

Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Quezon City

Eighteenth Congress  
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 6320



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**Introduced by Representative JAKE VINCENT S. VILLA**

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

There is a need to spearhead and fast-track the tourism development plan of the Province of Siquijor.

The institutionalization of a tourism development plan through the enactment of this measure will be the backbone of tourism development in the Province of Siquijor. This will ensure sustainable development in terms of tourism for the province. A tourism development plan catered to the culture and heritage of the province is needed to preserve such rights of Siquijudnons despite the rapid development in the Province.

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

  
**JAKE VINCENT S. VILLA**

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**AN ACT**  
**DECLARING THE PROVINCE OF SIQUIJOR AS A RESPONSIBLE, COMMUNITY-  
BASED CULTURAL HERITAGE AND ECOTOURISM ZONE**

*Be enacted by the Senate and House of Representative of the Philippines in Congress assembled:*

**SECTION 1. Title.** – this Act shall be known as the “Siquijor Responsible Tourism Act”.

**SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy.** – The State recognizes, respects and protects the rights of indigenous cultural communities to preserve and develop their cultures, traditions, and institutions, and considers these rights in the formulation of national plans and policies.

The State is further mandated to promote a tourism industry that is ecological sustainable, responsible, participative, culturally sensitive, economically viable and equitable for local communities. Towards this end, the Province of Siquijor is hereby declared a cultural heritage and ecotourism zone, It shall be accorded priority development by the Department of Tourism (DOT) and shall be subject to the rules and regulations, governing the development of cultural heritage and ecotourism zones. The promotion of the following inherent values and characteristics which influence the uniqueness of the Siquijor culture and the beauty of the Province of Siquijor shall be pursued in the development and management of the tourism industry in the Province: (a) the integrity of its ecology and environment; (b) the richness of its natural and cultural heritage; (c) the resilience of its indigenous social institutions, as applicable.

**SECTION 3. Objectives.** – Pursuant to the above declaration of policy, the State shall endeavor to accomplish the following objectives:

- (a) Develop and promote responsible, community-based ecological-cultural tourism as the core management strategy in the development and growth of Siquijor;
- (b) Ensure the conservation of the biodiversity and the preservation of the unique heritage and culture of the Province;
- (c) Develop tourism products and programs that will generate employment and livelihood for the local residents consistent with the preservation and maintenance of local heritage and culture;
- (d) Guarantee that the financial and economic benefits of the tourism industry are



equitable shared by, and distributed among, the Siquijudnons and local residents by giving preference and support community- and home-based tourism enterprises, such as micro and small businesses like local inns, lodges and homestays, restaurants, foods and fruits stands, arts and craft shops, and similar tourism-oriented industries and businesses;

- (e) Ensure that the quality of local tourism programs and activities are educational and enriching for tourists and visitors through the provision of orientation, educational and tour programs by local tour operators, nongovernment organizations (NGOs), local government units (LGUs) and the DOT; and
- (f) Guarantee that in the development and promotion of the local tourism industry, the LGUs shall ensure that the needs of local residents and communities in the areas of water supply, food, energy and local construction materials are first secured and met.

**SECTION 4. *Provincial Tourism Development Plan.*** – The DOT, in coordination with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the National Commission on Indigenous People (NCIP), and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), shall assist the Province of Siquijor in the formulation of the Provincial Tourism Development Plan that shall be complemented by a set of guidelines and standards for a responsible, community-based ecotourism. The tourism development plan shall ensure the preservation of the natural sites, the cultural and historic significance of identified tourist attractions, and respect for Siquijudnon culture and traditions, and shall include the following components:

- (a) Carrying capacity of sites;
- (b) Specific site assessments;
- (c) Identification of strategic priorities;
- (d) Product development for local income generation;
- (e) Capacity-building for local communities so residents therein can ably manage economically viable and responsible, community-based ecotourism business enterprises;
- (f) Support for the formation of local production groups and networks, including the marketing strategies and pricing of products; and
- (g) Marketing strategies that reflect the natural, cultural, social and environmental integrity of Siquijor.

The process of developing the Tourism Development Plan shall be participatory, from the bottom up, with the framework provided by the DOT, the DENR, the NCIP, and the NCCA, in consultation with the provincial and municipal governments.

**SECTION 5. *Formulation of Guidelines and Standards.*** – The concerned Protected Area Management Board of the DENR, the NCIP, and the local tourism council, in coordination with the LGUs, shall assist in the formulation of local tourism standards in the context of environment stability, as well as recommend guidelines to ensure that biodiversity conservation and environmental protection are integrated in the development of heritage and ecotourism plans. The guidelines and standards shall:

- (a) Raise the capacity of all stakeholders and ensure that best practices are followed;
- (b) Ensure optimal use of water and energy;
- (c) Reduce waste and pollution through the encouragement of recycling and environmentally-sound waste management disposal schemes, with a principle of taking as much waste away from the site as possible; and

- (d) Encourage the use local produce and services, and support the employment of local people.

**SECTION 6. *Coordination with National Agencies.*** – The DOT shall closely coordinate with the provincial and municipal governments of the Province of Siquijor, as well as with the regional and provincial offices of all relevant national government agencies, such as DENR, the NCIP, the NCCA, the National Historical Commission, the National Museum, the National Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC), the Department of Agriculture (DA) The Department of Science and Technology (DOST), the Department of Education (DepEd), the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), the Philippine National Police (PNP), the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA), and the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) in the implementation of this Act.

**SECTION 7. *Review of Provincial Tourism Development Plan*** – The review of Provincial Tourism Development Plan shall be initiated by mere notice coming from the chief executive of the LGU. The review shall in no way be initiated earlier than the lapse of a quarter-portion of the timeframe as identified by the Provincial Tourism Development Plan.

**SECTION 8. *Implementation Rules and Regulations.*** – The DOT, the DENR, the NCIP, and the NCCA, in consultation with the provincial and municipal governments of Siquijor, concerned government agencies, and stakeholders, shall, within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the proper implementation of this Act.

**SECTION 9. *Separability Clause.*** – In the event that any provision of this Act or part hereof is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in force and effect.

**SECTION 10. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, decrees, executive orders, presidential issuances and other administrative rules and regulations or parts thereof which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

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

**Approved,**