



POLICY PRIORITY ONE: TOURISM MARKETING

SAMPLE LETTER TO LEGISLATOR

Dear Rep. Van Doe,

My name is Jackson Taxpayer, and I live in Cityville, Iowa. I run a local bed and breakfast, and my wife owns an antiques business that is very popular with tourists coming to our area to ride the incredible network of trails you've helped fund. The success of our businesses, which have 17 employees, is dependent upon the state's out-of-state marketing campaign.

The Legislature cut tourism marketing and capped our dedicated funding source last year, for a total loss of more than \$300,000. Iowa is already 44th in spending for tourism marketing, and is nearly \$10 million below the Midwest regional average in tourism marketing. Each time a million dollars is cut from Iowa's investment in tourism marketing, the residents of our state miss out on more than \$12 million in new revenues, revenues that come from visitors to our state. These out-of-state revenues could be used to help pay teachers more, build new schools, or cut taxes.

Iowa's tourism industry is now more than a \$6 billion industry, making it one of Iowa's top industries. To put this in perspective, travel spending last year generated enough state and local sales tax revenue to pay the entire salaries of all Iowa firefighters, police officers, and sheriffs. Just think what an additional investment of \$1 million could do!

As the Iowa Legislature enters another budget-cutting year, I ask that you consider adding funds to proven programs that generate revenues and attract private investment, as tourism marketing does. Please consider increasing the Iowa Economic Development Authority's funding for out-of-state tourism marketing by at least \$1 million, and lifting the cap off the infrastructure funds dedicated to tourism marketing. Doing so will help small businesses in rural communities like ours grow.

Thanks for your time and consideration, please feel free to contact me at any time or stop in at our shop when you are in town.

Sincerely,
Jan Taxpayer
1700 Street Avenue - City, Iowa
515-555-5555

TIPS WHEN COMMUNICATING WITH LEGISLATORS

- **Keep your letter brief & to the point.** Legislators are very busy and have little "desk time" while they are working at the Capitol. If they want more information from you, they'll ask.

- **Identify yourself as a constituent.** You can do this subtly, by adding your address, or noting that you live in XYZ city. Legislators pay attention to constituent emails first and foremost.
- **Focus on local impacts.** The impact of an issue on communities in your legislator's district will be his/her main concern. Putting that local spin on an issue will help your legislator decide what to do, and how to vote. They get lots of facts and figures from lobbyists, but they won't get the "real story" from anyone but you!
- **Stay positive, no matter how frustrated you might be.** Your legislator may be adamantly opposed to enforcing Iowa's current school start date, but may be equally supportive of increased funding for tourism marketing. You don't want to burn that bridge.
- **Ask for something** - a vote, follow-up/response, sponsoring a bill, talking to colleagues, investigating the issue further, coming to a local board meeting to give the legislative perspective on the issue. Ask them to take some sort of action for you.
- **Make sure to thank them.** You'd be surprised how many people forget this step, and legislators remember those who remember to say thank you.