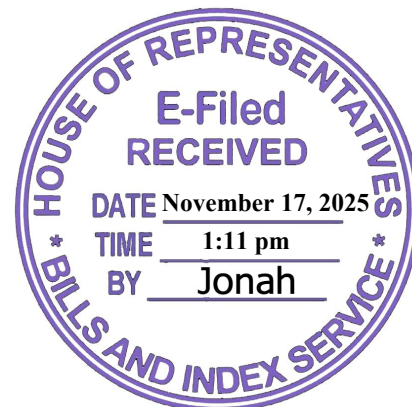


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 6046



Introduced by:

HON. CHRISTOPHERSON "COCO" M. YAP

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Twin Islands of San Pedro and San Pablo in Hinunangan, Southern Leyte are premier day-trip destinations — clear waters, white pebble shores, and rich marine life — just thirty (30) minutes from the mainland. The islands host small communities (San Pablo: 445; San Pedro: 449) whose livelihoods are mainly in agriculture and fisheries; recent tourism growth has provided a needed boost to household incomes.

This bill declares the Twin Islands as a community-based ecotourism zone to catalyze sustainable, participatory development: appropriate facilities and basic infrastructure; standards and safeguards to protect the environment; and opportunities for local Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and quality jobs. It aligns with national policy under the Tourism Act, which recognizes tourism as a driver of inclusive growth:

“The State declares tourism as an indispensable element of the national economy and an industry of national interest and importance, which must be harnessed as an engine of socioeconomic growth and cultural affirmation...”

— Republic Act No. 9593 (2009)

The measure also mirrors recent Congress enactments designating tourism and ecotourism zones with coordinated support from the DOT, DENR, DPWH, and LGUs — e.g., Southern Leyte’s own tourism zones under Republic Act No. 12236 (2025), the Balanga Wetland under Republic Act No. 11365 (2019), and the Candon City Ecotourism Zone under Republic Act No. 11407 (2019). As in those laws, declaration will enable planning assistance, standards-setting, and targeted promotion by the DOT and partner agencies.

COVID-19 severely disrupted local tourism and MSME incomes, and Typhoon Odette further damaged facilities and jobs. With travel normalizing, this bill provides the institutional support needed to restore and grow a resilient, sustainable visitor economy in Southern Leyte's Second District — anchored on environmental stewardship, community participation, and decent work.

In view of the foregoing, **ug sa ngalan sa SERBISYONG TINUORAY**, the undersigned respectfully requests the immediate passage of this measure.


CHRISTOPHERSON "COCO" M. YAP
Representative, Second District of Southern Leyte

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HOUSE BILL NO. 6046

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HON. CHRISTOPHERSON “COCO” M. YAP

AN ACT

DECLARING THE TWIN ISLANDS OF SAN PEDRO AND SAN PABLO, LOCATED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF HINUNANGAN, PROVINCE OF SOUTHERN LEYTE, AS ECOTOURISM ZONES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. Declaration and Coverage. — The Twin Islands of San Pedro and San Pablo, located in the Municipality of Hinunangan, Province of Southern Leyte, are hereby declared ECOTOURISM ZONES. Pursuant thereto, their development as viable hosts for a sustainable, community-based visitor economy shall be prioritized and supported by the Department of Tourism (DOT), subject to the rules and regulations governing ecotourism zones.

SECTION 2. Tourism Development Plan. — Within one (1) year from the approval of this Act, the Municipal Government of Hinunangan, in coordination with the DOT, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), the Department of Agriculture–Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA–BFAR), and other concerned agencies, shall prepare a Tourism Development Plan for the Twin Islands providing for:

- (a) development, maintenance, improvement, and restoration of tourism sites and basic facilities and infrastructure;
- (b) protection of the environment and marine ecosystems, including carrying-capacity limits and compliance with environmental laws and impact assessment requirements; and
- (c) community participation and opportunities for local MSMEs and workers.

The implementation of the Tourism Development Plan shall be included in the annual budget of the Municipal Government of Hinunangan.

SECTION 3. Assistance of the DOT and Partner Agencies. — The DOT shall assist the Municipal Government of Hinunangan in implementing the Tourism Development Plan by providing technical assistance, capacity building, and inclusion of the Twin Islands in national and regional promotion programs. The DPWH, DENR, DA-BFAR, and other concerned agencies shall support the implementation within their respective mandates. The Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA) may extend assistance consistent with applicable laws and regulations.

SECTION 4. Funding. — The funding for the implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual budget of the Municipal Government of Hinunangan. The DOT may augment such allocation with internally generated funds, and national government agencies may provide support consistent with their appropriations and programs.

SECTION 5. Rights and Land Classification Unaffected. — Nothing in this Act shall be construed to alter the classification of lands under existing laws, impair private property rights, or prejudice tenurial or fishing rights recognized by law. All projects shall respect existing rights and applicable land and marine use regulations.

SECTION 6. Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR). — Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DOT, in consultation with the Municipal Government of Hinunangan and concerned agencies, shall promulgate the IRR for the proper implementation of this Act.

SECTION 7. Separability Clause. — If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 8. Repealing Clause. — All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 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,