

3/9/2023

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



Representative Hodan Hassan, Chair
House Economic Development Finance & Policy Comm.
597 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Support for SF 1794/HF 232 – Tourism Industry Recovery Grants

Dear Chair Champion and Chair Hassan,

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support for SF 1794 (Hauschild) and HF 232 (Hansen), the bills to appropriate \$10 million for Tourism Industry Recovery Grants.

These grants account for a large part of our outstate tourism marketing dollars and allow us to do projects that impact our community in economic development from travelers. In the past, we have seen tourism grants support geotargeted ad placements surrounding events in neighboring states, similar tactics for leisure travelers enticing to our region, updated photo assets that include safety measures that are now required from our travelers, a focus on accessible travel assets, and increased attendance at out of state event bidding conferences to promote and pitch our region. These dollars are vital to our industry and directly to Visit Greater St. Cloud. If we were to get the appropriation, we would request funds from EMT to update our website to be offered in multiple languages, complete a cultural competency audit on our website and marketing materials, and aid in getting closed captioning on our video assets in addition to increased ad placements to our highest ROI outstate markets (Fargo, Chicago), increase in-state marketing to get folks staying close to home instead of traveling out of state (Minneapolis, Rochester, Duluth, Mankato) and placing a high emphasis on our direct flight markets from the St. Cloud Airport (Punta Gorda, FL, Meza, AZ).

Again, I urge your support of SF 1794/HF 232 and funding for Tourism Industry Recovery Grants.

Sincerely,

Rachel Thompson
Executive Director, Visit Greater St. Cloud
1411 West Saint Germain Street Suite 104, St. Cloud, MN 56301
320-202-6714