

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
H. No. 1128

Introduced by **Representative Raul C. Tupas**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

**AN ACT DECLARING THE ISLAS DE GIGANTES IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF
CARLES, PROVINCE OF ILOILO AS AN ECOTOURISM ZONE AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

The travel and tourism sector contributed a total of Php 3.35 trillion to the Philippine economy in 2017, accounting for about 21% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP), according to the latest report from the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC). The sector also directly supported some 2.3 million jobs or about 5.8% of employment last year. This is expected to rise by 6.6% in 2018 and rise by 2.6% to 3.2 million jobs in 2028.¹

The Western Visayas Tourist Arrival Data from DOT Region VI show that a total of 5.9 million tourists visited the region in 2017 and spent a total of Php 128.46 billion in terms of tourist receipts. Of this, the Province of Iloilo hosted around 1.3 million tourists in 2017.²

Certainly, travel and tourism remains one of the largest economic sectors in the Philippines. The booming travel and tourism sector is currently driving the growth of many industries as it continues to create jobs, drive exports and generate prosperity for the country.

Pursuant to the policy of the State to promote sustainable tourism industry throughout the country, this bill seeks to declare the Islas de Gigantes in the Municipality of Carles, Province of Iloilo as an ecotourism zone with the goal of developing and promoting the island into a tourist destination, generating investments and creating job opportunities, and protecting the natural resources within the area.

Islas de Gigantes is an island chain within the larger Western Visayas archipelago in the Visayan Sea. It is politically located in the Municipality of Carles, Iloilo and has four barangays: (1) Asluman; (2) Granada; (3) Lantangan; and (4) Gabi.

¹ <https://www.wttc.org/-/media/files/reports/economic-impact-research/countries-2018/philippines2018.pdf>

² Official Western Visayas 2017 Tourist Arrivals Data

The Gigantes Islands consist of several islands; the two largest are Gigantes Norte (North Gigantes) and Gigantes Sur (South Gigantes). In addition to the two main islands, the Gigantes group includes the following minor islets: Cabugao Gamay, Cabugao Dako, Bulubadiang, Gigantillo, Antonia, Bantigui, Tanguingui, Turnina, Polopandan, Waydahon and Gigantuna.

The islands are blessed with pristine white sand beaches, bountiful fresh seafood, and jagged rock formations. Some of the main tourist attractions are the Cabugao Gamay Island, Tangke Salt Water Lagoon, and the North Gigantes Island Lighthouse. Despite the increase of tourist arrivals in recent years, Gigantes has retained its off-beat charm and remains relatively underdeveloped compared to Boracay, Bohol, and other mainstream tourist destinations in the Philippines.

This bill is in line with the National Tourism Development Plan of the government which supports the development of Philippine tourism product and raises the competitiveness of the Philippines as a tourism destination.

The bill was deliberated and approved on Third Reading by the House of Representatives during the 17th Congress.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate consideration and passage of the bill is earnestly sought.


RAUL "BOBOY" C. TUPAS

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

SECTION 1. This Act shall be known as the "Islas de Gigantes Ecotourism Zone Act."

SECTION 2. It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote a tourism industry that is ecologically sustainable, responsible, participative, culturally-sensitive, economically viable and equitably beneficial to local communities.

SECTION 3. The Islas de Gigantes consisting of four (4) barangays, namely, Asluman, Granada, Lantangan, and Gabi located in the Municipality of Carles, Province of Iloilo, is hereby declared as an ecotourism zone, to be known as Islas de Gigantes Ecotourism Zone. 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 ecotourism zones.

The DOT shall prepare the development plan for Islas de Gigantes and shall incorporate the same in the overall National Tourism Development Plan. The plan shall be implemented jointly with the Municipality of Carles, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA).

The DOT, in coordination with the Municipality of Carles, the DENR, the TIEZA and other concerned agencies of the government, shall delineate well-defined geographic areas within the Islas de Gigantes Ecotourism Zone and coordinate the integrated development of the area for the optimum use of natural assets and attractions. The development shall ensure the preservation of the flora and fauna and perpetuate the historic significance of the identified tourist attractions.

SECTION 4. The Secretaries of the DOT, DENR and the Chief Operating Officer of the TIEZA shall include in their respective programs the implementation of this Act, the

29 funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act and
30 internally generate funds of the DOT.

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32 **SECTION 5.** Within sixty (60) days after the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of the
33 DOT, in consultation with the DENR, the TIEZA and the Municipality of Carles, shall
34 promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the proper implementation of this
35 Act.

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37 **SECTION 6.** All laws, orders, decrees, rules and regulations and other issuances, or
38 parts thereof, which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified
39 accordingly.

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41 **SECTION 7.** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least
42 two (2) newspaper of general circulation.

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44 Approved,