

**Fund Tourism**

**JobsEconomic DevelopmentRevenue**

February 17, 2016

INPUT YOUR LEGISLATOR’s NAME HERE

State House

Boston, MA 02133

**RE: Tourism funding for Fiscal Year ’17 State Budget**

Dear INPUT YOUR LEGISLATOR’S NAME HERE:

Please support implementation of the Tourism Trust Fund Formula for the Fiscal Year 2017 state budget. In 2014 the Legislature created the Tourism Trust Fund to dedicate a certain percentage of revenue derived from the room occupancy tax to continued tourism outreach efforts, with 70% of the funds targeted for the Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism (MOTT) and 30% targeted for the Regional Tourism Councils (RTCs). This represents a fiscal year 2017 budget request of:

* + **$23 million for Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism**
  + **$10 million for 16 Regional Tourism Councils**

Tourism has a tremendous economic impact in Massachusetts:

* #3 industry in the state
* 132,000 jobs
* $1.2 billion in state & local tax revenue annually

Tourism has a significant impact in the MetroWest region of the state

* Visitors to our 19 municipalities directly spent $940 million on lodging, food, shopping, culture, recreation, transportation, and services. (Data is from 2014; “visitors” are defined as people who travel 50 miles to get to their destination OR who stay overnight)
* These visitors paid taxes during their stay in MetroWest. These taxes brought in $48 million in state revenue and brought in $22 million to our MetroWest municipalities.
* Jobs: Just one year of spending by these visitors directly accounted for 7590 jobs in our region with a combined payroll of $231 million. The *vast* number of jobs indirectly supported by this spending is impossible to guess.

We now have direct flights to Logan Airport from 55 international destinations and we attract 23.5 million annual visitors to the Commonwealth, who spend $19.5 billion. In order to continue to keep this economic engine moving to maintain and grow these jobs and increase revenue to communities and the state we must continue to invest in tourism; marketing, promoting and attracting visitors to the state and in-state visitors to our attractions and destinations:

* **We are losing market share**. Massachusetts has lost tourism market share for domestic and international visitors.
* **We invest less than our competitors**. Our investment in marketing tourism trails other states drastically. Potential visitors only have limited discretionary dollars to spend, vacationers will choose other destinations – we can’t let this happen.
* **RTCs: A unique public/private partnership**. RTCs are funded through a unique public/ private partnership – in order to receive state funding RTCs must match private dollars for every grant dollar funded by the state.
* **Return on Investment**. Every dollar spent attracting visitors to the state generates increased revenue for the state and communities.

Tourism is an important economic engine to our state and to our region. Regional Tourism Councils play a critical role in marketing and promoting our region and bringing visitors here. Please support our FY17 budget request.

We appreciate all that you do on behalf of MetroWest and the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,