



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

H. No. 7656

BY REPRESENTATIVE VELASCO, PER COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 490

AN ACT
DECLARING THE MUNICIPALITY OF STA. CRUZ, PROVINCE OF
MARINDUQUE, 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. *Short Title.*** – This Act shall be known as the “*Santa Cruz Ecotourism*
2 *Act.*”

3 **SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to
4 promote a sustainable and effective ecotourism industry to attract tourists, both local and
5 foreign. Towards this end, the country shall rationalize all efforts to make the tourism
6 industry a major source of livelihood and an avenue for economic development. Moreover,
7 measures shall be taken to ensure that tourism development is consistent with the
8 preservation of the existing ecosystem and natural environment.

9 **SEC. 3. *Santa Cruz Ecotourism Zone.*** –The Municipality of Santa Cruz, located in
10 the Province of Marinduque, is hereby declared an ecotourism zone. As such, its development
11 shall be prioritized by the Department of Tourism (DOT) and other concerned agencies,
12 subject to the rules and regulations governing the development of ecotourism zones.

1 In particular, the development of the following areas shall be given focus by the DOT,
2 other concerned government agencies and the municipal government of Santa Cruz:

- 3 a) Islands of Maniwaya, Mongpong and Polo;
- 4 b) Bagumbungan Cave;
- 5 c) Busay Falls in Barangay Pag-asa;
- 6 d) Kawa-kawa Falls in Barangay Bangcuangan; and
- 7 e) Santa Cruz Church.

8 **SEC. 4. *Ecotourism Governing Board.*** – Within one (1) year from the approval of
9 this Act, there shall be created the Santa Cruz Ecotourism Governing Board, to be composed
10 of the following:

- 11 a) Mayor of the Municipality of Santa Cruz, as *ex-officio* Chairperson;
- 12 b) Secretary of the Department of Tourism (DOT) or a duly-authorized
13 representative, as member;
- 14 c) Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) or a
15 duly-authorized representative, as member;
- 16 d) Representative of the Lone District of Marinduque or a duly-authorized
17 representative, as member;
- 18 e) Representative from an accredited non-governmental organization whose
19 advocacy is environmental preservation, as member;
- 20 f) Representative from the academe, as member; and
- 21 g) Representative from the business sector, as member.

22 The Board shall prepare the necessary rules and regulations for the proper
23 implementation of this Act and shall, when necessary, amend, modify or revise such rules
24 and regulations to meet existing needs.

1 The Provincial Government of Marinduque shall provide a Secretariat for the Board
2 including the funding necessary to cover expenses for the performance of its official
3 functions and activities.

4 **SEC. 5. *Ecotourism Development Plan.*** – Within one (1) year from the approval of
5 this Act, the DOT, in coordination with the municipal government of Santa Cruz, the
6 Representative of the Lone District of Marinduque and other concerned government agencies,
7 shall prepare an ecotourism development plan containing among others the construction,
8 installation and maintenance of such appropriate facilities and infrastructure that shall
9 enhance tourism in the Municipality of Santa Cruz, particularly in the Islands of Maniwaya,
10 Mongpong and Polo; Bagumbungan Cave; Busay Falls in Barangay Pag-asa;Kawa-kawa
11 Falls in Barangay Bangcuangan; and Santa Cruz Church: *Provided*, That said development
12 plan shall ensure the preservation and conservation of the natural beauty and indigenous
13 nature of the locality.

14 **SEC. 6. *Implementation of the Plan.*** The DOT shall take immediate steps in
15 implementing the ecotourism development plan and incorporate the same in its overall
16 development plans and programs for national implementation.

17 **SEC. 7. *Appropriations.*** The Secretary of the DOT shall include in the Department's
18 program the implementation of this Act, the funding of which shall be included in the annual
19 General Appropriations Act and from internally generated funds of the DOT.

20 **SEC. 8. *Separability Clause.*** – If any provision of this Act shall be declared
21 unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force
22 and effect.

23 **SEC. 9. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, rules, regulations, presidential decrees and
24 other issuances inconsistent with any of the provisions of this Act are hereby deemed
25 repealed or amended accordingly.

1 **SEC. 10. *Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication
2 in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

3 *Approved,*

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