



4SSB 5251 Support a statewide tourism marketing program!

Washington would no longer be the only state in the nation without a statewide tourism marketing program under 4th Substitute Senate Bill 5251. The bipartisan sponsored legislation would create an industry-led Tourism Marketing Authority and provide performance-based industry funding mechanisms *without* additional taxes.

The legislation would provide:

- Independent oversight of the industry-run program by a board of tourism industry representatives and a legislator from each of the four political caucuses. The board will have a non-voting advisory committee with representatives from the Department of Commerce, Department of Transportation, the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Department of Revenue and a member from a federally recognized Indian Tribe.
- Implementation of a marketing plan and campaign that focuses on bringing more tourists to Washington specifically to rural and tourism-dependent counties, emphasizing outdoor recreational opportunities and designed to attract international tourists.
- A funding mechanism for a Statewide Tourism Marketing Account: Beginning July 1, 2018, 0.2 percent of the retail sales tax collected on lodging, restaurants and rental cars will be diverted into the Statewide Tourism Marketing Account. Diversions are limited to \$1.5 million for FY 19 and \$3 million for all future biennium (every two year state budget cycle) and are subject to appropriation. Expenditures from the account are subject to a 2-1 non-state to state match. **This plan offers the potential for a maximum of \$9 million per biennium to be spent on the statewide tourism marketing program.**

Washington Tourism At A Glance

- **4th** largest industry
- Visitors to Washington spend nearly **\$21 billion** each year.
- Tourism generates **\$1.8 billion in state and local tax revenue** and supports **170,500 jobs**.
- Year-round in every community - rural **and urban**.
- **Four out of five** tourism-related companies are **small businesses**.
- Highest employer of **women and minorities**.
- Tourism consumer marketing **returns \$25** in new visitor spending to the state for **\$1 spent**.
- **40 percent** of tourism dollars are **spent outside the state's major cities and suburbs**.

Why it's so important:

- Since the state closed its Tourism Office in 2011, Washington is the **ONLY** state without a statewide tourism marketing program.
- Competing western states have state tourism budgets ranging from \$7 - \$50 million.
- Those expenditures attract our-of-state tourists who might otherwise come to Washington.

What it will do for our economy:

- Generate additional beneficial economic development from Washington's fourth largest industry.
- Expand the benefits of tourism in rural and economically distressed regions of the state.
- Generate tax dollars from out-of-state interests that will help fund other state priorities.

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