



September 13, 2019

City of Madison Room Tax Commission  
210 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
Madison, WI 53703

Dear Commission Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to share with you my support and appeal for fully funding our Destination Madison organization. I recognize that you have a difficult task in identifying the best use of the limited room tax revenue. All of the entities you have been charged with considering for funding are wonderful investments that bring great value to the Madison community. However, in the spirit of the state statute regarding the use of room tax for tourism promotion and tourism development, I propose that upholding the funding plan as outlined in the city agreement with Destination Madison is one of the most valuable investments you could make among the list you must consider.

With the softening of overnight hotel revenues we are beginning to experience, increased meeting and event venues across the state, projected hotel room growth in the city, the ever increasing competition and supply of short-term rentals and national warnings of a flattening economy it is more critical than ever you keep our sales and marketing arm of the tourism industry healthy with investment and armed with the ability to compete in a challenging business and employment climate. All of the entities beyond Destination Madison you are considering, as well as our hotels, bars and restaurants, retail shops, and countless other businesses as well as thousands of employees are dependent upon overnight visitors. We all count on the strategic sales efforts and creative marketing initiatives that Destination Madison executes to keep those visitors coming to our great city.

Respectfully I request that you uphold the funding plan of 28% of 2019 room tax collections for Destination Madison that the Madison hoteliers agreed to when increasing the room tax from 9% to 10% last year. I also suggest that a complete change in the method and to which entities the room tax is disseminated by you be examined and changed to avoid these difficult decisions in the future.

Sincerely,

Skip Harless  
General Manager