



# A Great Return

## TOURISM WORKS FOR Washington

### Get ready for 2017 – Support a statewide tourism marketing program!

Continue your support for the Washington legislature to establish a new performance-based state tourism marketing program. The details of the legislation will be announced later in 2016 but our grassroots campaign has already begun.

A legislative working group is continuing discussions to finalize the measure but we know it will contain many of these basic elements:

- Independent oversight of the industry-run program by a board of legislators and representatives from the tourism industry.
- A marketing plan and advertising campaign that focuses on bringing more tourists to Washington and out to rural and tourism-dependent counties crafted by a non-profit entity representing the geographic and cultural diversity of the state.
- The details for starting up and funding the program are still being discussed. Options include additional tax credits, some industry match and sources from existing non-general fund taxes.

#### Washington Tourism At A Glance

- 4<sup>th</sup> largest industry
- Visitors to Washington spend nearly **\$21 billion** each year.
- Tourism generates **\$1.8 billion in state and local tax revenue** and supports **170,500 jobs**.
- Year-round in every community - rural **and urban**.
- **Four out of five** tourism-related companies are **small businesses**.
- Highest employer of **women and minorities**.
- Tourism consumer marketing **returns \$25** in new visitor spending to the state for **\$1 spent**.
- **40 percent** of tourism dollars are **spent outside the state's major cities and suburbs**.

#### Why it's so important:

- Since the state closed its Tourism Office in 2011, Washington is the **ONLY** state without a statewide tourism program.
- Competing western states have budgets ranging from \$7 - \$50 million.

#### What it will do for our economy:

- Generate additional beneficial economic development from Washington's fourth largest industry.
- Expand the benefits of tourism in rural and economically distressed regions of the state.
- Generate tax dollars from out-of-state interests that will help fund other state priorities.

**2017 is our best chance for success!**