

## Solon urges DOT to lure more Chinese to boost PH tourism

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QUEZON City Rep. Marvin Rillo is urging the Department of Tourism (DOT) to encourage more Chinese tourists to visit the Philippines despite maritime disputes.

Rillo said tourists from mainland China finally starting to return to the Philippines in droves and that China is set to reclaim its spot as the second-biggest supplier of foreign visitors to the Philippines, after South Korea.

“The surge in Chinese tourist arrivals in the Philippines in the first two months of 2024 is very encouraging, and we hope that the uptrend will keep going in the months ahead,” Rillo said. “We need the number of Chinese travelers to return to their pre-pandemic levels to sustain the full recovery of our highly labor-intensive tourism enterprises.”

Rillo said he is counting on the tourism industry to drive the creation of new jobs for Filipinos in services such as accommodation, transport, food and beverage, and entertainment, and in other activities in the value chain.

China soared as the third-biggest supplier of foreign visitors to the Philippines, after South Korea and the United States, in the first two months of 2024, based on DOT figures.

China leapfrogged over five countries – Canada, Australia, Japan, Taiwan, and the United Kingdom – that previously supplied the Philippines with the largest number of visitors a year ago, or in the first two months of 2023.

The number of Chinese travelers that arrived in the Philippines surged by 235 percent to 82,314 in the first two months of 2024, from 24,552 in the January to February period in 2023.

“In order to showcase our tourist attractions and lure more Chinese travelers, we would urge the DOT to send delegations of Philippine travel, tour, hotel, and resort operators to China,” Rillo said.

Rillo said Manila’s lingering maritime dispute with Beijing “should not inhibit or discourage the DOT from seeking new opportunities to capture a larger number of Chinese tourists.”