

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

Seventeenth Congress
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 4273



Introduced by **Honorable Gil P. Acosta, Honorable Frederick F. Abueg, and
Honorable Franz Josef George E. Alvarez**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill declares the province of Palawan as the ecological tourism capital of the Philippines with the corresponding government support and grant of autonomy.

Section 16, Article II of the 1987 Philippine Constitution provides that the State shall protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature. The right to a balanced and healthful ecology as enunciated in the landmark case of *Oposa vs. Factoran* carries with it the correlative duty to refrain from impairing the environment.

Ecotourism refers to a form of sustainable tourism within a natural and cultural heritage area where community participation, protection, and management of natural resources, cultural, indigenous knowledge and practices, environmental education, and ethics as well as economic benefits are fostered and pursued for the enrichment of the host communities and the satisfaction of tourists.

Palawan is the biggest province in the Philippines and is composed of 1,768 islands and islets. An exotic paradise in South East Asia, Palawan has been voted the world's best island for the second time in a row. With crystal clear blue waters, sandy shores and a phenomenal underwater river, the idyllic Palawan archipelago easily claimed the top spot in Travel & Leisure magazine's

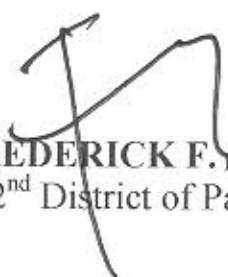
awards. This is the second time this publication has lauded Palawan, Conde Nast Traveler and National Geographic Traveler have also given the island similar awards.

Palawan is considered the Philippines' "Last Frontier." Ecology awareness is at a high level throughout the province. Puerto Princesa City being the capital considers its critical role as a "steward of biodiverse resources and as the active promoter of the balance of its total ecology."

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



GIL P. ACOSTA
3RD District of Palawan



FREDERICK F. ABUEG
2ND District of Palawan



FRANZ JOSEF GEORGE E. ALVAREZ
1ST District of Palawan

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HOUSE BILL NO. **4273**

**Introduced by Honorable Gil P. Acosta, Honorable
Frederick F. Abueg, and Honorable Franz Josef
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1 **AN ACT DECLARING THE PROVINCE OF PALAWAN AS THE**
2 **ECOLOGICAL TOURISM CAPITAL OF THE PHILIPPINES AND**
3 **OTHER PURPOSES**
4

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

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8 **SECTION 1. TITLE.** - This Act shall be known as “**An Act Declaring**
9 **the Province of Palawan as the Ecological Tourism Capital of the**
10 **Philippines.**”
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12 **SECTION 2. DECLARATION OF POLICY.** - It is hereby declared
13 the policy of the State to promote a viable tourism industry. Towards this end,
14 the country shall rationalize all efforts pertaining to environmental protection
15 and making the tourism industry a major source of livelihood and an avenue for
16 the generation of employment. Henceforth, aggressive measures seeking to

17 restore the country's share in the Asian tourist market shall be consistent with
18 the preservation of the existing ecosystem and natural environment.

19
20 **SECTION 3. - ECOLOGICAL TOURISM CAPITAL OF THE**
21 **PHILIPPINES.** - Pursuant to public policy, the Province of Palawan including
22 the city of Puerto Princesa is hereby declared an eco-tourism zone and shall be
23 called the Eco-Tourism Capital of the Philippines.

24
25 **SECTION 4. CREATION OF AN ECO-TOURISM OFFICE.** -
26 Within a year from the approval of this Act, there shall be created an Eco-
27 Tourism Office.

28
29 **SECTION 5. ECO-TOURISM BOARD.** - The eco-tourism office
30 shall be administered by the Eco-Tourism Board composed of members. The
31 following members shall serve ex officio:

- 32 (1) The Governor of the Province of Palawan;
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- 34 (2) The Representative from the First District of Palawan;
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- 36 (3) The Representative from the Second District of Palawan;
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- 38 (4) The Representative from the Third District of Palawan;
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- 40 (5) A representative from the Palawan Council for Sustainable
- 41 Development (PCSD);
- 42
- 43 (6) The Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural
- 44 Resources (DENR);
- 45
- 46 (7) The Secretary of the Department of Tourism (DOT);
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- 48 (8) A representative from the private sector, to be appointed by the
- 49 Provincial Governor with the concurrence of the Board;
- 50

(9) A representative from the non-governmental organization, to be appointed by the Provincial Governor with the concurrence of the Board;

(10) The Mayor of Puerto Princesa City;

(11) The President of the League of Municipalities of Palawan;

(12) The President of Liga ng mga Barangay;

(13) A representative from the Palawan Provincial Board.

The Eco-Tourism Board shall be co-chaired by the Representatives of the legislative districts of the province and the Governor of Palawan.

SECTION 5. IMPLEMENTING RULES AND REGULATIONS. -

The PCSD, DENR, and DOT shall prepare an eco-tourism master plan and promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to be approved by the President of the Philippines upon recommendation of the board.

SECTION 6. APPROPRIATION. - The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be taken from the current appropriation of PCSD and shall be included in the General Appropriations Act of the year following its enactment into law and thereafter.

SECTION 7. SEPARABILITY CLAUSE. - If any provision of this Act shall be held unconstitutional, any other provision not otherwise affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 8. REPEALING CLAUSE. - All laws, decrees, ordinances, rules, and regulations, executive or administrative orders, and other presidential issuances inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

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84 **SECTION 9. EFFECTIVITY.** - This Act shall take effect after its
85 complete publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

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87 Approved,

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