

CALL TO ACTION:

With the House Budget Committee expected to forward Chairman Allen Icet's proposal to the House floor this week (including a \$6 million cut to tourism funding,) it is imperative that tourism industry members contact their legislators and voice their concerns about the recommended cut.

If your legislator is a member of the House Budget Committee, it is not too late to try to sway him or her to support tourism.

Chairman Icet's plan to cut tourism is wrong, plain and simple, and it will do nothing but create additional budget issues later. Every dollar of tourism advertising nets a return of \$2.46 in state revenue. It only stands to reason that for every dollar cut, the state will deal with lost revenue.

Less tourism spending also creates problems for the industry, itself. A cut in state advertising will result in fewer visitors to attractions, fewer room nights for hotels, fewer customers at shops and fewer patrons at restaurants, bringing about lost travel industry revenue that will almost certainly force businesses to take cost-cutting measures themselves. In these troubling times, such a domino effect could be disastrous for the travel industry and for the state.

In a time of economic downturn, the last thing that should be done is to cut programs that generate tax revenue. Our goal is not to take money away from other state programs, but, instead, to generate money to fund those programs. Missouri's tourism industry has consistently propped up the state's economy when other sectors have experienced drastic losses. Now is not the time to cut off the hand that feeds.

Gary Figgins, Legislative Chair