MARRIOTT

March 15, 2016

Dear Sen. Joan Hartley, Rep. Chris Perone, and members of the Commerce Committee,

I SUPPORT **Bill H.B. No. 5576** to provide dedicated tourism marketing funding, which supports the continuous growth of Connecticut jobs, provides quality of life/community, and generates an ongoing revenue stream for Connecticut's many needed programs through industry taxes.

Connecticut's occupancy tax is currently directed into the general fund. The legislature determines the amount to be allocated to tourism marketing. We are proposing that a percentage of the occupancy tax currently being collected, be directly allocated to tourism marketing with the balance then going to the general fund. This account would be performance based through annual occupancy tax collections.
Why dedicated tourism marketing funding works for Connecticut:

TOURISM BRINGS AN ONGOING REVENUE STREAM TO CT!

- Occupancy tax collections **increased by $11 million** from $105,663,996 in FY 2014 to $116,281,201 in FY 2015. This is an essential revenue stream, not expenditure. *Source: CT Dept. of Revenue, FY 2014-2015 Annual Report, www.ct.gov/drs*
- With a 15% state occupancy tax, the lodging industry financially supports many of the Connecticut's programs beyond tourism marketing.

GROWS JOBS IN CONNECTICUT!

- The hospitality and leisure supersector is made up of two parts: the arts, entertainment, and recreation sector, and the accommodation and food services sector.
- As of Dec. 2015, 159,100 jobs are in this supersector, over the 155,000 jobs in 2014.
  This supersector grows CT jobs year over year, with **20,600 jobs added** since the beginning of the recession in 2008. *Source: CT Dep. of Labor, www.ctdol.state.ct.us*

FACTS: The current amount of employees in CT's hospitality and leisure supersector…

- would fill UCONN's Rentschler Football Field FOUR times!
- is larger than the total population of Bridgeport, CT's largest city!
- is equal to the amount of higher education students in the entire state of CT!

SUPPORTS CT COMMUNITIES AND SMALL BUSINESSES

- Quality of life in Connecticut is rated among the best in the United States. Our cultural, historic and entertainment attracts people and businesses to live and work in the state.
- The tourism sector offers CT resident's opportunities for self-employment and small business.

I ask you today to support dedicated tourism marketing funding so we can maximize the economic impact of travel and tourism in Connecticut. Tourism is an essential economic driver for the well-being and future of Connecticut.

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

Sincerely,

John Fraher, CHA
General Manager
Marriott Hartford Downtown

Hartford Marriott Downtown
200 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, Connecticut 06103 USA
T: 860.249.8000
MARRIOTTHOTELS.com

TOURISM WORKS FOR CONNECTICUT

TOURISM BRINGS AN ONGOING REVENUE STREAM TO CT!

- Occupancy tax collections **increased by $11 million** from $105,663,996 in FY 2014 to $116,281,201 in FY 2015.
- With CT's 15% state occupancy tax, the lodging industry financially supports many of the Connecticut's programs beyond tourism marketing.
- Connecticut's occupancy tax is currently directed into the general fund. The legislature determines the amount to be allocated to tourism marketing. We are proposing that a percentage of the occupancy tax currently being collected, be directly allocated to tourism marketing with the balance then going to the general fund. Tourism would support itself plus the many Connecticut programs needed in community!

Source: CT Dept. of Revenue, FY 2014-2015 Annual Report, www.ct.gov/drs

GROWS JOBS IN CONNECTICUT!

- The hospitality and leisure supersector is made up of two parts: the arts, entertainment, and recreation sector, and the accommodation and food services sector.
- As of Dec. 2015, **159,100 jobs** are in this supersector, over the 155,000 jobs in 2014. This supersector grows CT jobs year over year, with **20,600 jobs added** since the beginning of the recession in 2008.
- The accommodation and food services sector makes up approximately 8 percent of all employment nationally. *(U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Industry at a Glance, www.doleta.gov)*

Source: CT Dep. of Labor, www.ctdol.state.ct.us

FACTS ON CONNECTICUT TOURISM JOBS

The current amount of employees in CT's hospitality and leisure supersector…

- **would fill UCONN's Rentschler Football Field FOUR times!** *(rentschlerfield.com/stadium)*
- **is larger than the total population of Bridgeport, CT's largest city!** *(United States Census Bureau)*
- **is equal to the amount of higher education students in the entire state of CT!** *(Office of CT Higher Education)*

SUPPORTS CT COMMUNITIES AND SMALL BUSINESSES

- Quality of life in Connecticut is rated among the best in the United States. Our cultural, historic and entertainment attracts people and businesses to live and work in the state. Preserving our quality of life through our investment in culture and tourism is a key to rebuilding our economic future.
- The tourism sector offers CT resident's opportunities for self-employment and small business.

2016 CT REGULAR SESSION:

SUPPORT Bill H.B. No. 5576 to provide dedicated tourism funding which supports the continuous growth of Connecticut jobs, provides quality of life/community, and generates an ongoing revenue stream for Connecticut's many needed programs through industry taxes.

CLA
CONNECTICUT LODGING ASSOCIATION
Always Room for More!

Connecticut Lodging Association | ctlodging.org | info@ctlodging.org