

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



'22 AUG 15 P5 :23

SENATE
S. B. No. 1166

RECEIVED BY

Introduced by Senator SONNY ANGARA

AN ACT
DECLARING PAG-ASA ISLAND CLUSTER IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF
KALAYAAN, PROVINCE OF PALAWAN AS AN ECOTOURISM DESTINATION
AND PROTECTED AREA, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to declare the Pag-asa island and its adjoining islands of Parola, Kota and Panata, collectively referred to as the Pag-asa Island Cluster in the Municipality of Kalayaan, Palawan as a special ecological tourism zone. This is being pursued to promote and develop the island cluster, which sits well within the territory of the Republic of the Philippines, as a tourist destination for domestic and international tourists while protecting its natural resources and diverse flora and fauna. In addition, the measure also seeks to declare the islands of Parola, Kota and Panata as protected area under the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS).

Pag-asa Island, located 480 kilometers off southwestern Palawan, is the largest in the cluster that is effectively occupied by the Philippines, and the second largest island in the whole Kalayaan Island Group (Spratlys) in the West Philippine Sea. It is the only Philippine-occupied island in the Spratlys that is inhabited by civilians. With its impeccable beauty, the island is an ideal tourist destination.

To help realize the broad objectives of this measure, there shall be established a Pag-asa Island Ecotourism Cluster Governing Board which shall be composed of the Governor of Palawan as Chairperson, the Congressional Representative of the First District of Palawan as Co-Chairperson, the Department of Environment and Natural

Resources (DENR) Regional Executive Director for Region IV-B as Vice Chairperson, the Department of Tourism (DOT) Regional Director for Region IV-B as Co-Vice Chairperson, the Mayor of the Municipality of Kalayaan, the Barangay Chairperson of Pag-asa, the commander of the AFP Western Command, a member of a nongovernment organization whose advocacy is environmental preservation, a member of the academe, a representative of the business sector, and a representative of the private sector. This Board shall rationalize all efforts pertaining to environmental protection and making the tourism industry a major source of livelihood for the covered municipality and an avenue for employment generation.

This proposed measure also mandates the Pag-asa Island Ecotourism Cluster Governing Board in coordination with the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA) to prepare an eco-tourism master plan to ensure the promotion of tourism, the generation of employment and most importantly, the protection and preservation of the area's environment and ecosystem.

In view of the foregoing, immediate passage of this bill is earnestly requested.



SONNY ANGARA
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Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representative of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

1 Section 1. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State
2 to promote a sustainable ecotourism industry to attract local and foreign tourists to
3 secure the country’s share in the world tourism market and to make it an avenue for
4 generation of employment while ensuring the environmental protection and
5 preservation of the area.

6 Sec. 2. *The Pag-asa Island Ecotourism Cluster and Protected Area.* – The Pag-
7 asa island and its adjoining islands of Parola, Kota and Panata are hereby declared an
8 ecotourism destination and the islands of Parola, Kota and Panata are hereby declared
9 as protected areas under the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS).
10 The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) shall within ninety
11 (90) days after the approval of this Act, make inventory of the existing flora and fauna
12 in Pag-asa Island Cluster that shall serve as the basis for the creation of the master
13 plan as provided in this Act.

14 For the purpose of this Act, ecotourism shall refer to a form of sustainable
15 tourism within a natural and cultural heritage area where community participation,
16 protection and management of natural resources, culture and indigenous knowledge

1 and practices, environmental education and ethics as well as economic benefits are
2 fostered and pursued for the enrichment of host communities and satisfaction of
3 visitors.

4 *Sec. 3. Pag-asa Island Ecotourism Cluster Governing Board.* – For the purpose
5 of Section 2 of this Act, an ecotourism governing board, to be known as the Pag-asa
6 Island Ecotourism Cluster Governing Board, is hereby created. The Board shall be
7 composed of the following:

- 8 a) Governor of Palawan as Chairperson;
- 9 b) Congressional Representative of the First District of Palawan as Co-
10 Chairperson;
- 11 c) DENR Regional Executive Director for Region IV-B as Vice Chairperson;
- 12 d) Department of Tourism (DOT) Regional Director for Region IV-B as Co-Vice
13 Chairperson;
- 14 e) Mayor of the Municipality of Kalayaan;
- 15 f) Barangay Chairperson of Pag-asa Island;
- 16 g) Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Western Command Commander;
- 17 h) One (1) member of a nongovernment organization whose advocacy is
18 environmental preservation;
- 19 i) One (1) member of the academe;
- 20 j) One (1) representative of the business sector; and
- 21 k) One (1) representative of the private sector.

22 The governing board shall prepare the rules and regulations necessary for the
23 full implementation by the concerned local government unit of the provisions of this
24 Act and shall, as the need arises, amend, modify or revise such rules and regulations
25 to meet the needs of changing times.

26 *Sec. 4. Pag-asa Island Cluster Ecotourism Master Plan.* – The Pag-asa Island
27 Ecotourism Cluster Governing Board, in coordination with the Tourism Infrastructure
28 and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA), shall within one hundred twenty (120) days
29 from approval of this Act, prepare, develop and implement the Ecotourism Master Plan
30 to be approved by the President of the Republic of the Philippines.

31 *Sec. 5. Appropriations.* – The Secretary of the DOT shall include in the
32 Department's program the implementation of this Act, and the amount necessary to

1 carry out the provisions of this Act shall be taken from the current appropriation of
2 the Department and shall be included in the General Appropriations Act of the year
3 following its enactment into law and thereafter.

4 *Sec. 6. Separability Clause.* – If any portion or provision of this Act is
5 subsequently declared invalid or unconstitutional, other provisions hereof which are
6 not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

7 *Sec. 7. Repealing Clause.* – All other laws, acts, presidential decrees, executive
8 orders, presidential proclamations, issuances, rules and regulations, or parts thereof
9 which are contrary to or inconsistent with any of the provisions of this Act are hereby
10 repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

11 *Sec. 8. Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
12 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,