



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Philippines

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8926



INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE CARLOS ANDES LORIA

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Tourism is a vital pillar of Philippine economic growth, providing employment, supporting micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and promoting cultural and environmental heritage. In recent years, eco-tourism and wellness tourism have emerged as among the fastest-growing segments of the global tourism industry, driven by increasing demand for nature-based recreation, health-oriented destinations, and sustainable travel experiences.

The Province of Albay, famous for the iconic Mayon Volcano, continues to attract both domestic and international visitors. However, tourism development in the province remains heavily concentrated on a few traditional sites, underscoring the urgent need to diversify tourism offerings, extend visitor stays, and broaden the economic benefits of tourism to local communities.

The Gabawan Lake area in the Municipality of Daraga presents a unique opportunity to develop a large-scale eco-wellness and sustainable tourism park that integrates environmental conservation, recreation, wellness facilities, Agri-tourism, cultural spaces, and future-ready tourism infrastructure. Strategically located near the Bicol International Airport and major tourism corridors, Gabawan Lake has the potential to become a flagship eco-wellness destination in the Bicol Region.

This bill seeks to declare Gabawan Lake as a National Eco-Wellness and Sustainable Tourism Park and to institutionalize a comprehensive framework for its development and management. The proposed park will promote inclusive growth by creating jobs, supporting MSMEs, empowering local communities, conserving biodiversity, and strengthening Albay's position as a premier sustainable tourism destination.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate enactment of this measure is earnestly sought.



CARLOS A. LORIA
Representative
2nd District Albay



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AN ACT
DECLARING THE GABAWAN LAKE AREA IN BARANGAY
GABAWAN, MUNICIPALITY OF DARAGA, PROVINCE OF ALBAY AS
A NATIONAL ECO-WELLNESS AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PARK,
PROVIDING FOR ITS DEVELOPMENT, MANAGEMENT, AND
PROTECTION, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES

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

1 **SECTION 1. Short Title.** This Act shall be known as the “Gabawan Lake
2 Eco-Wellness and Sustainable Tourism Park Act.”
3

4 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** It is hereby declared the policy of the State to:
5

- 6 a. Promote sustainable, inclusive, and climate-resilient tourism development in
7 accordance with Republic Act No. 9593 (Tourism Act of 2009);
8 b. Conserve and protect natural ecosystems while generating livelihood
9 opportunities for local communities;
10 c. Encourage eco-wellness tourism that supports physical, mental, and social
11 well-being, particularly of senior citizens and persons with disabilities;
12 d. Strengthen local economies through MSME participation, community-based
13 tourism, and Agri-tourism.
14

15 **SEC. 3. Declaration as a National Eco-Wellness and Sustainable Tourism Park.**
16 The Gabawan Lake area, located in Barangay Gabawan, Municipality of Daraga,
17 Province of Albay, is hereby declared a National Eco-Wellness and Sustainable
18 Tourism Park, hereinafter referred to as the Gabawan Lake Park.

19 **SEC. 4. Scope and Coverage.** The Gabawan Lake Park shall cover approximately
20 thirty (30) to thirty-five (35) hectares, including the existing lake and surrounding lands
21 suitable for ecological, wellness, and tourism development. The precise metes and
22 bounds shall be determined by the Municipal Government of Daraga, in coordination

with the Provincial Government of Albay, Department of Tourism (DOT), and Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

SEC. 5. Park Development Components. The Gabawan Lake Park shall include, but not be limited to, the following components:

- a. Lake rehabilitation and enhancement works, including eco-friendly promenades, floating decks, fountains, and non-motorized water recreation;
- b. Eco-parks and landscape gardens, featuring botanical zones, native tree forests, and picnic areas;
- c. Wellness and senior citizen zones, including reflexology paths, meditation gardens, outdoor fitness facilities, and accessible walkways;
- d. Walking, jogging, and cycling networks surrounding the park;
- e. Biodiversity and aviary parks with environmental education facilities;
- f. Hydroponics and sustainable agriculture demonstration areas for agri-tourism and skills training;
- g. Restaurant and food village showcasing Bicolano cuisine and farm-to-table concepts;
- h. Visitor and tourism information centers;
- i. Cultural event grounds and amphitheaters;
- j. Parking, transport, and visitor support facilities;
- k. Future tourism attractions, including scenic observation decks and a cable car system, subject to environmental and feasibility studies.

SEC. 6. Environmental Protection and Sustainability Measures. All development activities within the Gabawan Lake Park shall be subject to:

- a. Environmental impact assessments and compliance with environmental laws;
- b. Adoption of renewable energy, water conservation, and waste management systems;
- c. Protection of biodiversity and natural habitats;
- d. Climate-resilient and disaster-adaptive infrastructure planning.

SEC. 7. Community Participation and MSME Development. The management of the Gabawan Lake Park shall prioritize:

- a. Employment of local residents;
- b. Participation of MSMEs, cooperatives, and people's organizations in tourism services;
- c. Capacity-building programs for tour guides, farmers, food producers, and entrepreneurs;
- d. Promotion of local culture, crafts, and products.

SEC. 8. Implementing Agencies and Management. The Department of Tourism (DOT) shall be the lead agency for the implementation of this Act, in coordination with:

- a. Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA)
- b. Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)
- c. Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH)
- d. Provincial Government of Albay

- e. Municipal Government of Daraga
- f. Other concerned agencies

SEC. 9. Public-Private Partnership and Investment Promotion. The development, operation, and maintenance of certain facilities within the Gabawan Lake Park may be undertaken through Public-Private Partnership (PPP) arrangements, in accordance with existing laws and regulations.

SEC. 10. Funding and Appropriations. The funds necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the Department of Tourism and TIEZA.

Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 11. Implementing Rules and Regulations. Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DOT, in coordination with concerned agencies and local government units, shall promulgate the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

SEC. 12. Separability Clause. If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 13. Repealing Clause. All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules, and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 14. Effectivity. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,