

**Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila**

**NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session**

House Bill No. 2678



Introduced by Hon. Christopher “Toff” V.P. de Venecia

**AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR MANDATORY APPOINTMENT OF CULTURE AND TOURISM
OFFICERS IN PROVINCES AND CITIES AND OPTIONAL APPOINTMENT IN
MUNICIPALITIES, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7160,
OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF 1991 AS
AMENDED, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Tourism holds a significant impact on the Philippine economy. The sector has redounded countless business opportunities and greater contribution to our nation’s GDP over the years, which, in turn, has generated substantial employment for the Filipinos.

The Philippine Statistics Authority reported that around 4.90 million persons were employed in the tourism industries in 2021, amounting to about 11.1 percent of the total employment of our country. The Department also recognized the slowly rising international tourist arrivals in the year, following the reopening of the country’s borders as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The contributions of tourism to our economy and our community are certainly not to be overlooked nor ignored.

As a driver of economic growth, especially for the regions, tourism provides provinces and local governments with the unique opportunity to capitalize on their local and cultural heritage, as well as celebrate the wonders that their own town or city beholds.

As such, there is a need to strengthen tourism safeguards as mentioned in Republic Act No. 9593, otherwise known as the “Tourism Act of 2009”, a law that was enacted to utilize tourism’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.”

R.A. 9593 explicitly states that every province, city, or municipality, in coordination with the DOT, shall have a permanent plantilla position for a tourism officer. However, most local government units are negligent or unable to comply, since the Local Government Code contains no such provision.

The absence of a dedicated tourism officer working to develop tourism products and programs for their jurisdiction holds a negative impact for both long-term planning and poverty alleviation strategies of the LGU – something that a well-crafted tourism development plan as mandated by R.A. 9593 will certainly address.

But above that, there must be an inclusion of the cultural aspect of the tourism officer, and thus, it is proposed that a Culture and Tourism officer be mandated in the LGUs in order to ensure that said officer would deal with both facets, and to gear the tourism plan towards a cultural development.

In light of these circumstances, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



REP. CHRISTOPHER “TOFF” V.P. DE VENECIA

Fourth District, Pangasinan

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AN ACT

PROVIDING FOR MANDATORY APPOINTMENT OF CULTURE AND TOURISM OFFICERS IN PROVINCES AND CITIES AND OPTIONAL APPOINTMENT IN MUNICIPALITIES, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7160, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF 1991 AS AMENDED, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. *Declaration of Policy.* - The State shall provide for a local government position that will be responsible for and accountable to the development of the tourism industry whereby it is harnessed as an engine of sustainable socio-economic growth and cultural affirmation to generate investment and employment

SEC. 2. Section 443(b) of Republic Act No. 7160, otherwise known as the Local Government Code of 1991 is hereby amended to read as follows:

(b) In addition thereto, the mayor may appoint a municipal administrator, a municipal legal officer, a municipal agriculturist, a municipal environment and natural resources officer, a municipal social welfare and development officer, a municipal architect, [and] a municipal information officer [.] **AND A MUNICIPAL CULTURAL AND TOURISM OFFICER.**

SEC. 3. Section 454(a) of the Local Government Code of 1991 is hereby amended to read as follows:

- (a) There shall be in each city a mayor, a vice-mayor, sangguniang panlungsod members, a secretary to the sangguniang panglungsod, a city treasurer, a city assessor, a city accountant, a city budget officer, a city planning and development coordinator, a city engineer, a city health officer, a city civil registrar, a city administrator, a city legal officer, a city veterinarian, a city social welfare and development officer, [and] a city general services officer [.], **AND A CITY CULTURAL AND TOURISM OFFICER.**

SEC. 4. Section 463(a) of the Local Government Code of 1991 is hereby amended to read as follows:

- (a) There shall be in each province a governor, a vice-governor, members of the sangguniang panlalawigan, a secretary to the sangguniang panlalawigan, a provincial treasurer, a provincial assessor, a provincial accountant, a provincial engineer, a provincial budget officer, a provincial planning and development coordinator, a provincial legal officer, a provincial administrator, a provincial health officer, a provincial social welfare and development officer, a provincial general services officer, a provincial agriculturist, [and] a provincial veterinarian (.), **AND A PROVINCIAL CULTURAL AND TOURISM OFFICER.**

SEC 5. There shall be incorporated in Title V of the said Code, entitled “Appointed Local Officials Common to All Municipalities, Cities, and Province”, a new article to be known as Article XXI on the Tourism Officer, and its accompanying provision, to read as follows:

“ARTICLE XXI

The Cultural and Tourism Officer

Section 490-A. *Qualifications, Powers, and Duties*

- (a) No person shall be appointed cultural and tourism officer unless he is a citizen of the Philippines, a resident of the local government unit concerned, of good moral character and irreproachable reputation, of known integrity and competence, has never been

convicted of any election offense or of any crime punishable by more than six (6) months of imprisonment, or has no pending information for any offense, a holder of a college degree in tourism, business, economics, marketing, public administration or other related fields from a recognized college or university, and a first grade civil service eligible, or its equivalent. They must have at least five (5) years of substantial work experience and involvement in the tourism industry either in the private sector or government.

Local Government Units with existing Tourism Officers prior to the implementation of this law will be given three (3) years to comply with the aforementioned requirements.

- (b) The cultural and 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 of 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 private entities in promoting the tourism and cultural heritage of their concerned 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. 6. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 7. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, executive orders, issuances, rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 8. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,