



### **3SSB 5251/SHB 1123 – SUPPORT FOR A STATEWIDE TOURISM MARKETING PROGRAM**

- Support funding of a statewide tourism marketing program in the 2017-19 budget and put your full support behind passage of the implementing legislation (3SSB 5251/SHB 1123).
- We recognize the state's priorities for funding education and important social services however the opportunities for a return on the state's investment through a tourism marketing program will help grow our state and local economies.
- The small investment by the state will be matched 2-for1 by the tourism industry and provide almost immediate returns on the investment to state coffers. The important tax and spending revenue generated by tourism will make a difference for years to come.
- Washington is the only state in the nation without a statewide tourism marketing program.
  - Over the next two years, Oregon will spend \$76 million on tourism promotion - \$17 million of that will be on global advertising.
  - The British Columbia Provincial government will contribute nearly \$53 million to Destination British Columbia over the next two years.
  - There is no coordinated statewide Washington program to bring in more national or international travelers.
- Our communities do an excellent job with local lodging taxes to promote themselves but to grow tourism revenues for the state, Washington needs to have a statewide tourism marketing program that brings national and international visitors into Washington state. One of the primary goals of the legislation is to reach travelers and get them to areas of the state outside urban centers.
- It is important for the state legislature to pass authorizing legislation as well and provide funding in the state budget for a statewide tourism marketing program. The structure of a Tourism Marketing Authority is necessary to ensure accountability and a return on the state investment. A budget allocation alone won't provide the guidance as defined by a working group of bipartisan legislators from both the House and Senate who spent several months in the 2016 interim developing the program.
- We urge you to talk to your leadership and budget negotiators and ask them to make sure SHB 1123/3SSB 5251 are funded in the state budget and bills are passed to implement the program in the 2017-19 biennium.