



TOURISM FEDERATION OF WISCONSIN

"Wisconsin Tourism's Legislative Voice"

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To: Wisconsin State Legislature
Date: April 3, 2020
Re: Governor Evers Tourism Industry Relief Proposals

We are all experiencing the tremendous impact of COVID-19 on our health and our economy. Wisconsin's tourism industry has been decimated with the closing of tourism businesses and cancellations of conventions and events.

Governor Evers recently released his second package of comprehensive Legislative proposals providing COVID-19 relief and support. Within the package we would like to highlight seven of the proposals in which TFW has unified support:

- 1.) Create and fund a Regional Destination Marketing Organization Grant Program.**
- 2.) Create and fund Co-Op Marketing Program Grants.**
- 3.) Waive certain parameters related to the Work-Share Program due to a PHE, specifically eliminating the current 20-employee minimum.**
- 4.) Provide increased WEDC funds for grants to support small businesses and workers.**
- 5.) Provide flexibility for municipalities to implement payment delays and multiple installments of three or more for property taxes.**
- 6.) Repeal the one-week waiting period for unemployment insurance (included in the Governor's first proposal).**
- 7.) Provide protections for businesses from UI rate increases due to employee layoffs caused by the public health emergency.**

Other items not included in the Governor's proposal that we support are:

- 1.) Ensure that reimbursements owed by the state for overpayments of estimated taxes are issued immediately.**
- 2.) Provide a 90-day extension for all state tax payments.**

The Tourism industry in Wisconsin has come to almost a complete halt. The cash flow stoppage has forced the vast majority of those involved in the tourism industry to lay off a significant portion of our employees, stopping their ability to meet basic costs of doing business.

The state's destination marketing organizations, funded largely by room tax, are facing 30-70 percent budget cuts, laying off staff and slashing marketing budgets for the remainder of their year. Clearly, there will be a sharp decline in available marketing dollars when the tourism industry, our municipalities, and the State of Wisconsin will need it most, when the outbreak ceases.

(cont.)

We are hopeful that COVID-19 will subside during the summer, Wisconsin's peak travel and tourism season, and restrictions on group gatherings and human movement may be lifted. According to a Longwoods International survey of 1000 U.S. adults this week, 72% are still planning travel within six months. This is hopeful news for Wisconsin's tourism industry, and we need to be prepared.

Wisconsin's tourism industry achieves a return on investment of 8 to 1: \$8 in tax revenue per \$1 promotional spend. In 2018, the tourism economy generated \$1.6 billion in state and local revenue and generated 199,000 jobs. By supporting these six items, you can help us get this vital Wisconsin industry back on its feet, and in turn help all of Wisconsin.