



July 15, 2021

Mayor Tom McNamara
Rockford City Council
City of Rockford
425 East State St.
Rockford, IL 61101

Dear Mayor and Members of City Council,

I am writing to express my support of the Tourism Improvement District (TID) because tourism is essential to the positive economic recovery and growth of our region. Without the investment from this TID, our city and region stand risk of losing jobs for area residents; revenue for our hotels, attractions, restaurants, and other locally owned businesses; and the ability to competitively position our city and region as a destination for visitors and vibrant home for our residents.

This pandemic has severely and negatively impacted the tourism and hospitality industry. Since March 2020, hotel occupancies have dropped by nearly 30 percent and overall revenue is down 40 percent. This decline in visitor volume not only translated to a decline in revenue for local businesses, but also reduced funds allocated by our municipalities to pay for core government services such as police, fire and public works due to reduced tax revenue.

The Tourism Improvement District is a solution to our region's economic recovery and long-term growth. As a hotelier-proposed and city-approved assessment on hotel stays, TID revenue provides a stable source of strategic funding for marketing, sales efforts, bid payments, and destination development to directly increase hotel occupancy and room rates and in turn, generates visitor spending in our market. It is proven that visitor spending equates to \$9 for every \$1 we invest in tourism marketing.

I've spoken with members of RACVB and other members of the hotel community, and we are confident that there are larger events out there, that could be brought to our area. I encourage you to vote yes to the Tourism Improvement District in support of region's recovery. If you would like additional information about the value of a TID, the role of RACVB, and the plans for tourism recovery, please contact John Groh, president/CEO of the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nikki Widstrom".

Nikki Widstrom
General Manager

7675 Walton St., Rockford, IL 61108
Hotel: +1 815 229 3322 Direct Fax: +1 815 229 3022
website: www.rockford.stayhgi.com
Reservations: StayHGI.com or 1-877-STAY-HGI

