

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



Eighteenth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 671

Introduced by **Hon. Cyrille F. Abueg-Zaldivar**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Originally filed during the Sixteenth Congress as House Bill (H.B.) No. 6074, this bill was approved by the House of Representatives on Third (3rd) Reading and eventually transmitted to the Senate of the Philippines on September 16, 2015. Former Deputy Speaker Frederick F. Abueg re-filed it during the Seventeenth Congress as H.B. No. 5794, and the House again approved it on third reading on August 9, 2017, while the Senate received it on August 14, 2017.

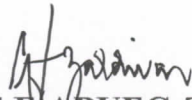
The proposed bill seeks to declare Gangub Cave in Barangay Sandoval, Municipality of Bataraza, Province of Palawan, as a Tourist Destination. Gangub Cave is located approximately twenty (20) kilometers from Bataraza's town center, accessible by bus or jeep, and by foot from the Provincial Road traversing Barangay Sandoval to Barangay Iwahig in approximately fifteen (15) minutes at a slow pace.

The cave resembles a ten-storey building with a towering height of more or less one hundred (100) feet from the base. Its main entrance has an elevation of at least thirty-nine (39) feet, which can be reached only by climbing the concrete steps toward the opening. Its façade is awe-inspiring, as it resembles that of a stately cathedral in the city. As one enters, enticing sounds emanating from the cave's multi-colored dome and created by the millions of small bats inhabiting Gangub Cave, welcome the visitor. The cave's main chamber is about thirty (30) meters and can be likened to the Peñablanca Cave of Cagayan and the Bathala Cave of Marinduque. The lower deck just beneath the cave's multi-colored dome can be utilized as an assembly hall that can accommodate approximately two hundred (200) people at a time. The upper deck, which is gloomy due to its distance from the entrance, may be utilized for taking pictures because of the picturesque spots found within the deck. The outermost deck located at the cave's southern portion appears to have been naturally designed as the vista lodge of the cave, where one can have a full view of the area down below and as far as the southern portion of the famous Mount Bolanjao. Here, visitors can take their lunch for it is well ventilated by the big opening at the southern portion. One can also rest by reclining upon the smooth rocks within the deck.

The numerous species of bats found in Gangub Cave also provide a good supply of guano, a high-value fertilizer. Unfortunately, it has been reported that at some point, residents and visitors would sneak in the cave and excavate the guano.

According to ancestral folklore, cavemen inhabited this cave in the early part of the fifteenth (15th) century. Gangub Cave is also known as “Panuyon Cave” from the Pala’wan word “panoy” that means “bats” or “paniki” in Filipino.

In view of the policy of the State to promote a tourism industry that is ecologically sustainable, responsible, participative, culturally sensitive, economically viable, and ethically and socially equitable for local communities, as declared in Republic Act 9593, otherwise known as “The Tourism Act of 2009,” the approval of this bill is earnestly recommended.


CYRILLE F. ABUEG-ZALDIVAR
Representative, 2nd District of Palawan

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AN ACT
DECLARING GANGUB CAVE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BATARAZA,
PROVINCE OF PALAWAN, 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:

1 **SECTION 1.** Gangub Cave is hereby a declared tourist destination. As
2 such, it shall be accorded with priority development by the Department of
3 Tourism (DOT) and shall be subject to the rules and regulations governing the
4 development of a tourist destination.

5 **SEC. 2.** The Department of Tourism, in accordance with the local
6 government units and other concerned agencies of the government shall, within
7 one (1) year after the approval of this Act, prepare a development plan involving
8 the construction, installation, and maintenance of such appropriate facilities and
9 infrastructure as shall enhance tourism in the area; *Provided,* That said
10 development plan shall ensure the preservation and conservation of the natural
11 resources of the area.

12 **SEC. 3.** The Department of Tourism shall take immediate steps in
13 implementing the tourism development plan that will suit the natural
14 characteristic of Gangub Cave and shall incorporate the same in its overall
15 development plans and programs for national implementation.

1 **SEC. 4.** It shall be the responsibility of the DOT to promote Gangub
2 Cave as a tourism area in all its national, regional and local promotion programs.

3 **SEC. 5.** The Secretary of Tourism shall issue such rules and regulations
4 as may be necessary to carry out the purpose of this Act.

5 **SEC. 6.** The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act
6 shall be included in the General Appropriations Act of the year following its
7 enactment into law and thereafter.

8 **SEC. 7.** All laws, rules, regulations, proclamations, executive orders or
9 parts thereof inconsistent with this Act, are hereby amended accordingly.

10 **SEC. 8.** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in
11 the Official Gazette or in two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,