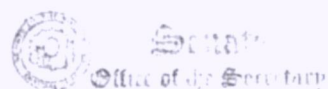


SENATE

S. No. 878



'19 AUG -7 P1:55

Introduced by Senator Manuel "Lito" M. Lapid

RECEIVED

**AN ACT  
ESTABLISHING AN INTER-GOVERNMENTAL TASK FORCE FOR THE PROTECTION  
AND ASSISTANCE OF TOURISTS**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Tourism remains as a major driver of economic growth in our country. As reported by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), the tourism sector contributed 12.7% to the country's gross domestic product (GDP) for the year 2018 which amounted to Php 2.2 Trillion. The industry is likewise a source of employment for our citizens as the share of employment in tourism industries to total employment was recorded at 13% or Php 5.4 Million in 2018.<sup>1</sup>

For this year, tourist arrivals continue to flourish with the Department of Tourism (DOT) reporting a growth rate of 15.62% for the period of covering the month of May 2019 as compared to the figures of May 2018. South Korea, China and the United States registered the three highest volume of tourists equivalent to more than 50% of the total tourist arrivals for May 2019.<sup>2</sup>

To be able to sustain this upward trend experienced by the sector, it is necessary that programs, policies and projects are put in place to protect the welfare of both foreign and domestic tourists in order to boost our image and stature as an international tourist destination. Therefore, the coordination and cooperation among the different government agencies related to tourist protection

<sup>1</sup> <https://psa.gov.ph/tourism-satellite-accounts-press-releases>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.tourism.gov.ph/industry\\_performance/may2019/May2019a3b.pdf](http://www.tourism.gov.ph/industry_performance/may2019/May2019a3b.pdf)

and assistance must be fostered. This bill proposes the creation of the Tourist Protection and Assistance Task Force to be composed of the DOT, Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Transportation (DOTr), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Department of Justice (DOJ), the Philippine National Police (PNP) and other government and private sector representatives. The Task Force will serve as the umbrella agency to ensure the adoption of uniform standards on signages, promotion of multi-lingualism on travel and tourism information, establishment of an assistance system, and the creation of help desks, among others.

Early approval of this bill is earnestly sought.



MANUEL "LITO" M. LAPID  
Senator

SENATE

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AN ACT  
ESTABLISHING AN INTER-GOVERNMENTAL TASK FORCE FOR THE PROTECTION  
AND ASSISTANCE OF TOURISTS

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

1       Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Tourist Protection  
2 and Assistance Act”.

3       Sec. 2. *Declaration of Principles.* – The State recognizes tourism as a major  
4 contributor to the country's economic growth. Towards this end, the State shall  
5 endeavor to enact measures for the protection and assistance of tourists, both  
6 domestic and foreign, during their travel around the country.

7       Sec. 3. *Tourist Protection and Assistance Task Force.* – Within nine (9)  
8 months after the approval of this Act, the Secretary of the Department of Tourism  
9 (DOT) shall establish an intergovernmental task force to be known as the “Tourist  
10 Protection and Assistance Task Force”, hereinafter referred to as the “Task Force.”

11       It shall be the duty of the Task Force to facilitate, through the concerned  
12 national government agencies and local government units (LGUs), the following:

13       (a) Adoption of uniform standards on signage for use throughout the  
14 Philippines in order to facilitate travel in the country;



- (b) Provision of directional signages in tourism facilities and destinations, including airports, seaports, land border crossings, highways, and bus, train, and other public transit locations'
- (c) Preparation and dissemination of multilingual travel and tourism information and promotional materials;
- (d) Establishment of a toll-free telephone assistance system run by multilingual operators to provide assistance to domestic and foreign tourists;
- (e) Coordination with LGUs for the establishment of tourist help desks in identified tourist destinations; and
- (f) Institution of measures to prevent unlawful acts or harassment committed on tourists.

Sec. 4. *Composition of the Task Force.* – The Task Force shall be composed of the following:

- (a) Secretary of the DOT or the duly designated representative as Chairperson;
- (b) Secretary of the Department of Interior and Local Government or the duly designated representative, as Vice Chairperson;
- (c) Secretary of the Department of Transportation or the duly designated representative;
- (d) Secretary of the Department of Public Works and Highways or the duly designated representative;
- (e) Secretary of the Department of Justice or the duly designated representative;
- (f) Director General of the Philippine National Police or the duly designated representative;
- (g) Such other representatives of other government agencies and private sector entities as may be determined to be appropriate to the mission of the Task Force by the Chairperson, as members.

1           The Task Force shall meet whenever necessary.

2           Sec. 5. *Funding.* – The amount necessary to cover the expenses for the  
3 operation of the Task Force shall be charged against the existing appropriation of  
4 the DOT as contained in the annual General Appropriations Act.

5           Funds for the implementation of the programs and projects that shall be  
6 approved by the Task Force shall be included in the appropriation of the  
7 implementing agencies concerned.

8           Sec. 6. *Separability Clause.* - Should any provision of this Act or the  
9 application thereof to any person or circumstance be held invalid, the other  
10 provisions or sections of this Act shall not be affected thereby.

11          Sec. 7. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and  
12 regulations or parts thereof which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed,  
13 amended or modified accordingly.

14          Sec. 8. *Effectivity Clause.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days  
15 following its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of  
16 general circulation.

17          *Approved,*