

January 21, 2026

To: Members of the New Hampshire House Resources, Recreation, and Development

Re: House Bill 1626 – Relative to the Effectiveness of Tourism Expenditures

Dear Chairman Harb and Members of the Resources, Recreation, and Development Committee,

Our associations and chambers collectively express strong opposition on House Bill 1626 on behalf of New Hampshire's crucial tourism industry, which sustains over 70,000 jobs and is fundamental to the state's economic health.

While we understand and appreciate the desire for accountability and transparency in state spending, this bill, as written, creates a significant unfunded mandate for the Department of Business and Economic Affairs (BEA) and the Division of Travel and Tourism Development (DTTD). The bill requires extensive new research, analysis, and reporting but provides no funding to support that work.

Beyond being unfunded, this requirement would be cumbersome and operationally burdensome to the DTTD team. The division already operates with a lean staff focused on executing marketing programs, supporting industry partners, and driving visitation and economic impact. Imposing an additional layer of complex, program-by-program ROI analysis for every expenditure over \$10,000 would divert limited staff time and resources away from the core mission of growing New Hampshire's visitor economy.

It is also important to note that prior to June 2025 when the contract was unsupported by the Executive Council, DTTD had been using a professional research firm to measure the effectiveness of tourism promotion in New Hampshire. The most recent evaluations show an estimated return on investment of approximately \$15 for every \$1 spent on tourism marketing. This strong performance is further reflected in the continued growth of Meals and Rentals tax revenue, which directly demonstrates the effectiveness of the department's marketing and promotion efforts.

Today, New Hampshire's tourism economy generates approximately \$7.5 billion in visitor spending, supporting businesses across accommodations, dining, retail, attractions, signature events, and ski areas. However, even this impressive figure does not capture the full ripple effect of tourism spending. It does not include the countless secondary and tertiary impacts such as spending at convenience and gas stations, grocery stores, urgent care centers, pop-up bake sales, Girl Scout cookie tables, and many other local and community-based services that benefit from visitor traffic but are not easily or directly attributed to tourism marketing campaigns. These real-world economic impacts are substantial, but they are extremely difficult and costly to measure with precision.

Tourism marketing is not a simple transactional investment where one can cleanly trace one advertisement to one purchase. It is a long-term, multi-channel, multi-market strategy that builds awareness, shapes perception, and drives travel decisions over time. Requiring a rigid, line-item ROI calculation for each program risks oversimplifying how destination marketing actually works, while imposing significant new costs that could otherwise be used to promote New Hampshire and generate even greater returns.

In short, HB 1626 would reduce marketing effectiveness and strain already limited resources, all while duplicating work that was already being done and demonstrated strong returns for the state.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the committee to oppose HB 1626.

Thank you for your service to our State and your consideration of this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

The New Hampshire Travel Council

Rebecca Metcalf, Chair
New Hampshire Travel Council

Charyl Reardon, President
White Mountains Attractions Association

Jessyca Keeler, President
Ski New Hampshire

Amy Landers, Executive Director
Lakes Region Tourism Association

Ashlee Rowley, Executive Director
Lake Sunapee Region Chamber of Commerce

Kim Pickering, Executive Director
Western White Mountains Chamber of Commerce

Ben VanCamp, President
The Chamber Collaborative of Greater Portsmouth