

Dear Room Tax Commission,

My name is Stephanie Bracken and I am an Area General Manager for three hotels here in Madison. I represent the Homewood Suites, TRU by Hilton, and Hampton Inn and Suites Madison West. I am writing to urge you to support the City's room tax investment into Destination Madison to the fullest extent possible. Thousands of our community's residents, my business and my workforce have suffered and likely will continue to suffer extensive economic hardships because of the COVID-19 crisis.

Destination Madison's past efforts have made our businesses and those working for us thrive. Their work in securing conventions, sporting events and attracting visitors have been excellent and ensuring they can continue this work for our future is critical. They are the one entity that the city invests room tax in that can help stabilize the hospitality industry and lead the long-term economic recovery for our community.

We have had to close the doors of 2 of the 3 hotels here on our campus since March 23rd. This involved the process of furloughing 50+ team members. We are not able to bring back our team members to work until we see travelers coming back to Madison, hotel occupancies increase.

Preliminary studies show that leisure travel will be the first to return. Destination Madison is imperative to our businesses to help market to these people returning to the Madison area for recreation, vacation, and to visit family.

Visitors make our lives in Madison better. Our local population cannot support all of our locally owned and operated businesses - downtown and elsewhere - and, many would be empty during the year if it weren't for visitors. And, our neighborhoods would lose their personality - and identities - if it weren't for the money that comes into our community from visitors.

Please help Madison recover by making sure Destination Madison has the financial means to fulfill its mission. We need Destination Madison to tell visitors our community is a welcoming place and to help them safely experience all our community, and businesses, have to offer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephanie Bracken". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Stephanie Bracken

Area General Manager for businesses in Madison, WI