

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

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 2680

Introduced by Rep. Wilfredo Mark M. Enverga

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Tourism plays a significant role in the social, economical, cultural and environmental development of society. It contributes to sustainable development of the country. It creates jobs and opportunity for people to increase their income and improve their living conditions. Today, tourism industry is one of the world's fastest growing economic sectors and largest employer of manpower of the country.

Republic Act No. 9593 otherwise known as "The Tourism Act of 2009" 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.

Polillo Group of islands (POGI as commonly used by its inhabitants) lies on the southeast part of Luzon in the province of Quezon. It is a cluster of 27 islands and islets including Balesin Island. Surrounded by seas, Lamon bay on the south and west and the vast Pacific Ocean on the east, it has 5 towns and its main island- the Polillo Main Island, is the biggest island (approximately 29 km from the mainland of Luzon) comprising the towns of Polillo, Burdeos and Panukulan, while Jomalig and Patnanungan are also two separate major islands.

Polillo Main Island, consisting of coastal municipalities of Polillo, Burdeos and Panukulan are holiday paradise in the Pacific Ocean, has remained largely untouched by tourism to this day. In between these municipalities are various existing and potential beach resorts notably, Treasure Island in Panukulan and Isla Polillo and more than a dozen resorts. Not to mention the famous Balesin Island Resort and the Minasawa Game Refuge and Bird Sanctuary an islet where threatened birds live and thrive. Apart from white sands that stretch as far as the eye can see; it has 25,000-hectare coral reefs found in Polillo town alone. With a rich marine life to boot, these islands are the perfect venue for snorkeling and diving.

Burdeos, Quezon on the other hand is a place to be for a taste of history. Traditional customs that have been practiced since pre-Spanish times are still observed to this day, making it an interesting place to visit during festivals. Burdeos has a natural charm with incomparable hospitality that everyone who visits the island would make a promise to return. Other well-known destination of Burdeos, Binunbunan Island is the most preferred camping site because of its proximity to Brgy. San Rafael. Visiting other islets like Anilon Island and Anawan Island are also worth mentioning. Finally in the Patnanungan border one can visit Malaguinoan, Chuvak and Tikling Islands.

Another well-known destination within Burdeos is the Isla Puting Bato, you can choose to explore the 7 caves or admire the limestone cliff formations. Pulong Buhangin/Luli Sandbar is also nearby so it can also be reached as well.

In Panukulan, also located at the main island of Polillo, has some named tourist spots with historical importance such as the panoramic view at Hook Bay and Pinagbanderahan. Both are worth visiting as well. Fish sanctuaries and Bakawan (Mangroves) are some of the wonders the town and its areas can offer.

Patnanungan, Quezon is another main island in Polillo Group of Islands. It has also a long coastline of beaches, Pulang Lupa and Leira's Beach are the places worth visiting.

In the near future, major land development company will built a gateway resort to exclusive Balisin Island Resort with hotels, recreational facilities and airport of international standards.

Jomalig, the farthest island, is also a tourism destination area. There is Salibungot Beach and Canaway Rock islets are the main attractive spots. Canaway Rock Islets, the second most visited site in Jomalig. Located in the shallow bluegreen seawater, it is composed of three rock islets that is used as a habitat of various species of marine animals such as the hermit crabs and sea snails.

Mauban, Quezon while not included in the Polillo Group of Islands is likewise a tourism potential across the aforementioned group of islands.

Recognized by the Department of Tourism as tourism area, Mauban is a first class municipality with a natural scenic view, hospitable people and delectable foods.

Famous in Mauban is the Cagbalete Island. The island is mystical and is famous for its long seashore during low tide. It is located at Lamon Bay, Mauban and is often compared to Boracay Island of Aklan as it has tranquil turquoise waters and fine white sands that can only be reached via boat ride. There are other numerous beaches and tourism destination in Mauban noteworthy to be visited and explored.

This bill seeks to commence the development and promotion of the tourism potentials of the Polillo Group of Islands and Mauban, Quezon (POGI+Mauban) by declaring it as a tourism zone. Through this, heightened economic activities will happen and the people will benefit and the development of the islands will be achieved.

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

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**AN ACT DECLARING POLILLO GROUP OF ISLANDS
AND THE MUNICIPALITY OF MAUBAN IN THE
PROVINCE OF QUEZON A TOURISM ZONE**

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

SECTION 1. This Act hereby declares the Polillo Group of Islands of Polillo, Burdeos, Panukulan, Patnanungan and Jomalig and the Municipality of Mauban, all in the Province of Quezon as national tourism zone.

SECTION 2. The Department of Tourism (DOT), in coordination with the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA) and other concerned agencies of the government, shall, within one (1) year after the approval of this Act, prepare the development plan involving the construction, installation and/or maintenance of such appropriate facilities and infrastructure which shall enhance tourism in the said group of islands; *Provided, That* said development shall ensure the preservation, protection and enhancement of the natural features, historic significance and cultural heritage of the tourism zone, while providing sustainable economic opportunities for the local community.

SECTION 3. The Department of Tourism (DOT) shall take immediate steps to implement the said development plan and incorporate the same in the Department's overall tourism development program for the ensuing calendar year.

SECTION 4. The Department of Tourism (DOT) and its attached agencies may provide necessary technical and financial assistance for the development of tourism infrastructure and skills development in the local government while endeavoring, when practicable, to promote the tourism zones both locally and internationally.

SECTION 5. The Department of Tourism (DOT) and the concerned local government units shall create a forum by which the private sector, nongovernment organizations and other interest groups, can interact with one another and the government to create an atmosphere that shall encourage investment, and the development of a culture of tourism.

SECTION 6. The Department of Tourism (DOT) shall likewise promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the proper implementation of this Act.

SECTION 7. This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days of completion of its publication.

Approved,