

Brian Maggiotto
Inn at Manchester

Dear Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to give testimony on behalf of the Tourism Industry here in Vermont. My name is Brian Maggiotto, together with my wife Gabriela, we run the Inn at Manchester in Manchester, Vermont, I also serve as President of the Bennington Area Chamber of Commerce. I have lived and worked all over the State and after leaving for a number of years to pursue a career in Advertising & Marketing with NBC, could not have been happier to return six years ago! Gabriela and I came back to Vermont because of a passion we had for the Green Mountains and the opportunity to give back to a place that had done so much for us and our families through the years. Having the opportunity to share the magic of Vermont everyday with guests is one of the true joys in my life. Without the support and efforts from organizations like the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing, Vermont Chamber of Commerce, and Vermont Inns and Bed & Breakfast Association to name a few, Inns like ours would not be able to celebrate the success that we do.

The request we put before you comes in the form of a \$500,000 increase to the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing promotional budget. To me, there is no questions that a 16% increase in spending is money well spent, though there are many who believe this still falls short of where the State needs to be to assist in supporting one of the cornerstones of its economy. I believe the steps we're taking today help to put us on path towards success for the future and protects us from losing market share to neighboring States that continue to put robust marketing dollars against seasonal events like Fall Foliage, Skiing, and Sugaring.

In the days and weeks leading up to today, it has been refreshing to see the support shown by many of our Senators and Representatives, along with industry colleagues and concerned citizens on the subject of Tourism funding. I come from a school of thought that in a State of just over 600,000 residents who annually welcome in roughly 13.1 million visitors, we ALL share is the responsibility of Tourism and Hospitality. You don't have to have a name tag that reads "Innkeeper" to be a part of the experience that visitors have while in Vermont. The Tourism industry impacts us all and supports our businesses in a variety of different ways, it extends far beyond the 32,000 employees who work day in and day out to curate a Vermont experience for our guests.

One of the key challenges for tourism in Vermont is its seasonality - and the seasons are very brief. We want our Department of Tourism and Marketing to have all the tools at its disposal to help draw visitors to the wonders of Vermont both on and off-peak season and to position Vermont as an opportunity to take a break from the digital demands of daily life, no matter what the time of the year. Help us to task them with increasing the flow of traffic through the Green Mountain State by featuring more of our streams and rivers, our craft breweries and artisanal cheese operations, and the multitude of attractions that our towns and villages offer. With over 80 million potential visitors within a day's drive of us and millions more

around the world, the marketing message should be strong enough with the necessary support to reach them all! Vermont has so much to offer 365 days of the year, please help us to share the magic of Vermont with everyone.