

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

Eighteenth Congress
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 4440

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE ISAGANI S. AMATONG

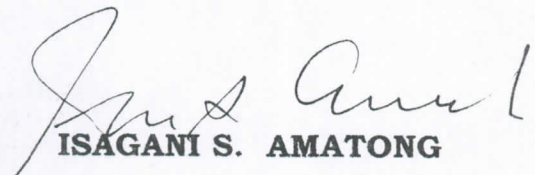
EXPLANATORY NOTE

Under Republic Act No. 9593 or the Tourism Act of 2009, it is the policy of the state to promote an ecologically sustainable and economically viable tourism industry as an engine of socio-economic growth and cultural affirmation to generate investment, foreign exchange, and employment. Since 2014, the input of the tourism industry to the gross domestic product (GDP) of the country has been continually increasing. In 2018, the contribution of tourism to the national economy amounted to 12.7%.

In this light, this bill seeks to declare the Murcielagos Island in the Municipality of Labason, Province of Zamboanga del Norte as an ecotourism zone. Murcielagos Island, which comprises two islets called Bayangan and Baliudyong, was declared as a protected landscape and seascape in April 23, 2000. The Bayangan islet is surrounded with white sand and has tail-like white sand deposit. The Baliudyong islet has cave-like openings, cliffs, and karst formations. The whole island is rich with flora and fauna.

Declaring Murcielagos Island as an ecotourism zone equipped with amenities and facilities, subject to the conditions prescribed by the National Integrated Protected Areas System Act of 1992, as amended, will not only attract more tourists in the area but will also provide employment and business opportunities for the local residents of Labason.

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


ISAGANI S. AMATONG

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AN ACT
DECLARING THE MURCIELAGOS ISLAND PROTECTED LANDSCAPE AND
SEASCAPE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF LABASON, PROVINCE OF
ZAMBOANGA 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:

SECTION 1. The Murcielagos Island Protected Landscape and Seascape in the Municipality of Labason, Province of Zamboanga del Norte is hereby declared an ecotourism zone. Its development shall be prioritized by the Department of Tourism and shall be subject to the rules and regulations governing the development of ecotourism zones and the management of protected areas.

SECTION 2. The Department of Tourism, in coordination with the Protected Area Management Board shall, within one (1) year after the approval of this Act, prepare a development plan involving the construction, installation, and maintenance of such appropriate facilities and infrastructure as shall enhance tourism in the area; *Provided*, That said development plan shall ensure the preservation and conservation of the natural resources of the area and shall be consistent with the provisions of Republic Act No. 7586 or the National Integrated Protected Areas System Act of 1992, as amended by Republic Act No. 11038.

SECTION 3. The Department of Tourism, in coordination with the municipality of Labason and the local Protected Area Management Board, shall take immediate steps in implementing the tourism development plan that will suit the natural characteristics of the area and shall incorporate the same in its overall development plans and programs for national implementation.

SECTION 4. It shall also be the responsibility of the Department of Tourism to promote Murcielagos Island Ecotourism Zone as a tourism area in all its national, regional, and local promotion programs.

SECTION 5. The Secretary of Tourism, in coordination with the municipality of Labason and the Protected Area Management Board, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.



SECTION 6. The Secretary of Tourism shall include in the Department of Tourism's program the implementation of this Act, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act and the internally generated funds of the Department of Tourism.

SECTION 7. All laws, rules, regulations, proclamations, executive orders or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby amended or repealed accordingly.

SECTION 8. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Juv", located at the bottom right of the page.