

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

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
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House Resolution No. 2552



INTRODUCED BY
REP. ALFRED VARGAS

A RESOLUTION
URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM (DOT), OTHER NATIONAL
GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS (LGUS) TO
MAGNIFY AND CONSOLIDATE EFFORTS AIMED AT SUPPORTING THE
FULL RECOVERY OF THE PHILIPPINE TOURISM SECTOR

WHEREAS, the unprecedented global health, social, and economic emergency of the COVID-19 pandemic has grounded airplanes and ships, closed hotels and resorts, shuttered entertainment venues, and placed severe travel restrictions to virtually all countries around the world, resulting in a “COVID-crisis on tourism”;¹

WHEREAS, the Philippines’ tourism sector has been particularly hit hard, creating a cascade of economic shocks in the country considering that “the tourism industry contributed 12.7% of the country’s [gross domestic product] in 2019, and provided 5.71 million jobs in the same year;”²

¹ World Tourism Organization, ‘International Tourism and COVID-19’ (2022).

² “In the Philippines, the government closed the airports in Luzon on 20 March as part of the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) that started in the island on 16 March. The tourism sector has already felt the negative impact of the pandemic on its performance much earlier. In other countries, travel restrictions and measures have started as early as January of this year, and have impacted the Philippine international tourist arrivals. Domestic tourists, on the other hand, also limited their travel for fear of contracting COVID-19. The Department of Tourism reported that international tourist receipts in the first quarter of the year declined to PHP85bn, 36% lower than the revenues in the same period last year.” PwC Philippines, ‘Impact of COVID-19 on the Philippine Tourism Industry’ (June 2020).

WHEREAS, in 2019, the Philippines welcomed 8.26 million foreign tourists who pumped \$11 billion into the economy, while domestic tourism generated a balance of \$36.6 billion;³

WHEREAS, the pandemic's impact to Philippine tourism has been catastrophic and "COVID-19's disruption to travel and tourism is far more severe and longer lasting than the 9/11 attacks of 2001, SARS of 2003, and the global financial crisis of 2008, combined;"³

WHEREAS, more than two years since the whole country was placed in a State of Public Health Emergency under Proclamation No. 922, we are seeing a glimmer of hope because of the government's aggressive vaccination efforts and the cooperation of our fellow Filipinos in implementing evidence-based public health strategies;

WHEREAS, Metro Manila and scores of provinces have already been placed in Alert Level 1 since March 2022, which translates to the easing of movement restrictions, removal of capacity limits to businesses, and the reopening and reinvigorating of local economies—especially for the tourism sector;

WHEREAS, the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) has early on given the green light to rules on land, air, and sea travel crafted by the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) in coordination with local government units, with the aim of, among others, promoting the recovery of our tourism sector;⁴

WHEREAS, the Department of Tourism (DOT) has also expressed its full support for the safe reopening of tourist destinations as this allows the country to restart our economy and help our tourism workers regain their jobs;⁵

³ Andrew J. Masigan, 'The impact of COVID on the tourism industry and the resumption of travel,' *Business World* (May 2, 2021).

⁴ "Under the IATF Resolution No. 101, travelers still have to undergo COVID-19 testing if required by the LGU of their destination – the provincial government, and authorities of highly urbanized cities and independent component cities. In which case, only a reverse transcriptase-polymerase chain reaction or RT-PCR test will be honored. But travelers can no longer be compelled to go on quarantine unless they exhibit symptoms upon arriving at their destination. They are also no longer required to secure a travel authority from the police's Joint Task Force COVID Shield, even health certificates prior to their trip." 'IATF approves uniform protocols on local travel,' *CNN Philippines* (February 27, 2022).

⁵ "The Department of Tourism (DOT) is for the safe reopening of tourist destinations as this allows us to restart our economy and help our tourism workers regain their jobs. The Department therefore welcomes the approval of uniform travel protocols for all local government units (LGUs) by the Inter-Agency Task Force on the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-MEID) to facilitate travel movement and promote local tourism. The DOT deems the simplification of requirements as vital in encouraging domestic travel and

WHEREAS, there has been a generally steady improvement in the state of our tourism sector, with the DOT expressing optimism for a strong recovery for this important pillar of our economy, especially this 2022;⁶

WHEREAS, the government is constantly evaluating its travel rules and protocols to ensure that tourism is promoted without sacrificing public health;⁷

WHEREAS, despite the readiness of our tourism sector in welcoming back international and local tourists, many of our stakeholders in the tourism industry remain wounded and heavily injured from the two-year pandemic;

WHEREAS, this Representation has been steadfast at calling for a whole-of-government, whole-of-nation, and whole-of-society approach in addressing the adverse impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic to our fellow Filipinos—in recognition of the valuable contribution of various stakeholders in solving a problem of this scale and magnitude;

WHEREAS, it is, thus, imperative that an integrated tourism recovery roadmap be drawn up by our leaders and experts in the DOT, with the inputs and wisdom of local government units (LGUs) and private stakeholders in tourism;

WHEREAS, such roadmap should contain and implement measures aimed at catalyzing the recovery of our tourism sector, including the introduction of subsidies for micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in tourism, wage subsidies for workers in the tourism sector,

helping in the speedy recovery of Philippine tourism. The DOT also defers to the decision of LGUs to require tests before travel.” Department of Tourism, *DOT Statement on uniform travel protocols* (February 27, 2021).

⁶ “The current tourism scenario is looking generally optimistic as we end 2021. As Alert Levels have gone down, local travel requirements were also eased. Many of our destinations now accept local tourists who are fully vaccinated, with no need to present a negative RT-PCR test. [...] For 2022, Romulo-Puyat sees ‘revenge travel’ manifesting across all markets of the Philippine tourism industry. And in the wake of disconnect and economic hardship brought about by the pandemic, Filipinos are likely to travel ‘more consciously.’” Joyce Anne Rocamora, ‘2021: Renewed hope towards ‘steady’ tourism recovery’, *Philippine News Agency* (December 28, 2021).

⁷ “The Philippines will focus ‘on job and income recovery and preparing the industry for the aftermath of the pandemic,’ Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat said at a two-day symposium hosted by the Asian Development Bank. The country reopened its borders to fully vaccinated travelers from over 150 countries in February. As part of efforts to facilitate the development of competitive tourism, the Department of Tourism has approved more than 70 tourist circuits, such as those comprising culinary history, nature and other theme-based attractions. A total of 49 new circuits in 13 regions are currently under development, Romulo-Puyat said.” Akane Okutsu & Lien Hoang, ‘Philippines, Indonesia to revamp tourism sector amid reopening,’ *Nikkei Asia* (March 17, 2022).

increased investments and support for capitalization for tourism-oriented businesses, and comprehensive technical and fiscal assistance to LGUs for the promotion of their respective local tourism industries;

WHEREAS, through the concerted efforts of the DOT, other national government agencies like the Department of Health (DOH), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), DILG, among others, as well as LGUs and the private stakeholders, the government can develop and execute solutions to fast-track the full recovery of the country's tourism sector;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, to urge the Department of Tourism, other National Government Agencies, and local government units to magnify and consolidate efforts aimed at supporting the full recovery of the Philippine tourism sector.

Adopted,


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