

**Senator Rotundo, Senator Curry, Representative Gattine and Representative Gere, members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development, my name is Jean Ginn Marvin and I am testifying here today in strong opposition to Part EE of LD 2212, which would allow \$700,000 to be removed from the Maine Tourism Marketing Promotion Fund.**

**Let me be clear: this fund was written into statute in 2001 for a specific purpose — to ensure that a portion of the meals and lodging tax generated by the tourism industry would be reinvested directly into marketing and promotion. This was not accidental. It was a deliberate policy decision and a commitment made between the State of Maine and the tourism industry.**

**For more than two decades, the industry has kept its end of that bargain. Maine's restaurants, inns, hotels, attractions, and tourism-related businesses have worked hard, generated revenue, collected taxes, and contributed to the state's economy with the understanding that 5% of the meals and lodging tax would be dedicated to bringing visitors back to Maine. Now the Legislature must keep its end of the bargain.**

**The Tourism Marketing Promotion Fund is not surplus money. It is not discretionary revenue sitting idle. It is a statutorily dedicated fund with a clear purpose. It is not there to be raided to solve unrelated budget challenges.**

**Redirecting these dollars undermines trust and sets a very troubling precedent. If a fund established in statute for a defined purpose can be tapped when convenient, it calls into question the reliability of other statutory commitments made to industries across Maine.**

**This proposal also comes at the wrong time.**

**Over the past year, both industry leaders and state officials have raised concerns about declining visitation, particularly from Canadian travelers**

— a critical market for Maine. We are competing with every other New England state and Canadian province for those visitors. Stable, predictable marketing funding has long been one of Maine's competitive strengths.

Maine's Office of Tourism has consistently reported that its marketing generates roughly \$15 to \$20 in visitor spending for every \$1 invested. Few state investments yield that kind of return. Cutting marketing does not save money — it reduces economic activity and ultimately reduces tax revenue.

When visitation drops, the impact is immediate and tangible:

- Fewer bookings
- Shorter operating seasons
- Reduced employee hours
- Less spending in local communities

Tourism supports jobs in every county in Maine. It supports small businesses, seasonal workers, year-round employees, and the communities that depend on visitor spending.

The Tourism Marketing Promotion Fund represents a promise made in statute in 2001. The industry has upheld that promise in the form of raising meals and lodging taxes. We ask that the Legislature uphold it's end of the bargain as well.

I respectfully urge you to reject the proposal to redirect \$700,000 from the Tourism Marketing Promotion Fund and to reaffirm the integrity of the statutory commitment that has served Maine's economy well for more than two decades.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jean Ginn Marvin [jean@nonantumresort.com](mailto:jean@nonantumresort.com) 207 329-1310