



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Seventeenth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **4711**



Introduced By:
REP. FRANCISCO JOSE F. MATUGAS II
1ST District, Surigao del Norte (*Siargao Island*)

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks the establishment of the Siargao and Bucas Grande Islands Ecotourism Zone.

In its *Guidelines for Ecotourism Investment/Development: A Guide to BIMP-EAGA Investors*, the PAWB recognized the Siargao Protected Landscape and Seascape as one of potential site for ecotourism development. The area was described, thus:

“The Siargao Protected Landscape and Seascape is just a few hundred kilometers east of the famed Philippine Deep which is endowed with a landscape and seascape of almost unparalleled natural beauty that attracts environmentally conscious ecotourists. It is internationally known as surfers’ paradise. Swimming, sunbathing, snorkeling, surfing (August to November-Northeast wind offshore, December to February-Northeast wind on shore), boat riding, island hopping, mountain biking, trekking, spelunking, kayaking and diving are among the recreational activities that the area offers. Existing visitor facilities and amenities include beach resorts, boat hire, jetski, cottages, restaurant, power house, commercial center, food establishment, souvenir shops and cling stations. Investment opportunities include stores rental for scuba diving gears, construction of guest house cum convenience store, monkey trail, divers and snorklers shack, and interpretative signs. The recorded number of visitors in the area for 2001-2003 is two thousand ninety-three (2,093).”

But while the area is endowed with vast natural resources which provide numerous investment opportunities for ecotourism development, such development

must be in accord with the policies laid down in R.A. 9593, otherwise known as "*The Tourism Act of 2009*," in that tourism development must be ecologically sustainable, responsible, participative, culturally sensitive, economically viable, and ethically and socially equitable for local communities. It is hoped that with the passage of this bill, the relevant government agencies can institutionalize the necessary programs for the development of the tourism industry in the area while at the same time preserving and protecting the beauty and bounty given by Mother Nature.

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

FRANCISCO JOSE F. MATUGAS II



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INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE FRANCISCO JOSE F. MATUGAS II

AN ACT
DECLARING SIARGAO AND BUCAS GRANDE ISLANDS IN THE PROVINCE
OF SURIGAO DEL NORTE AS AN ECOTOURISM ZONE AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

1 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as "The Siargao and Bucas
2 Grande Islands Ecotourism Act."

3
4 SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to
5 promote a tourism industry that is ecologically sustainable, responsible,
6 participative, culturally sensitive, economically viable and equitable for local
7 communities.

8
9 SEC. 3. *Siargao and Bucas Grande Islands as Ecotourism Zone.* - Siargao and
10 Bucas Grande Islands, in the Province of Surigao Del Norte are hereby declared an
11 ecotourism zone. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)
12 shall, within ninety (90) days after the approval of this Act, make an inventory of the
13 existing flora and fauna in Siargao and Bucas Grande Islands that shall serve as the
14 basis for a master plan that will be developed for purposes of this Act.

15
16 SEC. 4. *Siargao and Bucas Grande Islands Ecotourism Governing Board.* - For the
17 purpose of Section 3 of this Act, an ecotourism governing board, to be known as the
18 Siargao and Bucas Grande Islands Ecotourism Governing Board, is hereby created.

1 The board shall be composed of the Representative of the First District of Surigao del
2 Norte who shall act as chair, the Secretaries of the Department of Tourism (DOT)
3 and the DENR or their duly authorized representatives, a member of a non-
4 government organization whose advocacy is environmental preservation, a member
5 of the academe, a representative of the business sector, a representative of the
6 private sector and the local chief executives of the municipalities where Siargao and
7 Bucas Grande Islands are situated. The governing board shall prepare the rules and
8 regulations necessary for the full implementation by the concerned local government
9 units of the provisions of this Act and shall, as the need arises, amend, modify or
10 revise such rules and regulations to meet the needs of changing times.

11
12 SEC. 5. Siargao and Bucas Grande Islands Ecotourism Master Plan. - The
13 DENR and the DOT shall, within one hundred twenty (120) days from the approval
14 of this Act, develop a master plan to be approved by the President of the Republic of
15 the Philippines upon the recommendation of the governing board.

16
17 SEC. 6. The Secretary of the DOT shall include in the Department's program
18 the implementation of this Act, the funding of which shall be included in the annual
19 General Appropriations Act and/or internally generated funds of the Department

20
21 SEC. 7. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision or part thereof is declared
22 unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act or any provision not affected shall remain
23 in full force and effect.

24
25 SEC. 8. *Repealing Clause.* - All law, presidential decrees, executive orders, rules
26 and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are
27 hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

28
29 SEC. 9. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect immediately after its publication
30 in the *Official Gazette* or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

31
32 *Approved,*