

**My name is Karen Fahey Ross, and I have lived in Stowe since 1988.** I raised my children here, have been deeply involved in the community, and have operated my Stowe-based advertising agency, KFA, for 34 years. My work with local businesses, hotels, ski resorts, and statewide tourism organizations gives me a long-term, professional perspective on how Stowe's economy functions—and what it needs to remain strong.

I am writing to express my support for the proposed 2% tax because it is a **strategic economic investment** in Stowe's future.

**1. Local option taxes have never harmed visitor demand.** Since the 1% tax was introduced in 2006 (and expanded in 2023), Stowe's tourism economy and awareness as a premiere destination has grown nationally and internationally. Visitors expect local taxes when traveling, and these revenues help maintain the amenities that keep Stowe competitive with other destinations.

**2. Tourism relies on infrastructure—and infrastructure requires funding.** Visitors use our roads, sidewalks, trails, recreation paths, public restrooms, emergency services, and waste facilities. These assets are essential to the visitor experience and to the businesses that depend on tourism. The cost of maintaining them should not fall solely on residents but be shared with those that visit and utilize these services and amenities.

**3. Stowe's brand is one of its most valuable economic assets.** National media coverage has positioned Stowe as a premier destination. That visibility didn't happen by accident—it came from decades of investment by local businesses and tourism professionals. Sustaining this "gold-level" brand requires continued reinvestment. The 2% tax helps ensure Stowe remains competitive without placing the entire burden entirely on homesteaders and homeowners.

**4. The tax aligns with statewide norms.** A 2% rate is lower than Burlington's gross receipts tax, and Stowe is often second in Vermont for visitor volume. This adjustment is reasonable, expected, and economically sound.

**Supporting this tax is supporting Stowe's long-term economic health in addition to the region and state of Vermont.** It ensures that the town can maintain the quality, infrastructure, and visitor experience that drive our local economy and benefit residents and businesses alike across the greater area as well as our beloved state.

With gratitude,

Karen Fahey Ross



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