



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

H. No. 10350

BY REPRESENTATIVES DY (F.), ARAGONES, BASCUG, VIOLAGO, GATO, GO (M.), MATUGAS, FARIÑAS (R.C.), EBCAS, BAÑAS-NOGRALES, DAGOOC, SAULOG, GUYA, SAVELLANO, ALBANO (A.), BARBA, FRASCO, LOYOLA, SILVERIO AND ELAGO, PER COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 1291

AN ACT
DECLARING BARANGAY SAN MIGUEL IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF ECHAGUE, PROVINCE OF ISABELA, 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 “San Miguel Ecotourism Zone
2 Act”.

3 **SEC. 2. *Barangay San Miguel as Ecotourism Zone.*** – Barangay San Miguel in the
4 Municipality of Echague, Province of Isabela, is hereby declared an ecotourism zone. As such,
5 its development shall be prioritized by the Department of Tourism (DOT), subject to the rules
6 and regulations governing the development of ecotourism zones.

7 **SEC. 3. *San Miguel Ecotourism Development Council.*** – The San Miguel Ecotourism
8 Development Council, hereinafter referred to as the Council, is hereby created. It shall be
9 composed of ten (10) members, as follows:

1 (a) *Ex Officio* Members

- 2 (1) DOT Regional Director for Region 2, as Chairperson;
- 3 (2) Mayor of the Municipality of Echague, as Co-Chairperson;
- 4 (3) Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Regional Director for
- 5 Region 2, or a duly authorized representative;
- 6 (4) Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) Regional Director for Region
- 7 2, or a duly authorized representative;
- 8 (5) Punong Barangay of Barangay San Miguel;
- 9 (6) Provincial Tourism Officer of the Province of Isabela; and
- 10 (7) Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer of the Province of Isabela.

11 (b) Members Who Shall Represent Sectoral Concerns

- 12 (1) One (1) representative from an academic institution, preferably from a university or
- 13 college in the Province of Isabela, with proven track record in or related to the
- 14 conservation of forests and wildlife;
- 15 (2) One (1) representative from the private sector, preferably a resident of the Province
- 16 of Isabela, who is distinguished in a profession or field of interest relevant to the
- 17 conservation of forests and wildlife or to ecotourism; and
- 18 (3) One (1) representative from either non-government organization (NGO) or people's
- 19 organization (PO), duly accredited both by the DENR and the municipal government
- 20 of Echague. The NGO or PO represented should have been in existence for at least
- 21 five (5) years with track record in the conservation of forests and wildlife.

22 The *ex officio* elective members of the Council shall serve for the duration of their

23 respective terms of office to which they are elected.

24 The *ex officio* appointive members of the Council shall serve for the duration of the

25 period they hold the office to which they are appointed.

1 The sectoral members of the Council shall be selected by the Sangguniang Bayan of the
2 Municipality of Echague in a fair and transparent manner. They shall each serve a term of three
3 (3) years and may be reappointed for another term.

4 The members of the Council shall serve without compensation, but shall be authorized
5 to actual and necessary travelling and subsistence expenses incurred in the performance of their
6 duties, either in their attendance in meetings of the Council or in connection with their official
7 functions authorized by a resolution of the Council, subject to existing rules and regulations.
8 Each member shall have the full capacity and accountability for decisions binding to the
9 member's sector.

10 A member of the Council may be removed for any of the following grounds:

- 11 (a) more than three (3) consecutive unexcused absences from regular meetings of the
12 Council;
- 13 (b) commission of acts prejudicial to the development and management of the
14 ecotourism zone;
- 15 (c) disassociation from the office or organization being represented;
- 16 (d) termination of relationship with the office or organization being represented; or
- 17 (e) conviction by final judgment of any criminal act.

18 The local government of the Municipality of Echague shall provide a Secretariat for the
19 Council, to be headed by the Municipal Tourism Officer, and provide funds to defray the
20 expenses of the Secretariat in line with the performance of its official functions and the conduct
21 of the Council's activities.

22 The DOT and the DENR shall assist the Council in carrying out the objectives of this
23 Act.

24 **SEC. 4. *Functions and Responsibilities of the Council.*** – The Council shall have the
25 following functions and responsibilities:

- 1 (a) Formulate and implement an ecotourism development and management plan in
2 consultation with the local residents, businesses, and other stakeholders;
- 3 (b) Assess and evaluate the potential impact of development plans and activities to the
4 environmental safety and well-being of the zone, communities, and enterprises;
- 5 (c) Provide technical and financial assistance to the communities within and
6 surrounding the ecotourism zone;
- 7 (d) Formulate rules and regulations in relation to the maintenance and security of the
8 ecotourism zone; and
- 9 (e) Perform other functions as may be necessary to carry out the objectives of this Act.

10 **SEC. 5. *Formulation of Standards and Guidelines.*** – The DOT and the DENR shall
11 assist the Council in the formulation of local ecotourism standards and recommend guidelines
12 to ensure that biodiversity conservation and environmental protection are integrated in the
13 development and management of the ecotourism zone.

14 The standards and guidelines shall:

- 15 (a) Raise the capacity of all stakeholders and ensure that best ecotourism practices
16 are adopted;
- 17 (b) Ensure optimal use of water and energy;
- 18 (c) Encourage recycling and environmentally-sound waste management reduction
19 and disposal schemes;
- 20 (d) Encourage the use of local produce and services, and support the employment
21 of local people; and
- 22 (e) Prevent vandalism in the ecotourism zone.

23 **SEC 6. *Coordination with National Agencies.*** – The DOT and the DENR shall closely
24 coordinate with the Council, as well as with the regional and provincial offices of the DPWH,
25 Department of Labor and Employment, Department of Transportation, Department of

1 Agriculture, Department of Education, Department of Trade and Industry, Department of the
2 Interior and Local Government, Philippine National Police and other concerned agencies of the
3 government in the implementation of this Act.

4 **SEC. 7. Appropriations.** – The Secretaries of the DOT and DENR shall include in
5 their respective Department’s program the implementation of this Act, the funding of which
6 shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act, and shall augment such allocation
7 with internally generated funds of the DOT.

8 **SEC. 8. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – Within thirty (30) days from the
9 effectivity of this Act, the DOT and DENR shall, in consultation with the Council and
10 concerned government agencies and stakeholders, promulgate the necessary rules and
11 regulations for the proper implementation of this Act.

12 **SEC. 9. Separability Clause.** – If any provision of this Act shall be declared
13 unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain to be in full
14 force and effect.

15 **SEC. 10. Repealing Clause.** – All laws, rules, regulations, executive orders,
16 proclamations, presidential decrees and other issuances inconsistent with any provision of this
17 Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

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

Approved,