



May 15, 217

TO:

The Honorable John Braun, Chair, Senate Ways & Means Committee
The Honorable Dino Rossi, Vice-Chair, Senate Ways & Means
The Honorable Sharon Brown, Vice-Chair, Senate Ways & Means
The Honorable Kevin Ranker, Ranking Member, Senate Ways & Means
The Honorable Christine Rolfes, Asst. Ranking Member, Senate Ways & Means
The Honorable Timm Ormsby Chair, House Appropriations Committee
The Honorable June Robinson, Vice-Chair, House Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Bruce Chandler, Ranking Member, House Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Drew MacEwen, Asst. Ranking Member, House Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Drew Stokesbary, Asst. Ranking Member, House Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Mark Shoesler, Senate Majority Leader
The Honorable Joe Fain, Senate Majority Floor Leader
The Honorable Sharon Nelson, Senate Minority Leader
The Honorable Marko Liias, Senate Minority Floor Leader
The Honorable Frank Chopp, Speaker of the House
The Honorable Pat Sullivan, House Majority Leader
The Honorable Dan Kristiansen, House Minority Leader
The Honorable J.T. Wilcox, House Minority Floor Leader
The Honorable Kristine Lytton, Chair, House Finance Committee

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RE: **SSB 5251 / SHB 1123 – Statewide Tourism Marketing Act**

Dear Members of the State Legislature,

We urge your help in passing SB5251 / HB 1123 – the Statewide Tourism Marketing Act – before the Legislature adjourns this year. The Big Tent Outdoor Recreation Coalition is dedicated to promoting and enhancing our state’s outdoor recreation economy and we believe this bill is a key step necessary to address years of neglect where Washington either under-funded its tourism marketing efforts – or provided no financial assistance at all.

Washington ranks near the bottom of the nation in terms of promoting tourism. This lack of investment exists despite the fact that our state has stunning natural and outdoor assets for visitors to enjoy. Consider the impact of outdoor recreation and tourism - the fourth largest industry segment in Washington:

- Outdoor recreation in Washington comprises almost \$22 billion in economic activity.



- Of the nearly 200,000 jobs associated with outdoor recreation in the state, approximately 122,600 (62%) are associated with outdoor recreation on public land.
- Out-of-state visitors account for only 12 percent of all participant days and 27 percent of total outdoor recreation spending. There is clearly opportunity to grow this important segment of our economy through tourism.
- Importantly, many of our tourism jobs exist as small business operations in rural areas of the state.

The state is significantly behind in tourism investment. Tourism promotion in neighboring states like Oregon and Montana vastly exceeds that of Washington. This bill is a down-payment in the right direction. We urge your support of SB 5251 / HB 1123 – the Statewide Tourism Marketing Act and full funding of the program in the 2017 – 2019 budget.

Sincerely,

Marc Berejka, President, Big Tent Outdoor Recreation Coalition
Mike Racine, Vice President, Big Tent Outdoor Recreation Coalition



Member Organizations

Access Fund
American Whitewater
Back Country Horsemen of WA
Bainbridge Island Metropolitan
Park & Recreation District
Bremerton Sportsmen's Club
Cascade Drift Skippers
Cascade Rail Foundation
Columbia Sportswear
Community Boating Center
Earth Corps
EDC of Seattle & King County
Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance
Forterra
Friends of the John Wayne Pioneer
Trail
IslandWood
Kittitas County Field and Stream
Club
Mazamas
Metro Parks Tacoma
Mission Ridge Ski and Board Resort
Mountain Safety Research (MSR)
Mountains to Sound Greenway
Trust
NatureBridge
Northwest Marine Trade
Association

Oberto Brands, Inc.
Olympia Beer
Olympia Parks, Arts, & Recreation
Outdoor Industry Association
Outdoor Research
Pacific Market International
Pacific Northwest Ski Areas
Association
Pierce County Parks & Recreation
Premier Polaris
Recreation Northwest Expo
Recreational Boating Association of
WA
REI
Sail Sand Point
Salish Sea Expeditions
Sky Valley Recreation & Planning
Group
Skykomish Valley Environmental and
Economic Alliance
Superfeet
Surfrider Foundation
Tekoa Trail Trestle Association
The Mountaineers
The Nature Conservancy
The Otos Group
The Trust for Public Lands

The Wilderness Society
Trout Unlimited
Vancouver Parks & Recreation
Visit Kitsap Peninsula
Washington Bikes
Washington Off Highway Vehicle
Alliance
Washington Outdoor Alliance
Washington Recreation and
Conservation Office
Washington Recreation and Park
Association
Washington Scuba Alliance
Washington State Motorsports
Dealers Association
Washington State Park Foundation
Washington State Snowmobile
Association
Washington Trails Association
Washington Water Trails
Association
Washington Wildlife and
Recreation Coalition
Washingtonians for Wildlife
Conservation
YMCA Seattle