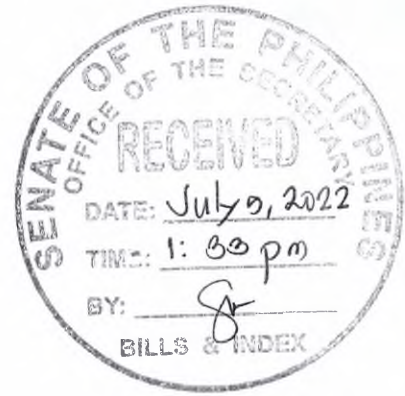


NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



SENATE

S. No. 33

Introduced by Senator Manuel "Lito" M. Lapid

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

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Tourism remains to be a major driver of economic growth in our country as it continues to generate income, employment, investment, and exports as well as preserving cultural heritage, improved infrastructure and local community facilities. As reported by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), the tourism sector contributed 12.7% to the country's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2019 which amounted to Php 2.48 Trillion. However, due to the pandemic, this dramatically dropped to 5.4% in 2020¹. 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 13.5% in the same year, which also significantly declined to 11.9% in 2020.

However, with the reopening of the Philippine borders to international travelers, Philippine tourism is expected to grow by almost 7% over the next decade. According to the Chief Executive Officer of World Travel and Tourism Council Julia Simson, nearly 3 million new jobs could be created over the same period, which is about 21.5% of all jobs in the Philippines.²

¹ <https://www.bworldonline.com/top-stories/2021/06/17/376325/tourism-contribution-to-gdp-lowest-in-at-least-2-decades/>

² <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2022/04/21/2175656/philippine-tourism-industry-bounced-back-2021>

Sadyang napakahalaga po ng turismo sa ating bansa sapagkat hindi lamang ito pinagmumulan ng revenue para sa marami nating lokal na pamahalaan, ito ay pinagmumulan din ng kabuhayan ng marami nating kababayan. Karamihan pa sa mga negosyong nagsisilbi sa tourism sector ay nasa kategoriyang Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) na tuwirang tumutulong sa ating mga pamayanan habang isinusulong ang ating ekonomiya.

Kaya po dapat tayong magsulong ng mga programa na tutulong sa industriya ng turismo sa pamamagitan ng pagtugon sa pangangailangan ng mga panauhin sa ating bansa. Sa ganitong paraan po ay ma-enganyo po natin na lalo pang dumami ang mga turista, lokal man o mula sa ibang bansa.

To be able to achieve this upward forecast in 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 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 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 multilingualism on travel and tourism information, establishment of an assistance system, and the creation of help desks, among others.

In view of this, early passage of this bill is sought.


MANUEL "LITO" M. LAPID
Senator

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S. No. 33

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**AN ACT
ESTABLISHING AN INTER-AGENCY GOVERNMENT 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 and
2 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) months
8 after the approval of this Act, the Secretary of the Department of Tourism (DOT) shall
9 establish an intergovernmental task force to be known as the "Tourist Protection and
10 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 Philippines
14 in order to facilitate travel in the country;

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

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

- 14 (a) Secretary of the DOT or the duly designated representative as
15 Chairperson;
- 16 (b) Secretary of the Department of Interior and Local Government or the duly
17 designated representative, as Vice Chairperson;
- 18 (c) Secretary of the Department of Transportation or the duly designated
19 representative;
- 20 (d) Secretary of the Department of Public Works and Highways or the duly
21 designated representative;
- 22 (e) Secretary of the Department of Justice or the duly designated
23 representative;
- 24 (f) Director General of the Philippine National Police or the duly designated
25 representative;
- 26 (g) Such other representatives of other government agencies and private
27 sector entities as may be determined to be appropriate to the mission of
28 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 the
4 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 implementing
7 agencies concerned.

8 Sec. 6. *Separability Clause.* - Should any provision of this Act or the application
9 thereof to any person or circumstance be held invalid, the other provisions or sections
10 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 following
15 its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general
16 circulation.

17 *Approved,*