



May 1, 2023

Sen. Bobby Joe Champion, Chair
Senate Jobs & Economic
Development Committee

Rep. Hodan Hassan, Chair
House Economic Development
Finance & Policy Committee

Dear Chair Champion, Chair Hassan and Members of the Conference Committee,

On behalf of the Minnesota Tourism Growth Coalition, the Minnesota Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus, and the Community of Minnesota Resorts, we want to thank you for your work to address tourism promotion in Minnesota. Currently, Minnesota's tourism budget lags behind our regional competitors, which we hope the conference committee will address. Your budget decisions can move Minnesota's tourism and hospitality industry forward by making a significant investment in tourism.

Specifically, we urge adoption of the House position to provide funding for the Tourism Industry Recovery Grant Program, funding for the Governor's budget recommendation to increase Explore Minnesota Tourism's (EMT's) base budget, funding for the Governor's budget recommendation for new initiatives and grants to Explore Minnesota, and the Senate's appropriation to build administrative capacity. We also support the Senate base budget increase to provide ongoing funding for the agency.

Tourism is the front door to economic development. State investments in marketing and promotion drive economic development across the state, from the urban core to regional centers to all corners of the state. Whether a visitor comes to Minnesota for a vacation, convention, sporting event or live entertainment they not only stay at a lodging business, but tourists also dine at local restaurants, shop in local stores, and visit our museums and cultural centers. Visitors buy groceries and bait before checking into a resort. You can count visitors to use state and metro parks and trails or visit Minnesota's Zoos. Conventions and festivals hire stage and lighting crews, engage graphic designers, printing companies, caterers and so much more. EMT's research indicates that someone coming to Minnesota for a business convention will return for a vacation. The multiplying ripple effects of tourism investments are like a stone tossed into calm waters.

Thank you for your support of tourism funding, including funding for the Tourism Industry Recovery grant program.

Thank you,

Paul Larsen, President
MN Tourism Growth Coalition

Tim Zunker, Chair
MN Assoc. Convention &
Visitors Bureaus

Mike Schwieters, President
Community of MN Resorts