

I am writing to support H.B.6119. Currently I run a Destination Marketing Organization called ExploreCTShoreline.com and represent a national tourism App called Gettinlocal.com.

Before moving to CT I served as the Commissioner of Tourism and Marketing for the state of Vermont and prior to that served in the legislature and chaired the Tourism Caucus. I served in the legislature during the great recession. At that time our unemployment fund was bankrupt, and our industry was a big part of that. At that time, we had stimulus funds coming into the state and our Tourism Caucus worked with the Commerce Committee to get the stimulus funding and to level fund our tourism budget. We were successful and added the funds and did targeted marketing that showed immediate response which brought in tax dollars and got people back to work. Any money put into tourism marketing will bring in revenue. In the upcoming year our visitors are going to be mostly regional and the neighboring states are all either level funding or increasing their funding to go after those same visitors. The campaign the state did last summer was very effective and we need to do more of that.

Thank you,

Megan Smith

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