



March 9, 2023

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

Representative Hodan Hassan, Chair  
House Economic Development Finance & Policy Committee  
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 additional dollars for a tourism recovery grant program will allow our organization to focus not only on recovery of the tourism industry in Shakopee and Scott County but will also allow us to focus on growth opportunities in new markets with a focus on lighter travel seasons to the region and efforts to market our outdoor assets to bring a new segment of traveler to the region.

In addition, these grant dollars will assist us in our efforts to work in conjunction with local government entities to leverage tourism into economic and workforce development. The Shakopee Chamber and Visitors Bureau sees tourism as one of the first steps in economic and workforce development. Someone does not move to or open a business in a community without first visiting.

These additional grant dollars would give us the opportunity, as an organization, to create new events for our region which will have a significant economic impact for our hospitality partners, many of whom are still recovering from the pandemic. When Explore Minnesota Tourism implemented an events grant program in 2017, we were able to utilize these dollars to create a free, five-week concert series in Downtown Shakopee. Because of the grant dollars to help us create this event, this has become an annual event with almost 30,000 attendees in 2022, with over 50% of attendees coming from outside of Shakopee, some attendees coming from as far as far as California, Nevada, Arizona, Texas, and Florida.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tim Zunker", is written over a blue horizontal line.

Tim Zunker  
President  
Shakopee Chamber and Visitors Bureau