

The Honorable Richard D. Roth
Chair, Senate Business, Professions and Economic Development Committee
State Capitol, Room 2053
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 285 (McGuire) California Tourism Recovery Act – SUPPORT

Dear Chair Roth,

Orange County Business Council (OCBC), the leading voice of business in Orange County, is pleased to **support SB 285 (McGuire), the California Tourism Recovery Act**. This crucial legislation would transfer \$45 million to Visit California for implementing their “Calling All Californians” campaign to jumpstart travel when it is safe to do so.

As you know, COVID-19 has impacted travel and hospitality more than any other industry, confirmed by the report of the Governor’s Task Force on Business and Jobs Recovery. More than half of California’s 1.2 million travel and hospitality industry workers lost their jobs because of the pandemic. Lower-wage workers have disproportionately borne the impact of job losses and the January Budget proposal suggests that these jobs may never return. Not only that, but for every tourism job lost, a ripple effect occurs in the ecosystem that supports the travel industry. Every three travel industry jobs support another two California jobs. Orange County in particular is dependent upon the success of the tourism industry—prior to the pandemic, Disneyland was the county’s largest employer.

California’s success as a world class tourism attraction is due in large part to Visit California— their programs delivered \$14.8 billion of revenue to the state’s economy in 2019. However, they are funded by private businesses through a self-imposed assessment, which means the closure of the state’s tourism industry immediately and dramatically reduced Visit California’s revenue. This has forced the organization to cancel all existing marketing programs and dramatically reduce staff.

Domestic leisure travel offers the best immediate opportunity for invigorating Orange County’s economy from the pandemic. However, as COVID-19 begins to be controlled, it will be an extremely crowded marketplace. California needs to actively market itself to prevent decay in awareness, preference, and travel intent.

For these reasons, OCBC asks the Committee to approve SB 285.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Ward
Senior Vice President of Government Affairs

cc: Members, Senate Business, Professions and Economic Development Committee
The Honorable Mike McGuire, Author
Sarah Mason, Senate Business, Professions and Economic Development Committee