunities for the people in the locality;
- (c) Prepare the civil works plans, detailed estimate, and bill of materials

- for road networks and infrastructure projects to be undertaken in the development, rehabilitation or improvement of the identified potential or existing tourist attraction; and
- (d) Submit the development or rehabilitation plans or program to the DOT for funding assistance.

Cities or municipalities with no existing tourism officers shall appoint a program officer to coordinate with the city or municipal planning officer and city or municipal engineer to carry out the duties under this Section.

SECTION 8. Duties of the DOT. – Pursuant to its mandate under Republic Act No. 9593, otherwise known as “The Tourism Act of 1999,” the DOT shall perform the following duties:

- (a) Study the development or rehabilitation program submitted by a city or municipality, including the source of funds and alternative long-term or short-term financing from government financial institution or private sector;
- (b) Coordinate with the DPWH for the development or rehabilitation of tourism roads, buildings, and infrastructure projects;
- (c) Coordinate with the DENR for environmental protection and safety; and
- (d) Coordinate with the DICT for the advertisement, software technology, and other programs or tools needed in the marketing of tourist destinations or cultural attractions.

SECTION 9. Appropriations. – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the DOT. Thereafter, such amount as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 10. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of Tourism shall, in coordination with the heads of other implementing agencies, promulgate the rules and regulations necessary for the effective implementation of this Act.

SECTION 11. Separability Clause. – If any provision or part of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall remain in force and effect.

SECTION 12. Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, proclamations, issuances, or ordinances contrary or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are amended, repealed, or modified accordingly.

SECTION 13. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation

Approved,