

Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 3954



INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE ALFRED VARGAS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

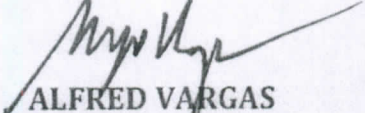
Section 2 of Republic Act 9593 or (RA 9593) states that:

"The State declares tourism as an indispensable element of the national economy and an industry of national interest and importance, which must be harnessed as an engine of socio-economic growth and cultural affirmation to generate investment, foreign exchange and employment, and to continue to mold an enhanced sense of national pride for all Filipinos."

According to the Department of Tourism (DOT), in the first half of 2019, a total of 4,133,050 international tourists visited the Philippines, marking an 11.43 percent increase from last year's figures.

This bill seeks to adopt and implement an integrated approach in tourism development and to be able to realize its full potential as an important economic tool necessary for national development.

Thus, immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


ALFRED VARGAS

Republic of the Philippines
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HOUSE BILL NO. **3954**

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE ALFRED VARGAS

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL TASK FORCE FOR THE PROTECTION
AND ASSISTANCE OF TOURISTS

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "Tourist Protection and Assistance Act of 2019".

SECTION. 2. *Declaration of Principles.* - The State recognizes tourism as a major contributor to the country's economic growth. Towards this end, the State shall endeavor to enact measures for the protection and assistance of tourists, both domestic and foreign, during their travel around the country

SECTION. 3. *Tourist Protection and Assistance Task Force.* - Within nine (9) months after the approval of this Act, the Secretary of the Department of Tourism (DOT) shall establish an intergovernmental task force, to be known as the "Tourist Protection and Assistance Task Force", hereinafter referred to as the "Task Force".

It shall be the duty of the Task Force to facilitate, through the concerned national government agencies and local government units, the following:

- a) adoption of uniform standards on signage for use throughout the Philippines in order to facilitate travel in the country;
- b) provision of directional signages in tourism facilities and destinations, including airports, seaports, land border crossings, highways, and bus, train, and other public transit locations;

- c) preparation and dissemination of multilingual travel and tourism information and promotional materials;
- d) establishment of a toll-free telephone assistance system run by multilingual operators to provide assistance to domestic and foreign tourists;
- e) coordination with local government units the establishment of tourist help desks in identified tourist destinations; and
- f) institution of measures to prevent unlawful acts or harassment committed on tourists.

SECTION. 4. *Composition of the Task Force.* - The Task Force shall be composed of the following:

- a) Secretary of the DOT or the duly designated representative, as Chairperson;
- b) Secretary of the Department of the Interior and Local Government or the duly designated representative, as Vice Chairperson;
- c) Secretary of the Department of Transportation or the duly designated representative;
- d) Secretary of the Department of Public Works and Highways or the duly designated representative;
- e) Secretary of the Department of Justice or the duly designated representative;
- f) Director-General of the Philippine National Police or the duly designated representative;
- g) a representative from the Road Board of the Philippines; and
- h) such other representatives of other government agencies and private sector entities as may be determined to be appropriate to the mission of the Task Force by the Chairperson, as members. The Task Force shall meet whenever necessary.

SECTION. 5. *Funding.* - The amount necessary to cover the expenses for the operation of the Task Force shall be charged against the existing appropriation of the DOT as contained in the annual General Appropriations Act.

Funds for the implementation of the programs and project that shall be approved by the Task Force should be included in the appropriation of the implementing agencies concerned. For local government units, funding shall be taken from their internal revenue allotment and other internally generated income.

SECTION. 6. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting

SECTION. 7. *Repealing Clause.* - Any laws, presidential decrees or issuances, executive orders, letters of instruction, administrative orders, rules or regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

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

Approved,