

Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila



Eighteenth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 964

Introduced by the Honorable Ann K. Hofer

EXPLANATORY NOTE

It is embodied in Section 16, Article II of the 1987 Constitution 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.

Siay-Kabasalan Wetlands under the Municipalities of Siay and Kabasalan, Second District of Zamboanga Sibugay is a hidden gem that is already gaining attention from both local and international tourists. This breathtaking natural wonder encompasses diverse ecosystems like the Cabug Island - a 30 year Mangrove Plantation by the local People's Organization in Siay which serves as roosting site for the Endangered Golden-crowned Flying Fox (*Acerodon jubatus*) and the Vulnerable Giant Flying Fox (*Pteropus vampyrus*). Adjoining this mangrove ecosystem are the vast tidal flats (mudflats) bordering Siay and Kabasalan which provides a rich foraging ground (feeding area) for various migratory bird species coming from as far as Europe, Siberia, Mongolia and Central Asia. Among the threatened species dependent to this wetlands of international importance are the Far Eastern Curlew (*Numenius madagascariensis*), Eurasian Curlew (*Numenius arquata*), Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*), and the endemic Philippine Duck (*Anas luzonica*).

With the Siay-Kabasalan Wetlands being declared as an ecotourism site, the needed development and promotion for this gem will be recognized. Furthermore, the creation of an ecotourism council will ensure the sustainable management, wise-use of resource, conservation of the wetlands and equitable sharing of benefits among the people. It is also expected that such development will boost local government income, generate earnings from foreign exchange, and create employment opportunities for the people residing with the area.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate approval of this measure is earnestly sought.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ann K. Hofer', written over a horizontal line.

ANN K. HOFER
Second District, Zamboanga Sibugay

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AN ACT
DECLARING THE SIAY-KABASALAN WETLANDS IN THE MUNICIPALITIES
OF SIAY AND KABASALAN, PROVINCE OF ZAMBOANGA SIBUGAY AS AN
ECOTOURISM SITE 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 “Siay-Kabasalan Wetlands
2 Ecotourism Act.”
3

4 SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* It is hereby declared policy of the State to protect and
5 advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm
6 and harmony of nature.
7

8 SEC. 3. *The Siay-Kabasalan Wetlands Ecotourism Site.* The Siay-Kabasalan Wetlands
9 in the Municipalities of Siay and Kabasalan in the Second District of Zamboanga Sibugay is
10 hereby declared as an ecotourism site, whose geographical limits shall be subject to study by
11 the local government unit. Its development shall be prioritized by the Department of Tourism
12 (DOT) and shall be subject to the rules and regulations governing the development of
13 ecotourism sites.
14

15 SEC. 4. *The Siay-Kabasalan Wetlands Ecotourism Council.* There shall be created an
16 ecotourism council, to be known as the Siay-Kabasalan Wetlands Ecotourism Council,
17 hereinafter referred to as the “Council” and shall be composed of the following members:
18

- 19 (a) The Chairperson shall either be the Local Chief Executive of Siay or Kabasalan
20 Municipality;
21 (b) A representative from an accredited non-governmental organization whose
22 advocacy is environmental preservation;
23 (c) A representative from a recognized indigenous people’s organization; and

24 (d) Two (2) representatives from the private sector.
25

26 Siay and Kabasalan's local legislative bodies shall appoint the members of the Council
27 for a term of five (5) years, renewable for one term.
28

29 SEC. 5. *Functions and Responsibilities of the Council.* The Council shall be responsible
30 for the following:
31

- 32 (a) Formulation and implementation of the Siay-Kabasalan Wetlands Development
33 Plan, in consultation with local residents, businesses, and other stakeholders;
34 (b) Assessment and evaluation of the potential impact of the development to the
35 environmental safety and well-being of the site, communities, and enterprises;
36 (c) Provision of technical and financial assistance to communities within the site;
37 (d) Formulation of rules and regulations in relation to the maintenance and security of
38 the ecotourism site; and
39 (e) Performance of other functions as may be necessary to carry out the objectives of
40 this Act.
41

42 SEC. 6. *Implementing Agency.* The DOT shall be the agency which shall take care of
43 planning, implementing, coordinating, and monitoring this Act.
44

45 SEC. 7. *Appropriations.* The funding necessary for the implementation of this Act shall
46 be included in the yearly budget allocation for the DOT under the General Appropriations Act.
47

48 SEC. 8. *Separability Clause.* If any part or provision of this Act shall be held
49 unconstitutional or invalid, other provisions, which are not affected thereby, shall continue to
50 be in full force and effect.
51

52 SEC. 9. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, rules, regulations, proclamations, executive orders
53 or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby modified or amended accordingly.
54

55 SEC. 10. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in
56 the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.
57

58 Approved,