



March 9, 2023

Senator Bobby Joe Champion, Chair  
Senate Jobs and Economic Development Committee  
3401 Minnesota Senate Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Champion and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Minnesota Tourism Growth Coalition, the Minnesota Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus, and the Community of Minnesota Resorts, we want thank you for the opportunity to express our support for SF 1794 which appropriates \$10 million to Explore Minnesota Tourism for a Tourism Industry Recovery Grant Program.

While there has been some recovery in the tourism and hospitality industry – that recovery has not been consistent. Many in the tourism and hospitality industry have experienced multiple starts and stops, and recovery is not even across the state or tourism sectors. A full recovery of the tourism economy will take several years.

The \$10 million Tourism Industry Recovery Grant Program will accelerate the state's tourism industry and grant funds will be used to support and attract meetings, conventions and group business, multicomunity and high-visibility events, and tourism marketing.

The tourism industry has suffered nearly \$12 billion in travel spending losses since 2019. Data from Explore Minnesota shows that Hospitality Gross Sales fell from \$16.6 billion in 2019 to \$11.7 billion in 2020. Sales tax collections in these tourism categories fell dramatically and hospitality employment is still down from pre-pandemic levels.

A successful tourism and hospitality industry plays a vital role in the success of local communities, regional centers, and the state. Increased tourism activity benefits local restaurants, bars, resorts, lodging, gas stations, grocery stores, bait shops, theaters, event planners, stage crews, printing shops, outdoor recreation providers, retail shops, and much more!

Please support SF 1794, funding for the Tourism Industry Recovery grant program.

Thank you,

Paul Larsen, President  
MN Tourism Growth Coalition

Tim Zunker, Chair  
MN Assoc. Convention &  
Visitors Bureaus

Mike Schwieters, President  
Community of MN Resorts