Our people, our culture, and our [food/natural beauty/sports team/other source of local pride] make [destination] a place that residents are proud to call home. But they also make [destination] a place that others want to come and visit, bringing dollars that grow our tax base and create jobs.

Travelers directly support [[dollar amount](https://www.ustravel.org/economic-impact)] supports [[cite number of jobs](https://www.ustravel.org/economic-impact)] in [our state] alone. These dollars fuel our local businesses and vital public services, improving the quality of life for residents.

Strong public investment in marketing [destination]’s brand is what makes all of these benefits possible. However, some of our lawmakers are questioning the value of this travel promotion, and making moves to [cut, eliminate, alter] the resources available for this vital function.

Many of our citizens are well aware of the power of travel in [state], [destination], or even their communities and neighborhoods. But they deserve to know what kind of return they get when our [local/state] government invests in travel and tourism promotion.

To start, let’s look at what happens when a destination decides to invest more in promoting themselves both domestically and internationally. Nashville, TN, has long been a mecca for music lovers worldwide, but did you know that its “Music City” moniker is a fairly recent development? Just over ten years ago, the city made a commitment to building a strong, authentic and identifiable “Music City” brand through consistent investment in travel promotion. The move has yielded significant results. Promotion of sites like the new Music City Center has helped attract more than $1 billion in new development to Nashville’s SoBro (South of Broadway) neighborhood, plus $5 billion in annual visitor spending, and directly supported 58,000 jobs, according to the Nashville Convention and Visitors Corporation.

It’s not just major cities that benefit from effective destination marketing, either. The “Lake Erie Love” campaign has driven an economic revival in the Lake Erie Shores & Islands region of Michigan, generating $151 million in visitor spending, according to a Longwood’s International study. Today, the area welcomes more than nine million visitors each year, making the region one of the most popular in the Midwest.

On the flip side, there are immediate and severe consequences for states and regions that cut their tourism marketing budgets. In Connecticut, travel revenue growth slowed to just half the pace it achieved during the deep recession years of 2009-2010 after the state eliminated its tourism office. Even Connecticut’s governor called the cuts [“a gigantic mistake”](https://www.ustravel.org/sites/default/files/Media%20Root/Document/Power_Travel_Promotion-2014-pages.pdf) during his successful campaign, and included restoring the state’s travel promotion funding as part of his [platform](http://www.ccpa-inc.org/documents/Malloy%20Policy%20Book.pdf).

When local governments arrive at the misguided decision to shutter their tourism offices, they may not consider what kind of an opportunity that presents for neighboring areas to increase their market share. When Washington state’s legislature shut down its tourism office in 2011, Montana in turn [increased its tourism marketing budget by 30 percent](https://www.ustravel.org/sites/default/files/Media%20Root/Document/Power_Travel_Promotion_WEB.pdf) the following year. Predictably, traveler spending in Montana grew 70 percent faster, and took in far more travel-related tax revenue than its more populous neighbor.

[Destination] may face the same fate if misinformed special interests have their way. Everyone from citizens to public services and local businesses win when our government invests in strong destination marketing, but that requires a commitment—yes, a dollar commitment.

The U.S. Travel Association’s most recent [Power of Travel Promotion report](https://www.ustravel.org/sites/default/files/Media%20Root/Document/Power_Travel_Promotion_WEB.pdf) outlines just how beneficial that investment is for destinations like [destination] in today’s competitive global marketplace. Case study after case study demonstrates the “virtuous cycle” of economic benefits spurred by travel promotion. More visitors mean more money spent on local attractions, hotels, retail, restaurants and transportation. This in turn creates jobs and increases investment in infrastructure and city centers, and generates tax revenue to support essential public services. All of this growth and activity contributes to a positive “halo effect,” improving the destination’s image at home and abroad, improving quality of life for everyone who lives there—and attracting new businesses and residents.

For these reasons and more, [destination] cannot afford to fall behind in the competitive global travel marketplace. Budgetary commitment to travel promotion provides opportunity. Do we really want to consider the alternative?