



June 16, 2017

The Honorable John Braun
Senator, Washington State
PO Box 40420
Olympia, WA 98504

RE: Statewide Tourism Marketing Program

Dear Senator Braun:

On behalf of business and community leaders in Clark County, we ask you to make a statewide tourism marketing program a priority for the Special Session of the 2017 legislature.

Washington is the only state without a statewide tourism marketing program and our border communities need the public/private partnership of SHB1123/SSB5251 to effectively compete with our neighboring states.

Oregon will spend nearly \$76 million in promoting itself in the next two years. More than \$16 million of that will be to international visitors through global advertising. We are losing millions in revenue and economic development without a coordinated marketing effort.

Tourism benefits every Washington community and this proposal specifically targets rural and tourism-dependent communities. Here in Clark County, visitors spent more than \$472 million in 2016. Tourism impacts more than hotels, restaurants and destinations. It benefits retailers, outdoor recreation, state parks, ports and cities and ultimately the taxpayers of Washington. In 2016, more than 4,450 jobs in Clark County were supported by tourism.

Please support a statewide tourism marketing program by passing SHB1123/SSB5251 and including funding for the public/private sector match in the 2017-19 budget. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ron Arp".

Ron Arp
President
Identity Clark County

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Bomar".

Mike Bomar
President
Columbia River Economic
Development Council

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lee Rafferty".

Lee Rafferty
Executive Director
Vancouver Downtown
Association