

DMO SAMPLE OP-ED TEMPLATE

[DOWNLOAD EDITABLE VERSION >](#)

[DATE]

[Editor/Recipient Organization]

[Editor/Recipient Name]

[Editor/Recipient Address]

Destination Marketing Organizations Will Be Critical to America's Economic Recovery. Congress Must Act Now.

Dear [Editor/Recipient],

The coronavirus pandemic has devastated the world, and [your destination] is no exception.

Among the hardest-hit industry sectors, both here and nationally: travel and tourism, which accounts for [local/state jobs data point, especially jobs lost if available]. Through no fault of their own, travel and tourism workers have seen their livelihoods vanish in just a few short weeks, with no end yet in sight.

That's why restoring confidence among the traveling public and getting customers back into travel-related businesses must be a top priority once the health crisis has dissipated. Imagine—even long after the health crisis has ended—vacant hotels, empty attractions, desolate convention and meeting facilities, and no patrons in restaurants or in retail establishments.

This is the very real scenario we face if destination marketing organizations (DMOs), such as [your DMO] continue to be excluded from the relief measures passed by Congress.

Because most carry a non-profit or quasi-governmental tax status, DMOs do not currently qualify for funds under the [Paycheck Protection Program](#) (PPP), the key relief vehicle that provides loan forgiveness for payroll costs, group healthcare benefits and other operations expenses.

That ought to be corrected, because these are the very organizations that will be so critical to powering America's economic recovery.

DMOs, which include convention and visitors bureaus, are tasked with promoting businesses, attractions and visitor experiences in states, cities, and towns across the U.S, as well as attracting events that spur economic development such as meetings, trade shows and conventions. DMOs are, by definition, champions of small business. It is their work that brings the visitors that fill restaurants, shops, attractions and lodging. Not to be overlooked: DMOs have historically played indispensable roles in their communities in times of crisis, from helping to share critical public health messaging to leading informational campaigns that extend well beyond local residents.

In 2019 alone, [your destination's local economic impact numbers].

None of this would be possible without the small businesses [your DMO] supports. In fact, small businesses—and the workers who power them—account for 83% of all travel industry businesses in the U.S. These are the very workers Congress sought to protect: people whose livelihoods have, through no fault of their own, been devastated by this pandemic. These are the people you know—your friends and neighbors. If DMOs cannot survive this crisis to help bring travel customers back to [city/state/region], workers and small businesses will be imperiled long after the worst of the pandemic has passed, effectively extinguishing America’s prospects for an economic recovery.

To keep these organizations afloat until the eventual recovery phase, the loan forgiveness aspect of the PPP is critical. Every dollar that goes in to a DMO is spent on its economic development mission of attracting visitors who spend money in local businesses. If a DMO’s only survival option is to take on loans, every dollar that’s spent repaying those loans over the next few years will be one dollar less that’s spent on supporting America’s economic recovery efforts.

America—and the world—are going to travel again. We did it after 9/11, we did it after the 2008 financial meltdown, we did it after health scares such as H1N1 and SARS.

[Your DMO] wants to be ready to steer that returning demand to [city/state/region] when it is safe to travel again. Congress must expand PPP eligibility to non-profit and quasi-governmental organizations in the next emergency relief package to ensure DMOs can sustain themselves through the worst of this crisis and are positioned to play a leading role in America’s economic recovery.

Sincerely,