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SENATE

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P.S. Res. No. 393

INTRODUCED BY SENATOR JOSEPH VICTOR G. EJERCITO

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM TO INVESTIGATE IN AID OF LEGISLATION THE ALLEGED DEGRADATION AND POLLUTION OF PRIME ISLAND BEACH DESTINATIONS AND OTHER COASTAL RECREATION WATERS IN THE COUNTRY WITH THE END VIEW OF CRAFTING LAWS, RULES AND REGULATIONS TO PROTECT AND CONSERVE OUR BEACHES, SHORELINES AND OTHER ECO-TOURISM SITES

WHEREAS, Section 16, Article 2 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution states that, the State shall protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature;

WHEREAS, under Republic Act No. 9593 or "The Tourism Act of 2009", the State declares tourism as an indispensable element of the national economy and an industry of national interest and importance, which must be harnessed as an engine of socioeconomic growth and cultural affirmation to generate investment, foreign exchange and employment, and to continue to mold an enhanced sense of national pride for all Filipinos

WHEREAS, the Philippines boasts of being a top tourist destination in the world, being an archipelagic country consisting of 7, 107 islands, abundantly endowed with marine life in its coastline and pristine beaches;

WHEREAS, among the major economic sectors, services remain to have the fastest growth due to the rise in travel and tourism investments and activities, with the continued increase in visitor arrivals. Based on the Department of Tourism's (DoT) data, the country welcomed 579,178 tourists for the month of February 2017 which is 5.36% higher than the February arrivals in 2016;

WHEREAS, while there may be a steady increase in the country's visitor arrivals yearly from 2013 to 2017, a -33% decline in estimated visitor receipts from 27.49 billion for the month of February 2016 to an aggregated Php 18.40 billion for the same month in 2017 was registered.¹ Tourism activities from January to February 2017 generated earnings amounting to Php 40,081.85 billion. This is -18.92% lower than the 49,432.57 billion earned for the same period in 2016;²

WHEREAS, Kalibo remains the top 3rd port of entry for foreign visitor with 53,601 (9.25%) visitors welcomed in February 2017 alone. ³ For the year 2016, the DoT reported that Boracay Island in Kalibo, Aklan received a total of 1,725,483 tourist arrivals, or roughly 4,727 visitors a day, which is 11% higher than 2015.⁴ More tourists are expected with the arrival of cruise ships;

WHEREAS, Boracay Island, once renowned as the most beautiful tropical paradise in the world, remains one of the country's top island destinations and income-earner for the tourism industry. Unfortunately, its reputation is now at risk due to alleged over-crowding, over-development and worse, decline in marine water quality due to poor and inadequate wastewater treatment and sewerage system;

WHEREAS, the issue of pollution, violations of the building code and other environment laws by residents, restaurant owners and hoteliers in Boracay have been brought to the public's attention as early as 2006, and then again in 2015. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources Environmental Management Bureau office in the Western Visayas detected high coliform bacteria levels in a drainage outlet which empties into the coastal waters attributed to domestic waste from residential and commercial establishments that are not connected to sewer lines.⁵

WHEREAS, despite efforts to improve the sewerage system, reports of water contamination persists and environmental groups are still calling for an investigation on the continued contamination of the waters in Boracay that may undermine the island's potential for eco-tourism, and worse, pose greater health risks for the residents, workers and tourists;

WHEREAS, there is a need to review the practice of proper waste water treatment and solid waste management, the rules and regulations enforced among local government units (LGUs), hotels, restaurants, bars, dive shops and other related tourism enterprises, and the behavior of residents and tourists, across all islands and shorelines facing rapid tourism and urban

¹ Source: <http://tourism.gov.ph/Pages/IndustryPerformance.aspx>

² Source: Department of Tourism website: <http://tourism.gov.ph/Pages/IndustryPerformance.aspx>

³ Source: *Sources of Data: A/D Cards & Shipping Manifests*; <http://tourism.gov.ph/Pages/IndustryPerformance.aspx>

⁴ Position Paper on Boracay by the Philippine Institute of Environmental Planners

⁵ <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/680545/dot-optimistic-boracay-visitors-to-increase-vows-steps-to-improve-water-quality>

development such as in Aklan, Cebu, Bohol, Surigao Del Norte, Palawan and Albay among others;

WHEREAS, there is a need to check the rate of growth and development in our prime tourism destination areas and look into the practices of LGUs, beach front lot owners, beach resort owners, and other private entities and corporations, involved in the beach resort operations, on how they protect the marine water and how government funds and resources are properly allocated and utilized in maintaining the water quality, proper wastewater treatment and solid waste management, for the protection of marine life and the development and implementation of long-term development plans, beach monitoring and grading programs for the revival and sustainability of the country's beaches and shorelines;

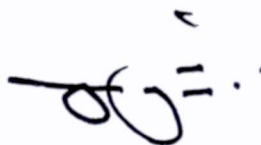
WHEREAS, there is an imperative need to review compliance with environmental and building laws, as well as the enforcement, implementation and monitoring of the same, in order to fill in the gaps for the protection and conservation of our beaches and shorelines for tourism purposes, in line with emerging trends in the industry and international standards, and for the promotion of overall health and well-being of our residents and tourists;

WHEREAS, there is a need to ensure that the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology through the promotion of activities geared towards environmental protection, conservation and restoration as mandated by The Tourism Act of 2009;

WHEREAS, there is a need to review the laws and regulations allowing the development of resort, accommodation establishment and other tourism enterprises for sustainable Tourism Development Plan;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, directing the Senate Committee on Tourism, to investigate in aid of legislation the alleged degradation and pollution of prime island beach destinations and other coastal recreation waters in the country with the end view of crafting laws, rules and regulations to protect and conserve our beaches and shorelines and other eco-tourism sites..

Adopted,



JOSEPH VICTOR G. EJERCITO