

May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Dear Room Tax Commission,

I am the owner of The Roman Candle and the Sparkler Café at the Madison Children's Museum. I am writing to urge your support for City room tax investment into Destination Madison to the fullest extent possible. Though so many of us have suffered hardships due to quarantine measures of COVID-19, if we do not invest in recovery and the future, we will prolong the suffering of our community.

Destination Madison is the marketing and economic engine that drives growth to our local and regional economy through targeted visitor spending—to the tune of over \$1 billion annually. 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.

Moreover, Destination Madison is selling events 2-5 years out, well after most experts predict we will have returned to normal or the new version of normal. Their natural sales cycle is in the future, where we need to be investing precious funds generated by visitor spending, for visitor spending.

I have lost 100% of our income at The Madison Children's Museum, including many profitable weddings. We are seeing our sales come in at a fraction of what they were before COVID infections, and we are faced with increased costs to operate—from spiraling food costs to purchasing sanitation products and PPE.

While we are all hurting and could use direct financial assistance, if we do not focus on the future—on the future visitors and their much-needed spending that will help the hospitality industry and our communities recover—then we will only prolong the misery. We must invest our room tax into helping restore and recover our restaurants, museums, event venues, hotels, and shops, and Destination Madison is single-mindedly focused on this goal.

Please help Madison recover by making sure Destination Madison has the financial means to fulfill its mission. We need Destination Madison to tell visitors that 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, appearing to be 'BS' or similar initials, written in a cursive style.

Brewer Stouffer

City of Madison Resident and Business Owner