

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

**EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS  
First Regular Session**

**House Bill No. 6233**



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**Introduced by Representatives Ria Christina G. Fariñas  
and Rudys Caesar G. Fariñas I**

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

This bill seeks to declare the Maruaya Farm Tourism and Agro-industrial Site in Piddig, Ilocos Norte as a tourist destination.

The Philippines possesses world heritage sites like the Subterranean River National Park in Puerto Princesa, Palawan and Rice Terraces in the Cordilleras. The country is also home to the second-best beach in Asia – Boracay. Furthermore, the Philippine has also been popular around the world for its agriculture. Its agricultural areas make up 47% of the total land area.

The Department of Tourism (DOT) acknowledges agriculture as a contributing factor to the country's tourism and economy. On October 23, 2017, the DOT launched the "*Its More Fun in the Philippine Farm*" program which aims to focus on farm tourism. The program also hopes to encourage the youth to take interest in agriculture and address the problem of conversion of lands to industrial sites, shopping malls or subdivisions. The farmers are getting old while majority of the youth are taking up non-agriculture related courses.

In an article published in the Business World, entitled "*Farm tourism gaining ground in PHL*," it was reported that farm tourism in the Philippines boosts the economy of the country as foreign tourists ballooned to 3.177 million from January to May 2018, a growth of 10.24% from the same period in 2017. This has made the Philippines one of the top destinations for farm tourism, along with Taiwan, Hawaii, California, Brazil and others. Several provinces, like La Union, Pangasinan and Zambales have already invested in farm tourism.

About 80% of the residents of the Municipality of Piddig, a third-class municipality, source their income from agriculture. In order to boost the socio-economic status of the residents, the local government and the Piddig Organic Agricultural Practitioners Associations, Inc. came up with innovations centered on cultural and nature-based tourism. Thus, a sunflower farm and vegetable garden in the Maruaya Village was established. This initiative was welcomed by about 3,000 tourists, both local and foreign, on February 14, 2019. The development in Maruaya Village encouraged the youth to pursue education on agriculture and convinced them that there is success in agriculture.

In addition to the sunflower farm and vegetable garden, the site also houses a coffee roasting facility and food factory school. In cooperation with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), the food factory school offers training courses for interested individuals to learn and harness their skills. Currently, there is a project proposal for a convergence between the Municipality of Piddig and the Department of Public Works and Highways in concreting the ragged Maruaya Road leading to the site.

With the opening of the Maruaya Farm, more tourists are expected to visit the place which will lead to business opportunities. The business opportunities, in turn attract investors which will boost the economy of the municipality. The national government must, therefore, help in its promotion and ensure the sustainability and preservation of the natural beauty of the site.

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



**RIA CHRISTINA G. FARIÑAS**



**RUDYS CAESAR G. FARIÑAS I**



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**AN ACT**

**DECLARING THE MARUAYA FARM TOURISM AND AGRO-INDUSTRIAL SITE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF PIDDIG, PROVINCE OF ILOCOS NORTE AS A TOURIST DESTINATION, PROVIDING FOR ITS DEVELOPMENT, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

**Section 1.** The Maruaya Farm Tourism and Agro-Industrial Site is hereby declared a tourist destination. As such, its development shall be prioritized by the Department of Tourism (DOT) and shall be subject to the rules and regulations governing the development of tourist destinations.

**Sec. 2.** Within one (1) year from the approval of this Act, the DOT, in coordination with the local government units and agencies of the government, shall prepare a tourism development plan involving the construction, installation, and maintenance of appropriate infrastructure and facilities that enhance tourism in the area: *Provided, That the development plan shall ensure the preservation and conservation of the natural beauty and resources of the area: Provided, further, That any activity and development to be carried out in the area must conform with the concept of ecotourism as provided in the national*

ecotourism strategy jointly issued by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the DOT.

**Sec. 3.** The DOT and its attached agencies shall take immediate steps to implement the tourism development plan that suits the natural characteristics of the Maruaya Farm Tourism and Agro-Industrial Site and shall incorporate the same in its tourism development and program for the ensuing calendar year. It shall also include Maruaya Farm Tourism and Agro-Industrial Site in all its national, regional, and local promotion programs.

**Sec. 4.** The Secretary of Tourism shall include in the DOT's program the implementation of this Act, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act and from internally generated funds of the DOT.

**Sec. 5.** Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of Tourism, in consultation with the Municipality of Piddig, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the proper implementation of this Act.

**Sec. 6.** All laws, rules, regulations, proclamations, executive orders, or parts thereof, inconsistent with this Act are hereby amended accordingly.

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

*Approved,*