



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

H. No. 6930

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BY REPRESENTATIVES MARQUEZ AND NOGRALES (K.A.),  
PER COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 568

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AN ACT DECLARING THE BAKHAWAN ECO-PARK IN  
BARANGAY NEW BUSWANG, MUNICIPALITY OF  
KALIBO, PROVINCE OF AKLAN AN ECOTOURISM ZONE  
AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

1           SECTION 1. *Declaration of Policy.* – The State is mandated  
2 to promote a tourism industry that is ecologically sustainable,  
3 responsible, participative, culturally sensitive, economically viable  
4 and equitably beneficial to local communities.

5           SEC. 2. *Bakhawan Eco-Park Ecotourism Zone.* –  
6 The Bakhawan Eco-Park in Barangay New Buswang, Municipality  
7 of Kalibo, Province of Aklan is hereby declared a community-based  
8 ecotourism zone. As such, its development shall be prioritized by  
9 the Department of Tourism (DOT), subject to the rules and  
10 regulations governing the development of ecotourism zones.

11           SEC. 3. *Objectives.* – Pursuant to the above declaration  
12 of policy, the State shall seek to:

1 (a) Develop and promote responsible "community-based  
2 ecological tourism" as the core management strategy in the  
3 development of the Bakhawan Eco-Park;

4 (b) Ensure the conservation of the biodiversity and the  
5 preservation of said eco-park;

6 (c) Develop tourism products and programs that shall  
7 generate employment and livelihood for the local residents and  
8 nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) concerned, consistent with  
9 the preservation and maintenance of the mangrove forest;

10 (d) Guarantee that the financial and economic benefits  
11 of the tourism industry are equitably shared by and distributed  
12 among the local residents and NGOs concerned, by giving  
13 preference and support to community- and home-based tourism  
14 enterprises, such as micro and small businesses, like local inns,  
15 lodges and homestays, restaurants, food and fruit stands, and other  
16 similar tourism-oriented industries and businesses;

17 (e) Ensure that the quality of local tourism programs  
18 and activities are educational and enriching for tourists and visitors  
19 through the provision of orientation, educational and tour programs  
20 by local tour operators, NGOs, the municipal government of Kalibo  
21 and the DOT; and

22 (f) Guarantee that, in the development and promotion  
23 of the local tourism industry, the municipal government of Kalibo  
24 ensures that the need of local residents for water, food, energy and  
25 local construction materials is adequately met.

1           SEC. 4. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act:

2           (a) *Biodiversity conservation* refers to the practice of  
3 preserving the variety of species, habits and ecosystems, and genetic  
4 diversity of the place, including *inter alia*, terrestrial, marine and  
5 other aquatic ecosystems, and the ecological complexes which they  
6 are a part of;

7           (b) *Community-based tourism* refers to a form of tourism  
8 where the local community and its residents have substantial  
9 control over and involvement in the development and management  
10 of the local tourism industry and a greater portion of the economic  
11 gains remain within the community;

12          (c) *Ecotourism* refers to a form of sustainable tourism within  
13 a natural area where community participation, protection and  
14 management of natural resources, cultural and indigenous  
15 knowledge and practices, environmental education and ethics,  
16 as well as economic benefits are fostered and pursued for the  
17 enrichment of host communities and satisfaction of visitors;

18          (d) *Homestay* refers to a system of tourist accommodation  
19 where a tourist stays with local residents and experiences the  
20 day-to-day life of the residents of the Bakhawan Eco-Park  
21 community, Barangay New Buswang and the Municipality of  
22 Kalibo; and

23          (e) *Responsible ecotourism* refers to a form of sustainable  
24 tourism in which both the tourism sector and the tourists take  
25 responsibility in the protection, respect, and conservation of the  
26 natural environment and the local culture and ways of life,  
27 and where community participation as well as economic benefits

1 are fostered and pursued for the well-being of the local people  
2 in Barangay New Buswang and visitors.

3 SEC. 5. *Scope and Coverage.* – This Act shall cover the  
4 boundaries of the two hundred twenty (220)-hectare mangrove  
5 forest of the Bakhawan Eco-Park in Barangay New Buswang,  
6 Municipality of Kalibo, Province of Aklan.

7 The setting of technical boundaries of the ecotourism zone  
8 shall be undertaken by the Department of Environment and  
9 Natural Resources (DENR) and other concerned agencies.

10 SEC. 6. *Tourism Development Plan for the Bakhawan*  
11 *Eco-Park.* – The DOT, in coordination with the DENR,  
12 shall assist the municipal government of Kalibo in the formulation  
13 of a tourism development plan for the Bakhawan Eco-Park that  
14 shall be complemented by a set of guidelines for a responsible,  
15 community-based ecotourism.

16 The tourism development plan shall ensure the preservation  
17 of the area and shall include the following components:

- 18 (a) Carrying capacity of the eco-park;
- 19 (b) Specific site assessment;
- 20 (c) Identification of strategic priorities;
- 21 (d) Product development plans for local income generation;
- 22 (e) Capacity-building for the local community so residents  
23 therein can ably manage economically viable and responsible,  
24 community-based ecotourism business enterprises;
- 25 (f) Strategies to promote the formulation of local production  
26 groups and networks, including the marketing and pricing of  
27 products; and

1 (g) Marketing strategies that uphold the natural, social  
2 and environmental integrity of the Bakhawan Eco-Park  
3 and its local residents.

4 The process of formulating the tourism development plan  
5 for the Bakhawan Eco-Park shall be participatory, with the  
6 framework to be provided by the DOT and the DENR,  
7 in consultation with the local governments of Kalibo and Barangay  
8 New Buswang.

9 *SEC. 7. Formulation of Guidelines and Standards.* -  
10 The concerned Protected Area Management Board of the DENR  
11 and the local tourism council, in coordination with the local  
12 governments of Kalibo and Barangay New Buswang, shall assist in  
13 the formulation of local tourism standards, ensuring that  
14 environmental protection is integrated in the development of  
15 ecotourism plans.

16 These local tourism standards shall:

17 (a) Raise the capacity of all stakeholders and ensure that best  
18 practices are followed;

19 (b) Ensure optional use of water and energy;

20 (c) Reduce waste and pollution through the encouragement  
21 and recycling and environmentally-sound waste management  
22 disposal schemes, with a principle of taking as much waste away  
23 from the eco-park as possible;

24 (d) Prevent vandalism in the facilities of the eco-park; and

25 (e) Encourage the use of local produce and services, and  
26 support the employment of local people.

1           SEC. 8. *Coordination with National Agencies.* - The  
2 DOT shall closely coordinate with the municipal government  
3 of Kalibo, as well as the regional offices of the DENR, Department  
4 of Labor and Employment, Department of Public Works and  
5 Highways, Department of Transportation, Department of  
6 Agriculture, Department of Education, Department of Trade  
7 and Industry, Department of the Interior and Local Government,  
8 Philippine National Police, Maritime Industry Authority, and other  
9 line agencies of the government in the implementation of this Act.

10           SEC. 9. *Appropriations.* - The Secretary of the DOT  
11 shall include in the Department's program the implementation  
12 of this Act, the funding of which shall be included in the annual  
13 General Appropriations Act and from internally generated funds  
14 of the DOT.

15           SEC. 10. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* -  
16 Within thirty (30) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DOT and  
17 the DENR, in consultation with the municipal government of Kalibo  
18 and other concerned government agencies and stakeholders, shall  
19 promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the proper  
20 implementation of this Act.

21           SEC. 11. *Separability Clause.* - If, for any reason,  
22 any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the  
23 other provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall  
24 continue to be in full force and effect.

25           SEC. 12. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, executive  
26 orders, proclamations and administrative regulations, or parts

1 thereof, inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed or modified  
2 accordingly.

3       SEC. 13. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect  
4 fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette*  
5 or in any newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,

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