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February 14, 2020

**RE: GOVERNOR'S PROPOSED FY 21 BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS**

Dear Sen. Osten, Rep. Walker, and members of Appropriations Committee,

Connecticut Lodging Association (CLA) strongly supports continued funding of statewide marketing. CLA is concerned with Governor Lamont's budget adjustments and the lack of appropriate funding to Statewide Tourism Marketing. Tourism is an essential economic driver and revenue stream, for the well-being of Connecticut.

**CLA SUPPORTS A DEDICATED TOURISM FUND FOR STATEWIDE TOURISM MARKETING**

- CLA SUPPORTS **20% of the occupancy tax to be allocated to the tourism fund.**
- CLA SUPPORTS the Tourism Fund and suggests the following formula:
  - allocating **60% of the fund to statewide tourism marketing** and 40% for other items.
- CLA SUPPORTS changing the title of Statewide Marketing to **Statewide Tourism Marketing.**
- CLA **OPPOSES occupancy tax increases.** CT's 15% hotel is already the highest statewide hotel tax in the nation, to increase would only push visitors to neighboring states and result in loss of revenue.

	GOVERNOR'S PROPOSED FY 21 BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS		CLA SUPPORTS
Statewide Marketing	\$4,280,912	33% of the tourism fund	<b>60% of the tourism fund</b>
All other "line items"	\$8,769,923	67% of the tourism fund	<b>40% of the tourism fund</b>
Total Revenues Deposited	\$13,050,835	10% of the occupancy tax	<b>20% of occupancy tax</b>

The key to marketing success is repetition of the message. With insufficient marketing funds, Connecticut cannot compete effectively in the tourism industry. Consumers are being inundated with tourism advertisements from across the country and the world. With a 15% occupancy tax, the lodging industry financially supports many of the State's programs beyond tourism marketing. In fiscal year 2019, the occupancy tax generated over \$132 million for the state's coffers. Continued marketing would significantly increase that contribution year over year.

We ask you to adjust Governor Lamont's budget as proposed, recognize the value of statewide tourism marketing, and support increase of funds to bring in visitors and revenue to Connecticut. Tourism is an essential economic driver for the well-being and future of Connecticut. Support tourism investment, oppose tax hikes.

Thank you for your time, effort and your support for a better Connecticut.

Sincerely,  
 Ginny Kozlowski, Executive Director  
 Connecticut Lodging Association