



May 9, 2022

Senator Bill Ingebrigtsen, Chair
Senate Environment & Natural Resources Finance Committee
3207 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Representative Rick Hansen, Chair
House Environment & Natural Resources Finance Division
407 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chairs and Members of the Conference Committee,

On behalf of the Minnesota Tourism Growth Coalition, Community of Minnesota Resorts, and Minnesota Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus, we want to thank the House for including \$10 million for the Tourism Industry Recovery Grant Program in the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance bill.

While there has been some recovery in the tourism and hospitality industry – that recovery has not been consistent. There have experienced multiple starts and stops, and recovery is not even across the state or tourism sectors. A full recovery of the tourism economy will take several years.

The \$10 million Tourism Industry Recovery Grant Program will be used to support and attract meetings, conventions and group business, multi-community and high-visibility events, and tourism marketing. One hundred percent of these funds will flow to tourism organizations across the entire state of Minnesota.

The tourism industry has suffered nearly \$12 billion in travel spending losses since 2019. Data from Explore Minnesota shows that Hospitality Gross Sales fell from \$16.6 billion in 2019 to \$11.7 billion in 2020. Sales tax collections in these tourism categories fell dramatically and hospitality employment is still down by approximately 70,000 workers.

A successful tourism and hospitality industry plays a vital role in the success of local communities, regional centers, and the state. Increased tourism activity benefits local bars, restaurants, gas stations, grocery stores, bait shops, theaters, event planners, stage crews, printing shops, outdoor recreation providers and much more!

We urge you to include funding for the Tourism Improvement Grant Program in a conference committee agreement.

Thank you,

Terry Mattson, President
MN Tourism Growth Coalition

Mike Schwieters, President
Community of MN Resorts

Tim Zunker, Chair
MN Assoc. Convention &
Visitors Bureaus