

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

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session
House Bill No. 1233

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Introduced by Honorable REYNALDO V. UMALI

EXPLANATORY NOTE

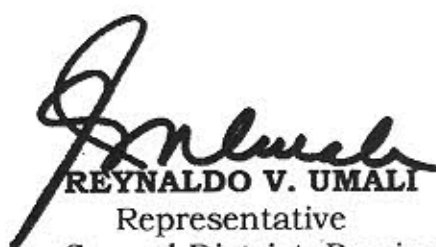
This bill seeks to declare Verde Island Passage as Marine Protected Area (MPA) and Eco-Tourism Zone.

The Province of Oriental Mindoro is bestowed with various natural aquatic treasures one of which is known as the Verde Island.

Verde Island Passage has been described as the "center of the world's marine biodiversity" in a joint study by America's Smithsonian Institute. The passage is hosts to spectacular reef formations of more than 300 species of coral and underwater rock canyons that is home to more than a half of the world's known shore fish species. The Verde Island Passage is about 100 kilometers in length and about 20 kilometers across at its narrowest point.

Cognizant of the potential of eco-tourism in becoming an economic pump-primer and the urgency of protecting, conserving and promoting the sustainable use of the Verde Island Passage, the proponent strongly recommend the enactment of this bill.

In view of thereof, early consideration and approval of this bill is earnestly sought.


REYNALDO V. UMALI
Representative

Second District, Province of Oriental Mindoro

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**AN ACT SEEKING TO DECLARE VERDE ISLAND PASSAGE AS A MARINE
PROTECTED AREA (MPA) AND ECO TOURISM ZONE**

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

SECTION 1. It is hereby declared the policy of the state to protect its natural resources in relation to the promotion of a sustainable tourism industry. Towards that end, the country shall formulate effective strategies, conserve its resources and to enable the industry to become a major source of livelihood and employment as well as rationalize all efforts pertaining to environmental protection. Henceforth, aggressive measure seeking to restore the country's share in the global tourist market shall be consistent with the preservation of the natural environment and the ecosystem.

SECTION 2. **Declaration of Policy.** – Pursuant to public policy, the Verde Island Passage is hereby declared as a Marine Protected Area and Eco-tourism Zone. As such, it shall be subject to the rules and regulations governing the development of eco-tourism zone. Protections in various areas range from limits on development, fishing gear types, fishing seasons, catch limits, moorings, to complete ban on removing marine life of any kind.

SECTION 3. **Marine Protected Area and Eco-tourism Master Plan.** – Within a year from the approval of this Act, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, in coordination with the Department of Tourism, the Local Government Units, and with other concerned agencies of the government, shall prepare a marine protected area and eco-tourism master plan, promulgate the necessary rules and regulations, review and strengthen existing local structural framework to enhance cooperation and support. Provided, that said development plan shall ensure the preservation of the natural resources in the area.

SECTION 4. **Implementing Agencies.** – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources, in coordination with the Department of Tourism, shall take immediate steps to implement said development program for the ensuing calendar year.

SECTION 5. **Promulgation of Rules and Regulations.** - The Department of Environment and Natural Resources, together with the Department of Tourism, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the proper implementation of this Act.

SECTION 6. **Appropriation.** The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be taken from the appropriation of the General Appropriations Act of the year following its enactment into law and thereafter.

SECTION 7. **Separability Clause.** Should any provision herein be declared unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity of other provisions of this Act.

SECTION 8. **Repealing Clause.** – All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SECTION 9. **Effectivity Clause.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.