



Holiday Inn

February 12, 2009

To members of the Appropriations Committee:

This letter is meant to communicate our undivided support for the funding for regional tourism marketing as it applies to the Meetings & Convention market. Having traveled all over the country with the bureau at many different trade shows, I have been able to witness first-hand just how impactful they are. As a partner of the CVB, we are able to attend national level trade shows at a fraction of the cost of attending with our brand-affiliates. The discounts we receive through the partnership enable us to attend more trade shows and quite frankly, if we didn't pair up with them, we wouldn't be able to afford to go on our own. Instead of attending five to eight trade shows, we would probably be attending one or two because of the dramatic difference in price. The hotel's job is to sell their property and the CVB sells the destination. That teamwork is so impactful to meeting planners because they know how comprehensive the bureau knowledge is. They want to know about the area they will be meeting in, not just how the rooms they're staying in look. As every meeting planner will tell you: if you want to find out about the region – you ask the CVB!

When I attend a trade show with the bureau, we are selling the destination, not the brand. The whole reason to attend these shows is to bring business to our area and if we attend with the brand affiliates, they'll sell the brand in the major cites, not the smaller regions. When we exhibit as Fairfield County, we target the planners bringing business to our area which leads to more exposure for us. This allows us to get in front of people that might never have considered using either Holiday Inn Stamford Downtown or Fairfield County. We literally get in front of thousands of people that we would never have had the chance to see.

In addition, the Regionally Coordinated Sales Missions we attend are another great way to get us in front of meeting planners. If we were to try that task on our own, the financial burden would never make it feasible. The opportunity to introduce our property to DC based planners would never be available to us if we had to shoulder the financial burden without that partnership.

Straight to the point, the Bureau is a huge asset to getting meeting planners into our area. Travel is down and meeting planners are looking for more and more ways to find value. The Bureau is our way to get the word out there in so many more ways than we can manage on our own. We count on our partnership to maximize our dollars spent on advertising, trade shows, and marketing. They yield results and taking that away will have such a negative impact on us that I hate to even postulate on it.

Sincerely,
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