Tourism is a significant industry in the Philippines. The country’s 7,641 islands offer diverse tourism destinations attracting tourists from all over the world. The country attracted more than 6.5 million foreign visitors in 2017. This, in turn, has translated to the industry contributing 12.7% share of the country’s gross domestic product in 2018. Employment in the tourism industry has also gone up from an estimated 4.99 Filipinos employed in 2015 to 5.4 million in 2018. It is estimated that these figures will only go up over the years, as tourism is seen as a major growth driver.

Republic Act No. 9593, otherwise known as the Tourism Act of 2009, has been enacted to utilize the tourism industry’s potential “as an engine of socio-economic 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.”

The Tourism Act of 2009 also put emphasis on the role of local government units as they are in the unique position of capitalizing tourism to spur socio-economic growth of their respective localities. Section 42 of the Tourism Act of 2009 specifically states that “Every province, city or municipality in which tourism is a significant industry shall have a permanent position for a tourism officer.” However, most local government units are unable to comply since Republic Act No. 7160, otherwise known as the Local Government Code of 1991, contains no such provision.

This bill, therefore, seeks to harmonize both laws by amending the Local Government Code of 1991 to provide for mandatory appointment of tourism officers in provinces, cities and municipalities where tourism is a significant industry.

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1 Philippine Statistics Authority: Contribution of Tourism to the Philippine Economy is 12.7 percent in 2018, 06 June 2019
The presence of a dedicated tourism officer will certainly help in the development and promotion of tourism, which will, in turn, generate significant economic benefits for the locality.

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

REP. ESTRELLITA B. SUANSING  
1st District, Nueva Ecija

REP. HORACIO P. SUANSING, JR.  
2nd District, Sultan Kudarat
Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City

Eighteenth Congress
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 5311

Introduced by Representatives
ESTRELLITA B. SUANSING and HORACIO P. SUANSING, JR.

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR MANDATORY APPOINTMENT OF TOURISM OFFICERS
IN PROVINCES, CITIES AND MUNICIPALITIES WHERE TOURISM IS A
SIGNIFICANT INDUSTRY, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT
NO. 7160, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF
1991, AS AMENDED

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

1 SECTION 1. Section 443(a) of Republic Act No. 7160, otherwise known as The
2 Local Government Code of 1991, as amended, is hereby further amended to
3 read as follows:

4 “SECTION 443. Officials of the Municipal Government.
5 – xxx
6
7 “(b) In addition thereto, the mayor may appoint a
8 municipal administrator, a municipal legal officer, a
9 municipal agriculturist, a municipal environment and
10 natural resources officer, a municipal social welfare and
11 development officer, a municipal architect, [and] a
12 municipal information officer[.], AND A MUNICIPAL
13 TOURISM OFFICER: PROVIDED, THAT IN
14 MUNICIPALITIES WHERE TOURISM IS A
15 SIGNIFICANT INDUSTRY, THE APPOINTMENT OF A
16 MUNICIPAL TOURISM OFFICER SHALL BE
17 MANDATORY.
18
19 “X X X”

20 SEC. 2. Section 454(b) of Republic Act No. 7160, otherwise known as The
21 Local Government Code of 1991, as amended, is hereby further amended to
read as follows:
"SECTION 454. Officials of the City Government. – (a) xxx

(b) In addition thereto, the city mayor may appoint a city architect, a city information officer, a city agriculturist, a city population officer, a city environment and natural resources officer, [and] a city cooperatives officer [,], AND A CITY TOURISM OFFICER PROVIDED, THAT IN CITIES WHERE TOURISM IS A SIGNIFICANT INDUSTRY, THE APPOINTMENT OF A CITY TOURISM OFFICER SHALL BE MANDATORY.

"X X X"

SEC. 3. Section 463(b) of Republic Act No. 7160, otherwise known as The Local Government Code of 1991, as amended, is hereby further amended to read as follows:

"SECTION 463. Officials of the Provincial Government. – (a) xxx

(b) In addition thereto, the government may appoint a provincial population officer, a provincial natural resources and environment officer, a provincial cooperative officer, a provincial architect, [and] a provincial information officer [,], AND A PROVINCIAL TOURISM OFFICER: PROVIDED, THAT IN PROVINCES WHERE TOURISM IS A SIGNIFICANT INDUSTRY, THE APPOINTMENT OF A PROVINCIAL TOURISM OFFICER SHALL BE MANDATORY.

"X X X"

SEC. 4. A new Article shall be inserted in Title V of Republic Act No. 7160, otherwise known as The Local Government Code of 1991 to be known as Article XXI on the Tourism Officer, to read as follows:

ARTICLE XXI

THE TOURISM OFFICER

SECTION 490-A. QUALIFICATIONS, POWERS, AND DUTIES. – (A) NO PERSON SHALL BE APPOINTED TOURISM OFFICER UNLESS HE IS A CITIZEN OF THE PHILIPPINES, A RESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNIT CONCERNED, OF GOOD MORAL CHARACTER, HAS NEVER BEEN CONVICTED OF ANY ELECTION OFFENSE OR A CRIME PUNISHABLE BY MORE THAN SIX (6) MONTHS, A HOLDER OF A
RELEVANT BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN TOURISM, BUSINESS, LAW, ECONOMICS, MARKETING, PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION OR OTHER RELATED FIELDS FROM A RECOGNIZED COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY, AND A FIRST GRADE CIVIL SERVICE ELIGIBLE OR ITS EQUIVALENT. HE/SHE MUST HAVE ACQUIRED AT LEAST FIVE (5) YEARS OF SUBSTANTIAL WORK EXPERIENCE AND INVOLVEMENT IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY EITHER IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR OR GOVERNMENT. THE APPOINTMENT OF A TOURISM OFFICER IS MANDATORY FOR THE PROVINCIAL, CITY AND MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS WHERE TOURISM IS A SIGNIFICANT INDUSTRY.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS WITH EXISTING TOURISM OFFICERS PRIOR TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS ACT WILL BE GIVEN THREE (3) YEARS TO COMPLY WITH THE AFOREMENTIONED REQUIREMENTS.

(B) THE TOURISM OFFICER SHALL TAKE CHARGE OF THE OFFICE FOR TOURISM AND SHALL PRACTICE THE FOLLOWING:

(1) PREPARE, IMPLEMENT, COORDINATE, MONITOR, AND UPDATE LOCAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PLANS;

(2) ENSURE THE PROPER ENFORCEMENT OF TOURISM STANDARDS, LAWS, RULES AND REGULATIONS;

(3) PROVIDE REGULAR REPORTS ON STATUS OR TOURISM PLANS AND PROGRAMS, TOURIST ARRIVALS, EMPLOYMENT, OCCUPANCY RATES, INVESTMENT AND TOURIST PRODUCTS, AMONG OTHERS, TO THE LOCAL CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TO THE DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM (DOT);

(4) COORDINATE WITH THE DOT AND ITS ATTACHED AGENCIES, AS WELL AS CORPORATIONS AND PRIVATE ENTITIES, IN REGARD TO THE DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION OF TOURISM IN THE LOCALITY; AND

(5) ESTABLISH PARTNERSHIP WITH LOCAL AGENCIES AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN PROMOTING THE TOURISM OF THEIR CONCERNED MUNICIPALITIES, CITIES, AND PROVINCES NATIONWIDE AND GLOBALLY.

(C) EXERCISE SUCH OTHER POWERS AND PERFORM SUCH OTHER DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS AS MAY BE PRESCRIBED BY LAW OR ORDINANCE.

SEC. 5. Separability Clause. – If any provision of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in force and effect.
SEC. 6. Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SEC. 7. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,