

**[ REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9458, May 15, 2007 ]**

**AN ACT DECLARING THE ISLAND-TOWNS OF BIRI, CAPUL, SAN ANTONIO AND SAN VICENTE, ALL IN THE PROVINCE OF NORTHERN SAMAR AS ECO-TOURISM ZONES**

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

SECTION 1. This Act hereby declares the Island-towns of Biri, Capul, San Antonio and San Vicente in the Province of Northern Samar as national tourism zones.

SEC. 2. Until comprehensive legislation rationalizing the national tourism program is adopted, the following principles shall govern the planning, development, promotion and management of these tourism zones:

- a. The Department of Tourism (DOT) and its attached agencies, and the provincial government of Northern Samar shall coordinate in the formulation of a tourism development plan for these tourism zones: *Provided*, That said plan is consistent with, or maybe integrated into, the national tourism master plan of the DOT.
- b. The plan shall protect and enhance the natural features and cultural heritage of the tourism zone, while providing sustainable economic opportunities for the local community.
- c. The relevant local government shall utilize its powers provided under the Local Government Code to implement and enforce the tourism development plan.
- d. The DOT and its attached agencies may provide necessary technical and financial assistance for the development of tourism infrastructure and skills development in the local government while endeavoring, when practicable, to promote the tourism zones both locally and internationally.
- e. The DOT and the local government shall create a forum by which the private sector, nongovernment organizations and other interest groups, can interact with one another and the government to create an atmosphere that shall encourage investment, and the development of a culture of tourism.
- f. The land embraced by the tourism zone shall be exempt from the coverage of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program, and shall be determined by the concerned sanggunian.

SEC. 3. The DOT, in consultation with the local government concerned, shall adapt appropriate rules and regulations, and enter into agreements to implement this Act.

SEC. 4. This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days of completion of its publication.