

## 2020 California Tourism Month

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### **CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC DEVASTATES SAN MATEO COUNTY'S TOURISM INDUSTRY FOLLOWING STRONG 2019**

*New economic impact report highlights the importance of tourism to San Mateo County*

**Burlingame, Calif. (May 19, 2020)** –The coronavirus pandemic has shattered San Mateo County's tourism industry, which, according to Visit California's latest economic impact report, was thriving in 2019.

The "California Travel Impacts" report, prepared for Visit California by Dean Runyan Associates, shows visitor spending reached \$4.5 billion and supported 45,300 jobs in San Mateo County in 2019, a 5.5% boost from 2018. Continued growth highlights how important tourism is to the region and California's economy.

Visitor spending generated \$501.8M in local tax revenue last year, providing a stream of revenue in San Mateo County to fund the community's way of life including support of essential programs, such as public safety, infrastructure and parks.

In light of the coronavirus pandemic, Tourism Economics projects California will lose \$72.1 billion in statewide travel-related spending in 2020, nearly half of what was generated last year. The study also showed the pandemic will wipe out 613,000 California jobs by the end of May, more than half the tourism industry's workforce.

"The COVID-19 crisis caused an unprecedented downward spiral in our tourism industry," said John Hutar, President and CEO of the San Mateo County/Silicon Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau. "The impact has been profound – our hotel members have suspended operation of 25% of their guest room inventory, which unfortunately has caused a significant loss of jobs."

Statewide, 2019 marked a record 10 years of travel-related economic growth for the state, further signaling the steady influence tourism has had on California's economy for the past decade.

Visitors to California spent \$144.9 billion in 2019, a 3.2 percent increase over 2018. The number of travel and tourism jobs increased to 1.2 million last year, an additional 13,000 jobs. Travel-generated tax revenue also grew for the 10th straight year, providing \$12.2 billion to state and local governments, a 3.4 percent increase over 2018.

“The data show just how vital tourism is to the California economy and why it must be restored when we control and ultimately overcome this deadly outbreak,” said Caroline Beteta, President and CEO of Visit California, the state’s tourism marketing non-profit organization. “When that time arrives, we’ll be calling on Californians to become the main drivers of recovery by traveling in the state, shopping locally and visiting local restaurants, wineries and attractions. California has led the nation in its response to the health crisis, and it will lead the economic comeback.”

To ensure the tourism industry rebounds in our community, the [San Mateo County/Silicon Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau](#) is working with Visit California on initiatives to inspire community support and begin safe and responsible travel when the time is right.

The release of the 2019 Travel Impact Report coincides with California Tourism Month, which occurs every May following a [resolution](#) enacted by the Legislature in 2016. This week, California also joins U.S. Travel in honoring the Spirit of Travel for [National Travel and Tourism Week](#). The spirit of travel isn’t only found in far-off places. When residents embrace the spirit of travel by supporting local businesses and helping neighbors, they also play a key role in rebuilding their community, their state – and America.

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**About San Mateo County/Silicon Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau**

*The San Mateo County/Silicon Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau is a destination sales and marketing organization. The organization’s objective is to attract meetings, conventions, business, and individual travelers, thereby enhancing the economic growth in San Mateo County and Palo Alto, CA. For more information about San Mateo County/Silicon Valley CVB, go to [www.visitsmcsv.com](http://www.visitsmcsv.com).*

**About Visit California**

*Visit California is a nonprofit organization with a mission to develop and maintain marketing programs – in partnership with the state’s travel industry – that keep California top-of-mind as a premier travel destination. For more information about Visit California and for a free California Official State Visitor’s Guide, go to [www.visitcalifornia.com](http://www.visitcalifornia.com). For story ideas, media information, downloadable images, video and more, go to [media.visitcalifornia.com](http://media.visitcalifornia.com).*