The Time to Increase the State's Tourism Marketing Budget is Now

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Tourism is the second largest employment sector and revenue generator in New Mexico. As we grow the economy – whether that is attracting businesses to move to the area or whether it is attracting retirees and businesses, it's important to remember most people will first experience New Mexico as a visitor.

There is something known as the Halo Effect, which is an unexpected benefit of an action, a tourism trends in New Mexico and nationally) uncovered was the economic development benefit from tourism promotion. People who are considering moving to New Mexico, buying a vacation home in New Mexico or moving or starting a business in New Mexico, are impacted positively by first having seen one of our New Mexico True ads, their research found.

Given that trend and the huge success of the New Mexico True campaign, we must support the Governor and Tourism Cabinet Secretary in growing our tourism budget, which will have a direct return on investment for the state.

The Governor and Tourism Cabinet t have requested a budget increase for tourism marketing promotion and advertising of $6.06 million. While that is a large increase over last year's budget of $10.5 million, the money will be used to market the state and attract more visitors. And visitors pay two important taxes that are used to benefit all New Mexicans – lodgers' tax and gross receipts tax.

The State of New Mexico collected 47 million in lodger's tax collections in FY 2016 vs. 44 million in FY 2015, a 6.4% increase. The city of Santa Fe had an 11.2% year over year increase in hotel guest room revenue 2018 vs. 2017. The city of Santa Fe also saw a 1.2 million Increase in lodger's tax 2018 vs. 2017.

It's time to say yes to the tourism budget increase. The dollars invested will have a direct economic return on investment in jobs, lodgers' tax, gross receipts tax and revenue to the businesses that depend on tourism to survive.