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Urgent Action Request Issued by Tom Norwalk, SCVB President and CEO

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Tom Norwalk, President and CEO of the Seattle Convention & Visitor's Bureau has issued an Urgent Action Request. Yesterday, House Ways & Means Chair Rep. Ross Hunter's (D-Medina) released his proposed 2011 Supplemental Budget, which eliminates funding for activities to promote tourism, effective March 1, 2011 – three months earlier than anticipated. Clearly, this proposed budget bodes ill for Washington State tourism. The text of Tom's request is below. Please consider taking appropriate action:

Urgent Action Request

New Proposal to Close State Tourism by March 1;

Please Voice your Concern by 3 p.m. Today!

House Ways & Means Chair Rep. Ross Hunter (D-Medina) released late yesterday his proposed 2011 Supplemental Budget, which eliminates funding for activities to promote tourism, effective March 1, 2011 – three months earlier than anticipated.

Ironically, annual state tourism impact numbers were released yesterday and they confirm the importance of sustained tourism marketing efforts – total visitor spending of \$15.2 billion (+7.4%) and state and local tax revenue of nearly \$1 billion (+5%).

The bill is scheduled for executive session from the Ways & Means Committee today at 3:30 p.m. A summary of the proposed budget and the budget document can be found [here](#).

Background

Governor Gregoire's proposed 2011-2013 biennial budget, released last month, calls for the elimination of the state tourism office by June 30, 2011. While this action caught the statewide tourism industry by surprise, SCVB and fellow industry leaders responded immediately by:

Working together to create a transition plan that protects valuable tourism marketing assets and ensures continuity going forward.

Accelerated work to identify a long-term, sustainable tourism funding solution for Washington

New Challenge.

Early closure of the office on March 1 would seriously undermine private sector efforts to preserve marketing momentum that is critical to sustaining tourism's economic and employment benefits in Washington state.

Please voice your concern as soon as possible today:

1. Send an e-mail or call your legislator. Review the list of House Ways & Means Committee members, find your legislator on the committee and explain to them why the immediate elimination of tourism funding is detrimental to the state. [Click here to find your representative by zip code.](#)
2. Call the Legislative Hotline. Leave a message for your House Ways and Means Committee representatives at 800-562-6000.

Sustained tourism marketing and promotion is vital for all us all. Please take immediate action on this issue and reach out immediately to others who are invested in our industry's success!

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Authored by

[Greg Duff](#)

[Principal|Seattle](#)

[206.816.1470](tel:206.816.1470) greg.duff@foster.com