



A Great Return

TOURISM WORKS FOR Washington

Statewide Tourism Program

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. Why is a sustainable, long-term funding program needed?

A: Since the legislature closed the state tourism office in 2011, Washington has been the only state in the U.S. without a vigorous statewide tourism marketing program. Competition has never been stronger for the tourism dollar. We are at significant risk of losing market share without a statewide marketing program.

Q: What is expected for the 2017 session?

A: A legislative proposal is being crafted with input from around the state and different sectors. We have spent years traveling the state, updating as many businesses and organizations as possible; seeking input and gathering feedback. We have invested time and energy into meeting with other states, commissions, legislative and state agency staff to find out what is possible and what is not, while maintaining an industry driven' proposal.

Q: What will be the funding mechanism for the 2017 legislation?

A: 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.

Q: Who is marketing statewide tourism in the meantime?

A: WTA's current, but slim, annual budget is essential to maintaining our state's modest marketing activities, including visitor guide collateral, destination web site, trade show marketing participation, travel publicity, social media and more. The existing budget also allows WTA to maintain tourism research and to ensure geographic diversity through all its marketing which means that small communities get their fair share of tourism's benefit.

Q: What is the impact of tourism on Washington State?

- 4th 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**.