

House Commerce and Economic Development Committee Hearing  
April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019

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*“The Importance of Tourism” Testimony*

My family has operated Basin Harbor since 1886 across five generations. We are in our 133 year of operation in 2019. When I think about what has changed most radically during that time, it’s not the plumbing or the electric vehicle charging stations we now have. It’s the marketing.

The formula to keep ourselves (1) attractive and relevant, (2) in front of new customers, and (3) in the minds of previous customers changes *yearly, if not monthly, if not daily*. The competition for our consumers’ attention and discretionary spending is multiplying. We compete with trips to Disney World, presents from Santa, and international travel options. Our competition is not in Vermont but it is as close as one mile away in New York State, and as far away as Australia.

It takes a village. We are members of a variety of organizations in Vermont in order to show our support, stay current and learn from their efforts, and consciously work together to find solutions to bringing visitors to Vermont.

- Vermont Business Roundtable
- Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility
- Vermont Chamber of Commerce
- Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Vermont Convention Bureau
- Lake Champlain International
- Vermont Outdoor Guide Association
- Addison County Economic Development Corporation
- Vermont Association of Wedding Professionals
- Vermont Boat and Marine Association
- Vermont Tourism Summit
- Vermont Fresh Network
- Vergennes Partnership

Regionally and nationally, we belong to organizations for their marketing and educationally offerings. It is important to be aware of the business climate outside Vermont so that we can stay competitive with neighboring states and vacation alternatives.

- New England Inns and Resorts Association
- American Hotel and Lodging Association
- Audubon International
- Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International
- Historic Hotels of America | Preferred Hotel Group
- Resort Hotel Association | Kindred Resorts and Hotels

We work with outside companies for our website maintenance and development (located in MA), our marketing efforts (located in VT), and our public relations efforts (located in VT). Our marketing efforts and budget include, but are not limited to:

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- Tradeshow attendance, display and tour materials
- Hosting complimentary stays, food and beverage
- Instagram and Facebook advertising
- Pay Per Click advertising
- Advertising campaign development
- Photography: accommodations, meeting spaces, general/social, video
- Collateral development: group and wedding, postcards
- Developing brand guidelines
- Email template design
- Public relations efforts: pitching publications, local event assistance
- Website updates; recently adding video to our website homepage and ADA updates
- Printing hardcopies: postcards, brochures, wedding sales materials
- Local radio advertising
- Postage
- Advertisements in (10) hardcopy magazines and guides, (3) newspapers
- Training and education through industry partners
- Staff development and compensation
- Membership and active participation in local, state-wide, regional, and national associations
- Vermont Department of Transportation directional signs
- Contingency funds for flexibility when opportunities present themselves
- Staff onboarding and employee relations

Digital marketing alone has 25 line items in our budget, not including the pieces mentioned above.

All of this takes work, talent, and effort. All of this has a cost.

We believe all boats will rise in the harbor together. By creating a beautiful image of what Basin Harbor has to offer we are improving the Vermont Brand. By working with our partners, fellow hospitality properties, and association memberships, we are strengthening the brand of Vermont. We rely on the State's assistance with these efforts. We are doing our part but we expect that you'll do yours, too. We all need to be making a continued investment in Vermont.

Average Stats from the Past 10 Years (2009-2019\*) at Basin Harbor: \*2019 is projected as of 04/01/19

Open to guests for 165 days a year

16,655 occupied rooms per year

Occupancy rate of 68.2%

3.3% of our Net Sales on Non-Operating Marketing Expense

*The following is missing 2019 contributions:*

Rooms & Meals Tax Total:	\$7,331,566
Sales & Use Tax:	<u>\$598,671</u>
Total Operational Tax to State of VT:	\$7,930,237
Property Taxes:	\$1,709,794

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