



**H.705 – An act relating to promoting tourism and marketing
House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development**

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The Vermont Chamber of Commerce represents over 1,000 members. The vast majority of our members are small businesses and many of them are part of the tourism industry. Informed by routine engagement with our diverse membership, we maintain an informed perspective on issues impacting Vermont's economy.

Vermont's local communities, businesses, and attractions create the fabric that makes up the state's "brand." Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing (VDTM) brings together the shared values and experiences within Vermont communities to tell Vermont's story with a unified voice. This unified message is shared with potential visitors across the country and around the world.

After manufacturing, tourism is the second largest contributor of out-of-state dollars to the state. Tax revenue generated from tourism activity equates to a savings of over \$1,450 for every Vermont household. Investing in tourism promotion not only generates tax revenues and creates jobs, it provides an opportunity to expand the reach and visibility of Vermont's rural communities and small businesses. Our art organizations, attractions, restaurants, and independent retailers all benefit from tourist activity and spending further reinforce Vermont's brand.

Vermont's destination marketing capitalizing on distinct local characteristics which define towns and regions. Challenges in rural economic development often stem from a community's remoteness or small scale. These challenges are why it is critical to have VDTM telling the story of Vermont's iconic experiences. Increased investment will allow VDTM to further engage towns, businesses, and destinations to ensure the most compelling stories of Vermont are being told to potential visitors. The tourism industry is the heartbeat of the Vermont brand, making visitors feel at home and sharing the Vermont experience and values we enjoy every day.

Vermont has decreased its investment in tourism promotion by 6% over the last 5 years. It's time to reverse that trend and invest in Vermont. Destination marketing is most successful with repetition of message, reaching potential visitors at multiple touchpoints. A \$500,000 increase will allow VDTM to reach more potential visitors. With greater reach, VDTM will be able to better serve, promote, and engage organizations and communities. If we do not invest in Vermont tourism, the voice of our small businesses and rural communities will be muted. We will fail to compete in a global market, we will lose ground. Vermont will be left behind while others grow.

Vermont's Destination Marketing Funnel

A Visitors' Journey

A potential visitors' journey starts with awareness. Each phase of the journey is important, but the travel planning journey will not start without top of the funnel brand awareness.

