



NORTH CAROLINA TRAVEL AND TOURISM BOARD

WHEREAS, North Carolina is an attractive, accessible, and affordable destination for leisure and group travel with a variety of diverse landscapes and activities conducive to year-round visits and enjoyment; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Department of Commerce and Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina works with the North Carolina Travel & Tourism Board to promote the sound development of the travel and tourism industry in North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, the function and duties of the Travel & Tourism Board include, but are not limited to advising the Secretary of Commerce in the formulation of policy and priorities for the promotion and development of travel and tourism in the State; recommending programs to the Secretary that will promote the State as a travel and tourism destination and that will develop travel and tourism opportunities throughout the State; promoting the exchange of ideas and information on travel and tourism between State and local governmental agencies, and private organizations and individuals; advising the Secretary upon any matter that the Secretary, Governor, or CEO of the EDPNC may refer to it; and promoting policies that support tourism in North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, while North Carolina's tourism industry has grown significantly over the past decade (from \$12.1 billion in spending in 2001 to \$21.3 billion in spending in 2014, an increase of 77 percent), Visit North Carolina's promotional budget has not, leaving the state with significant diminished buying power as the current year budget is essentially the same as the 2001-2002 fiscal year investment; and

WHEREAS, according to the US Travel Association, despite being the 6th most visited state in the US, North Carolina's 2014-2015 state tourism marketing budget slipped from ranks 27th to 32nd, dropping 5 positions in just one year, in state tourism office budgets in 2014-15, putting it significantly behind states that are direct competitors including Virginia, Tennessee, South Carolina, Louisiana, Alabama, and Kentucky; and

WHEREAS, third-party research conducted by Visit NC in 2014 revealed that every \$1 invested in paid media generated \$184 in new visitor spending and \$15 in new state and local tax revenues; and

WHEREAS, there is substantial legislative and executive interest in increasing the State's tourism marketing budget to make North Carolina more competitive in attracting new visitors, and keeping them traveling within the state longer; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Commerce has requested the EDPNC to delineate how additional funding in the amount of \$12 million would be invested in tourism marketing; and

WHEREAS, Visit NC staff has prepared an investment breakdown for this effort, including benchmarks and a schedule of performance tracking research that could be applied to the process; and

WHEREAS, this campaign would include domestic tourism advertising and promotions, VisitNC.com website development and maintenance, domestic public relations, social media initiatives, retirement marketing, sports events recruitment, film tourism marketing; group travel, international, and film production marketing; industry development, and performance tracking research.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the members of the North Carolina Travel & Tourism Board join the North Carolina Department of Commerce in proposing up to a \$12 million incremental budget increase for tourism marketing; and that these funds should they be appropriated, fully comply with the Travel & Tourism Policy Act as set forth by statute in § 143B-434.2, and meet the guidelines of Visit NC's contract with the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina.

ADOPTED, this 23rd day of February, 2016.

Tammy O'Kelley, Chairperson
North Carolina Travel & Tourism Board

- **TAMMY O'KELLEY**
Chairperson, House Appointee
- **JOHN E. SKVARLA III**
Secretary of Commerce
- **CHRISTOPHER CHUNG**
EDPNC
- **KEVIN BAKER**
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