



To: House Tourism Committee

From: Steve Yencich, CAE
President/CEO

Re: Informational Hearing on Tourism Industry

Date: February 14, 2013

- The Michigan Lodging and Tourism Association (MLTA) represents every major year-round and seasonal resort in the state as well as the vast majority of signature metropolitan hotels.
- At the same time, roughly 56% of our membership base comes from relatively small properties with 50 rooms or less.
- Hundreds of industry vendors, CVBs, DMOs, universities and tourist attractions are also members of MLTA.
- I'm also here to testify on behalf of the Tourism Improving Michigan's Economy, (TIME) Alliance, Inc.
 - TIME is a 501(c)(4) organization designed to educate the public, media, policymakers, and industry stakeholders on the many ways tourism benefits our state's economy.
 - Thanks to the support of over 150 contributors, in 2012, TIME was able to air over one thousand radio ads focusing on the Michigan Talk Network and WJR radio featuring 15 different partners.
 - Along with MLTA, TIME also lobbies on behalf of industry-wide issues.
- Beginning in 2003, MLTA began to advocate upon issues that affected all of tourism businesses and organizations (tourism promotion funding, post Labor Day schools, etc).

- We took this position because our leadership strongly believes that when tourism grows it puts heads in hotel beds, and increases business for restaurants, golf courses, ski resorts, campgrounds and all other tourism businesses.
- All of the progress made in recent years has come as a result of all segments of our industry collaborating and working together to grow our industry and Michigan's economy.
- When tourism grows, it benefits not just primary employers, but industry vendors (food and beverage companies, camp outfitters, golf club manufacturers, etc).
- Tourism growth also benefits agriculture, grocery stores, gas stations, website designers, ad agencies, accounting firms, business supply companies and other general businesses.
- Tourism is not just woods-n-water. In fact, there are far more hotel rooms and tourism-related businesses, festival and events in Detroit, Grand Rapids and other metropolitan regions, than all resort areas combined.
- During the recent recession total tourism jobs dropped from 200,000 to just 142,000. Now, thanks to Pure Michigan and improvements in the economy, employment levels are back to pre-recession levels and are expected to grow well beyond those levels.
- Tourism provides jobs for all socio-economic levels.
 - Tourism provides jobs for our youth where they can acquire career skills like dependability, initiative, and teamwork that will serve them a lifetime.
 - We also offer jobs for college graduates. In fact, there are over 30 colleges and universities that offer two and four year degree programs in hospitality, hotel, tourism and outdoor recreation management.
 - Tourism also provides jobs to high school graduates and the unemployed. Ours is still an industry where anyone with creativity and talent can aspire to and attain management and/or ownership positions.
- Tourism takes place year-round and in all eighty three Michigan counties.
- Michigan is uniquely a drive-to destination and doesn't enjoy the benefits of "drive-through" traffic that states like Ohio, Indiana and others enjoy. As such the maintenance and growth of funding for the Pure Michigan campaign is essential to the continued growth of our industry and state's economy.

- Travel Michigan markets our state nationally and internationally, encouraging millions to consider Michigan as a potential vacation destination.
 - Convention and Visitor Bureaus market their region or destination, drawing the interest of potential travelers to visit their area.
 - Individual tourism businesses invest millions to advertise and market their offerings, drawing guests and customers into their front doors.
 - All of these efforts work hand-in-glove to further grow and diversify Michigan's economy.
- A quality tourism experience is dependent on quality roads. In its soon-to-be strategic plan, our industry supports bipartisan action to repair our crumbling roads and bridges.
 - MLTA and the TIME Alliance pledge to work with you towards this end.
 - Continued funding of the Pure Michigan campaign is the safest investment you can make. None of the jobs created in hotels, campgrounds, golf courses, restaurants, attractions or other tourism businesses will ever be outsourced or sent to another state.

TOURISM JOBS STAY PUT!