



Kittery
Eliot
York
South Berwick
Cape Neddick

February 17, 2026

RE: LD 2212

My name is Holly Roberts, and I am the Executive Director of the York Region Chamber of Commerce. I am writing on behalf of our members to express strong opposition to the proposed transfer of \$700,000 from Maine's Tourism Marketing Promotion Fund in the supplemental budget. Redirecting these funds away from their intended purpose undermines a long-standing commitment to Maine's tourism industry and creates a concerning precedent for the future.

The Tourism Marketing Promotion Fund exists for a clear and specific reason, to promote Maine and drive visitation. These dollars are generated directly from the success of Maine's tourism and hospitality businesses through a dedicated portion of the meals and lodging tax. For more than two decades, the understanding has been that a share of the revenue our industry produces would be reinvested to help sustain and grow visitation. Changing that expectation risks eroding trust between the state and one of its most important economic sectors.

This proposal is particularly troubling given current market conditions. Maine, like many destinations, has experienced shifts in visitation, including declines from key markets such as Canada. Now is the time to reinforce marketing efforts, not weaken them. Consistent and reliable marketing investment has been one of Maine's competitive strengths, helping maintain visibility in an increasingly crowded marketplace.

The return on investment from tourism marketing is well documented. The Maine Office of Tourism has reported that its efforts generate approximately \$15-\$20 in visitor spending for every \$1 invested. Few state investments produce that level of economic impact. Reducing marketing resources does not simply save money, it reduces economic activity, tax revenue, and business stability across communities statewide.

For tourism businesses, visitation levels are not abstract statistics, they translate directly into jobs, wages, operating hours, and the ability to remain open. When visitor numbers decline, the impacts are immediate, fewer reservations, reduced employee hours, delayed investments, and less spending in local economies. Protecting the Tourism Marketing Fund helps protect Maine workers and communities.

Equally important is the precedent this action would set. The fund was established in statute in 2001 specifically to ensure that tourism revenue would remain dedicated to tourism promotion. Using it for unrelated purposes, even once, opens the door to future diversions and weakens the policy framework that has supported Maine's tourism growth for decades.

Tourism in the York Region (York, Kittery, Eliot and South Berwick provides a critical economic gateway for the State of Maine, generating billions in regional spending and supporting thousands of jobs. As part of the Maine Beaches Region, these towns are a primary entry point for out-of-state visitors whose spending lowers taxes for all Maine households.

I respectfully urge you to protect the Tourism Marketing Promotion Fund and maintain its integrity for its intended purpose. Maine's tourism industry generates billions in economic activity and supports communities across the state. Preserving stable, dedicated marketing investment is essential to sustaining that success. Thank you for your consideration and for your support of Maine's tourism economy.

Sincerely,


Holly Roberts

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