



## STATE OF WASHINGTON TOURISM

### 2023-24 State Tourism Program Operational Funding Request Quick Information

The state tourism program has been **successfully re-built with public and private investment**. Now it needs a funding stream to operate, and drive statewide economic impact, resiliency and equity.

Companion bills [HB 1258](#) and [SB 5465](#) will raise the current cap on general funds to \$13 million per fiscal year and adjust the industry matching requirement from 2:1 to 1:1 (industry to state). This amount is **necessary to operate** the re-built tourism program **statewide** and **year-round**, including:

- ✓ Scale rural and underserved community development and grants
- ✓ Balance visitation flow, broaden destination stewardship
- ✓ Deploy *responsible travel* campaigns that regenerate and enhance the tax base

#### **Without these operational funds, programs will be greatly reduced or cut**

- ✓ State of Washington Tourism's budget declines 36% in 2023, an additional 30% in 2024

#### **What it takes to operate statewide, year-round**

- ✓ The average state tourism office operating budget is \$23 million per fiscal year
- ✓ 29 states have increased budgets since the pandemic
- ✓ Competing western state programs: Oregon, \$44M; Montana, \$40M; Wyoming, \$26M; Utah, \$25M; Arizona, \$23M; Colorado, \$22M

#### **This is good investment for Washington**

- ✓ State tourism program is *re-built* and ready to produce *revenue*
- ✓ A strong public-private partnership is established
- ✓ Tourism program success has been demonstrated
- ✓ Request is just 1% of collections from of state sales tax on rental cars, lodging and restaurants - and the tourism program will regenerate tax revenue
- ✓ Revenue from out-of-state visitors is like "importing taxpayers"
- ✓ Tourism provides fast recovery in economic downturns
- ✓ Revenue can be used to fund social and other programs
- ✓ Tourism sustains jobs amid pandemic, recession and workforce issues
- ✓ Programs focus on rural, underserved and diverse communities, outdoor recreation and international travelers

#### **For more information or to help advocate:**

Becky Bogard, Bogard & Johnson, (206) 979-0326, [becky@bogardjohnson.com](mailto:becky@bogardjohnson.com)

Kathryn Hedrick, Bogard & Johnson, (360) 280-6202, [kathryn\\_hedrick@comcast.net](mailto:kathryn_hedrick@comcast.net)

James Paribello, Paribello Public Affairs, (360) 402-8405, [Paribello@gmail.com](mailto:Paribello@gmail.com)

David Blandford, SWT Executive Director, (206) 713-8314, [david@stateofwatourism.com](mailto:david@stateofwatourism.com)