

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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BILLS & INDEX DIVISION

House Bill No. 900

AN ACT DECLARING THE VERDE ISLAND PASSAGE MARINE CORRIDOR AS A MARITIME PROTECTED AREA AND AN ECOTOURISM ZONE, CREATING FOR THE PURPOSE THE VERDE ISLAND PASSAGE MANAGEMENT BOARD, DEFINING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

The Verde Island Passage is one of the rich biodiversity areas in the country and has been declared the center of center of the world's marine shore fish diversity by marine scientists. As such, the national government and local government units have taken measures to protect, conserve and sustainably use biological diversity to ensure and secure the well-being of the present and future generations of Filipinos.

Then President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, for instance, issued Executive Order No. 578 which established a national policy on biological diversity and created an *ad hoc* task force to ensure the protection, conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in the Verde Island Passage Marine Corridor, and formulate a Verde Island Passage Management Plan in consultation with stakeholders, the private sector, civil society and local communities.

Local government units, in cooperation with national government agencies, law enforcement, and civil society, signed a memorandum of agreement to create a network for the protection and sustainable management of the Verde Island Passage.

Despite these significant steps, the Verde Island Passage remains vulnerable. Human activities such as fishing, shipping, tourism, and navigation still pose a serious threat. Thus, this bill seeks to urgently declare the Verde Island Passage Marine Corridor as a Marine Protected Area and an Ecotourism Zone. The bill also proposes the creation of a management body that shall implement the existing management plan and the policies enunciated in the proposed Act.

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

MARIO VITTORIO "MARVEY" A. MARIÑO

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 900

Introduced by Rep. MARIO VITTORIO "MARVEY" A. MARIÑO
5th District, Batangas

AN ACT DECLARING THE VERDE ISLAND PASSAGE MARINE CORRIDOR AS A MARITIME PROTECTED AREA AND AN ECOTOURISM ZONE, CREATING FOR THE PURPOSE THE VERDE ISLAND PASSAGE MANAGEMENT BOARD, DEFINING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the "Verde Island Passage Marine Corridor Protected Area Act".

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. – Considering the Verde Island Marine Corridor is recognized as the world's center of marine biodiversity, it is hereby declared the policy of the State to conserve and protect its marine resources and promote the welfare of the human communities therein, their culture and way of life insofar as they are in harmony with nature. Towards this end, the State shall ensure the optimal resource utilization, conservation, protection, and promotion of the sustainable coastal and marine development of the areas covered by the Verde Island Passage Marine Corridor.

SECTION 3. Scope. – The Verde Island Passage Marine Corridor lies between the southern coast of the province of Batangas and the northern coast of Mindoro Island, more particularly described as follows:

Point	X		Y		LONGITUDE			LATITUDE			Remarks
	Coordinates	Coordinates	Coordinates	Coordinates	DEG	MIN	SEC	DEG	MIN	SEC	
1	121.45733	13.81120	121	27	26	13	48	40			Boundary bet. San Juan & Sariaya (River)
2	121.86471	13.56996	121	51	53	13	34	12			Northern tip of Marinduque (Mogpo)
3	122.03394	13.20391	122	2	0	13	12	14			Boundary of Buenavista & Torrijos (S. Tip)
4	122.14901	12.90621	122	8	56	13	54	22			Water
5	122.14901	12.11870	122	7	7	13	45	39			Water
6	122.09967	12.74913	122	5	59	13	44	57			Water
7	122.08140	12.74523	122	4	53	13	44	43			Water
8	122.08031	12.74514	122	4	49	13	44	43			Water
9	122.04462	12.74501	122	2	41	13	44	42			Water

10	122.00176	12.75186	122	0	6	13	45	7	Water
11	121.48678	12.99637	121	29	12	13	59	47	Boundary b/w Pinamalayan & Gloria
12	120.02122	13.44654	120	17	58	13	26	48	Tip of Paluan (Cape Calavite)
13	120.02540	13.88239	120	1	16	13	52	57	Cabra Island
14	120.02450	13.89695	120	1	31	13	53	48	Cabra Island A
15	120.58856	14.22214	120	35	19	14	13	20	Cabra Island A

SECTION 4. *Definition of Terms.* – The terms used in this Act are as follows:

Existing Management Plan shall refer to the Verde Island Passage Management Plan formulated and completed by the Ad Hoc Task Force on Verde Island Passage pursuant to Executive Order No. 578 issued on November 8, 2006.

Non-Government Organization (NGO) – any civic, developmental, environmental, or philanthropic non-stock, non-profit organization, duly registered, having by-laws, democratically-elected representatives, with qualifications, expertise and objectivity in activities concerning community organization and development, or resource and environmental conservation, management relative to protected areas.

Protected Area – a clearly defined geographical space, recognized, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values.

VIPMB -- Verde Island Management Board.

VIPMC -- Verde Island Passage Marine Corridor.

SECTION 5. *Verde Island Passage Management Board.* – A Verde Island Passage Management Board is hereby created under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to implement the existing management plan and policies enunciated under this Act. It shall be composed of:

- a. The Secretary of the DENR, as Chairperson;
- b. The Governors of the Province of Batangas, the Province of Marinduque, the Province of Mindoro Occidental, the Province of Mindoro Oriental, and the Province of Romblon, as co-chairpersons;
- c. The Executive Director of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR), as member;
- a. The Regional Director of the Department of Tourism (DOT) Region IV-A, as member;
- b. The Regional Director of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) Region IV-A, as member;
- c. The Regional Director of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), as member;

- d. The Regional Director of the Department of Health (DOH) Region IV-A, as member;
- e. The Regional Director of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) Region IV-A, as member;
- f. The Regional Director of the Department of Finance (DOF) Region IV-A, as member;
- g. The Regional Director of the Department of Justice (DOJ) Region IV-A, as member;
- h. The Regional Director of the Department of Energy (DOE) Region IV-A, as member;
- i. The Regional Director of the Department of Transportation (DOTr) Region IV-A, as member;
- j. The Regional Director of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Region IV-A, as member;
- k. The Regional Director of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Region IV-A, as member;
- l. The Regional Director of the Department of National Defense (DND) Region IV-A, as member;
- m. Two (2) representatives from the academe, to be appointed by the President upon recommendation of the DENR Secretary, as members; and
- n. Two (2) representatives from NGOs, to be chosen from among themselves in an election duly called for the purpose, as members.

SECTION 6. *Term.* – Except for government officials who shall serve ex-officio, every VIPMB member shall serve for a term of three (3) years; Provided, That the said member remains connected with the sector being represented. Whenever a vacancy occurs during the term of a member who does not represent the government, a new member shall be chosen in the same manner as the original process to serve the remaining term of the predecessor.

SECTION 7. *Powers and Functions of the Board.* – The VIPMB shall have the following powers and functions:

- a. Formulate the Verde Island Passage Marine Protected and Ecotourism Master Plan that is consistent with the existing Management Plan.
- b. Ensure the proper implementation and enforcement of existing laws, rules and regulations, policies, and programs within the VIPMC;

- c. Decide matters relating to planning, resource use and protection, and general administration of the area in accordance with the existing Management Plan Framework;
- d. Coordinate with national and local agencies, local government units, local communities, the academe, non-government organizations, and such other institutions to ensure the conservation, management, and proper zoning of coastal waters to reduce possible conflict in the use of resources in VIPMC;
- e. Provide guidelines and best practices for coastal and foreshore development planning that take into account the likelihood for increase storm activity, saltwater intrusion, and other climate change impacts;
- f. Initiate partnerships with the private sector and the local government units concerned on establishing processes for dealing with pollution, including but not limited to oil spills, through the Environmental Impact Assessment System;
- g. Facilitate access to technical assistance and information among different agencies, sectors, and local government units;
- h. Regulate construction, operation, and maintenance of structures and utilities within the VIPMC;
- i. Generate funds and accept donations and grants and exercise accountability over all funds that may accrue to the VIPMC;
- j. Convene a conflict resolution mechanism;
- k. Provide adequate measures to ensure consultation and participation of stakeholders;

SECTION 8. *The Secretariat.* – The Board, through a Resolution, shall establish a Secretariat to provide administrative support to the VIPMC Management Board. The Secretariat shall have the following functions:

- a. Coordinate day-to-day activities related to the implementation of the Management Plan;
- b. Arrange and service meetings of the Board; and
- c. Prepare the necessary reports and documents.

SECTION 9. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the initial operating expenses of the VIPMB shall be charge d to the appropriations authorized for the DENR. Thereafter, the sum necessary for the continued operation and maintenance of the VIPMB shall be charged from the user fees to be imposed by the respective local government units concerned. This income shall be derived from the tourist fess, contributions from industries and facilities directly benefiting from the use of the portions of VIPMC.

SECTION 10. *Implementing Rules.* – Within 90 days from its effectivity, the VIPMB and other concerned agencies shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the proper implementation of this Act.

SECTION 11. *Separability Clause.* – All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees, rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with any provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SECTION 12. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, executive orders, memorandum circulars inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby amended, repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 13. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect within fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation, whichever comes earlier.

Approved,