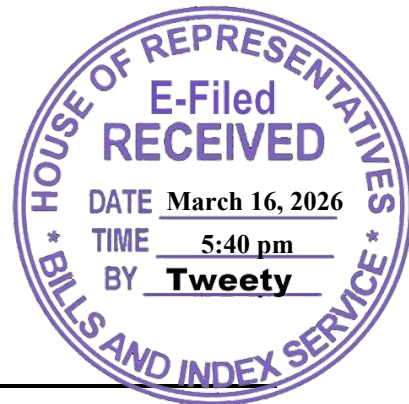


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 196

Submitted by the Committees on Tourism and Appropriations on March 16, 2026

Re : House Bill No. **8568**

Recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 407

Sponsors : Representatives Eleandro Jesus F. Madrona, Mikaela Angela B. Suansing, and
Jesus “Jess” R. Marquez

Mr. Speaker:

The Committees on Tourism and Appropriations to which was referred House Bill No. 407, introduced by Representative Jesus “Jess” R. Marquez, entitled:

**“AN ACT
DECLARING THE BAKHAWAN ECO-PARK IN BARANGAY NEW
BUSWANG, MUNICIPALITY OF KALIBO, PROVINCE OF AKLAN,
AN ECOTOURISM ZONE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR”**

have considered the same and recommend that the attached House Bill No. **8568**, entitled:

**“AN ACT
DECLARING THE BAKHAWAN ECO-PARK, LOCATED IN
BARANGAY NEW BUSWANG, MUNICIPALITY OF KALIBO,
PROVINCE OF AKLAN, AS AN ECOTOURISM ZONE”**

be approved in substitution of House Bill No. 407 with Representatives Jesus “Jess” R. Marquez, Eleandro Jesus F. Madrona, Junard “Ahong” Q. Chan, Rosalie Ang Salvame, Rommel Rico T. Angara, Jose C. Alvarez, Elisa “Olga” T. Kho, Dibu S. Tuan, Florencio T. Miraflores, Tsuyoshi Anthony “Hori” G. Horibata, John Geesnell “Baba” Yap, Caroline B. Agyao, MD, Ustadz Yusop T. Alano, Maximo Y. Dalog, Jr., Romeo S. Momo, Sr., Ronald V. Singson, Patricia C. Calderon, Rebecca Maria Alcantara Ynares, Dale B. Corvera, Celso G. Regencia, Jane T. Castro, Alyssa Michaela “Mica” M. Gonzales, Binky April M. Tupas, Salvador A. Pleyto, Marlo C. Bancoro, Eulogio “Leo” R. Rodriguez, Ferdinand “B1” L. Beltran, Niko Raul S.J. Daza, Rachel Marguerite B. Del Mar, Howard A. Guintu, Angelo Marcos Barba, John Tracy F. Cagas, Timothy Joseph E. Cayton, King Collantes, Antonino B. Roman III, Laarni Lavin Roque, Alfonso V. Umali, Jr., and Lordan G. Suan as authors thereof.

Respectfully submitted,



REP. MIKAELA ANGELA B. SUANSING

Chairperson

Committee on Appropriations



REP. ELEANDRO JESUS F. MADRONA

Chairperson

Committee on Tourism

THE HONORABLE SPEAKER
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
QUEZON CITY

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8568
(In substitution of House Bill No. 407)

Introduced by Representatives Jesus “Jess” R. Marquez, Eleandro Jesus F. Madrona, Junard “Ahong” Q. Chan, Rosalie Ang Salvame, Rommel Rico T. Angara, Jose C. Alvarez, Elisa “Olga” T. Kho, Dibu S. Tuan, Florencio T. Miraflores, Tsuyoshi Anthony “Hori” G. Horibata, John Geesnell “Baba” Yap, Caroline B. Agyao, MD, Ustadz Yusop T. Alano, Maximo Y. Dalog, Jr., Romeo S. Momo, Sr., Ronald V. Singson, Patricia C. Calderon, Rebecca Maria Alcantara Ynares, Dale B. Corvera, Celso G. Regencia, Jane T. Castro, Alyssa Michaela “Mica” M. Gonzales, Binky April M. Tupas, Salvador A. Pleyto, Marlo C. Bancoro, Eulogio “Leo” R. Rodriguez, Ferdinand “B1” L. Beltran, Niko Raul S.J. Daza, Rachel Marguerite B. Del Mar, Howard A. Guintu, Angelo Marcos Barba, John Tracy F. Cagas, Timothy Joseph E. Cayton, King Collantes, Antonino B. Roman III, Laarni Lavin Roque, Alfonso V. Umali, Jr., and Lordan G. Suan

AN ACT
DECLARING THE BAKHAWAN ECO-PARK, LOCATED IN BARANGAY NEW BUSWANG, MUNICIPALITY OF KALIBO, PROVINCE OF AKLAN, AS AN ECOTOURISM ZONE

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

1 **SECTION 1.** *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to promote a
2 tourism industry that is ecologically sustainable, responsible, participative, culturally
3 sensitive, economically viable, and equitably beneficial to local communities.

4 **SEC. 2.** *Bakhawan Eco-Park Ecotourism Zone.* – The Bakhawan Eco-Park, located
5 in Barangay New Buswang, Municipality of Kalibo, Province of Aklan, is hereby declared a
6 community-based ecotourism zone. Pursuant thereto, its development shall be prioritized and
7 supported by the Department of Tourism (DOT), subject to the rules and regulations
8 governing the development of ecotourism zones.

1 **SEC. 3. *Scope and Coverage.*** - This Act shall cover the boundaries of the two
2 hundred twenty-hectare (220-hectare) mangrove forest of the Bakhawan Eco-Park.

3 The setting of technical boundaries of the ecotourism zone shall be undertaken by the
4 Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and other concerned agencies.

5 **Sec. 4. *Definition of Terms.*** – As used in this Act:

- 6 a) *Biodiversity conservation* refers to the practice of preserving the variety of
7 species, habits and ecosystems, and genetic diversity of the place, including
8 *inter alia*, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems, and the ecological
9 complexes which they are a part of;
- 10 b) *Community-based ecotourism* refers to a form of tourism where the local
11 community and its residents have substantial control over and involvement in
12 the development and management of the local tourism industry wherein the
13 greater portion of the economic gains remain within the community;
- 14 c) *Ecotourism* refers to a form of sustainable tourism within a natural area where
15 community participation, protection and management of natural resources,
16 cultural and indigenous knowledge and practices, environmental education
17 and ethics, as well as economic benefits, are fostered and pursued for the
18 enrichment of host communities and satisfaction of visitors;
- 19 d) *Homestay* refers to a system of tourist accommodation where a tourist stays
20 with local residents and experiences the day-to-day life of the local residents;
21 and
- 22 e) *Responsible community-based ecotourism* refers to a form of sustainable
23 tourism in which both the tourism sector and the tourists take responsibility in
24 the protection, respect, and conservation of the natural environment and the
25 local culture and ways of life, and where community participation as well as

1 economic benefits are fostered and pursued for the well-being of the local
2 residents and visitors.

3 **SEC. 5. *Development Strategies.*** –To accomplish the development of the Bakhawan
4 Eco-Park as an ecotourism zone, the State shall:

- 5 (a) Develop and promote responsible community-based ecotourism as the core
6 management strategy in the development of the Bakhawan Eco-Park;
- 7 (b) Ensure the conservation of the biodiversity and the preservation of said Eco-
8 Park;
- 9 (c) Develop tourism products and programs that shall generate employment and
10 livelihood for the local residents and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
11 concerned, consistent with the preservation and maintenance of the mangrove
12 forest;
- 13 (d) Guarantee that the financial and economic benefits of the tourism industry are
14 equitably shared by and distributed among the local residents and NGOs
15 concerned, by giving preference and support to community- and home-based
16 micro and small tourism enterprises, such as local inns, lodges and homestays,
17 restaurants, food and fruit stands, and other similar tourism-oriented industries
18 and businesses;
- 19 (e) Ensure that the quality of local tourism programs and activities are educational
20 and enriching for tourists and visitors through the provision of orientation,
21 educational and tour programs by local tour operators, NGOs, the Municipal
22 Government of Kalibo and the DOT; and
- 23 (f) Guarantee that, in the development and promotion of the local tourism
24 industry, the Municipal Government of Kalibo ensures the adequate provision
25 of water, food, energy, and local construction materials to residents.

1 **SEC. 6. *Tourism Development Plan for the Bakhawan Eco-Park.*** - The Municipal
2 Government of Kalibo shall, in coordination with the DOT, DENR, and concerned agencies
3 of the government, prepare the tourism development plan for the Bakhawan Eco-Park that
4 shall be complemented by a set of guidelines for a responsible, community-based ecotourism.

5 The tourism development plan shall ensure the preservation of the area and shall
6 include the following components:

- 7 (a) Determination and description of the carrying capacity of the Eco-Park;
- 8 (b) Specific site assessment;
- 9 (c) Identification of strategic priorities;
- 10 (d) Product development plans for local income generation;
- 11 (e) Capacity-building for the local community so residents therein can ably
12 manage economically viable and responsible community-based ecotourism
13 business enterprises;
- 14 (f) Strategies to promote the formulation of local production groups and
15 networks, including the marketing and pricing of products; and
- 16 (g) Marketing strategies that uphold the natural, social, and environmental
17 integrity of the Eco-Park and its local residents.

18 The process of formulating the tourism development plan shall be participatory, with
19 the framework to be provided by the DOT and DENR, in consultation with the local
20 governments of the Municipality of Kalibo and Barangay New Buswang.

21 **SEC. 7. *Formulation of Guidelines and Standards.*** - The DENR shall assist the local
22 governments of the Municipality of Kalibo and Barangay New Buswang in the formulation
23 of local tourism standards to ensure that environmental protection is integrated in the
24 preparation of development plans.

25 These local tourism standards shall:

- 1 (a) Raise the capacity of all stakeholders and ensure that best practices are
- 2 followed;
- 3 (b) Ensure optional use of water and energy;
- 4 (c) Reduce waste and pollution through environmentally-sound waste
- 5 management disposal schemes;
- 6 (d) Prevent vandalism in the facilities of the Bakhawan Eco-Park; and
- 7 (e) Encourage the use of local produce and services, and support the employment
- 8 of local people.

9 **SEC. 8. *Role of the DOT.*** - The DOT shall also assist the Municipal Government of
10 Kalibo in the implementation of the tourism development plan by providing technical
11 assistance in tourism capacity building. It shall also include the Bakhawan Eco- Park in its
12 national and regional promotion programs.

13 **SEC. 9. *Coordination with National Agencies.***- The Municipal Government of
14 Kalibo shall coordinate with the regional offices of the DENR, Department of Labor and
15 Employment, Department of Public Works and Highways, Department of Transportation,
16 Department of Agriculture, Department of Education, Department of Trade and Industry,
17 Department of Interior and Local Government, Philippine National Police, Maritime Industry
18 Authority, and other line agencies of the government in the implementation of this Act.

19 **SEC.10. *Appropriations.*** – The funding for the implementation of this Act shall be
20 included in the annual budget of the Municipal Government of Kalibo. The DOT may
21 augment such allocation with internally generated funds.

22 **SEC.11. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** - Within thirty (30) days after the
23 effectivity of this Act, the Municipal Government of Kalibo shall, in consultation with the
24 DOT, DENR, and concerned agencies of the government, promulgate the rules and
25 regulations to implement this Act.

1 **SEC. 12. *Separability Clause.*** – If any provision of this Act is declared
2 unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain to be in full
3 force and effect.

4 **SEC. 13. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, decrees, executive orders, proclamations, and
5 other issuances inconsistent with any of the provisions of this Act are hereby deemed
6 repealed or amended accordingly.

7 **SEC. 14. *Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
8 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,