

Missouri Travel Council Legislative Update

From: Dale Amick 2/18/10

Missouri House Budget Chairman Allen Ictet has directed all House appropriation sub-committees to cut all state agencies in the governor's recommended state budget by five per cent.

To that end, the House Appropriations Committee for Economic Development has cut the governor's recommended budget for the Division of Tourism by one million dollars. Gov. Jay Nixon originally had recommended a 20.4-million-dollar budget for the Division.

Committee Chairman Charlie Schlottach says he will work to try to restore some of the budget cut later in the budgetary process.

Schlottach was successful in defeating an amendment by Rep. Doug Funderburk to cut the Division of Tourism budget by five million dollars. Funderburk said the tourism and travel industry could remain functional without the five million dollars.

After lengthy discussion, the amendment was defeated 7-4.

Voting for the amendment and to cut Division of Tourism funding by five million dollars were Funderburk, Rep. Sue Allen of Town and Country, Rep. Mike Leara of St. Louis, and Rep. Andrew Koenig of St. Louis County.

If one of these legislators is your representative, you may want to contact them about their vote against tourism.

Speaking up in support of the tourism industry and in opposition to the Funderburk amendment were Reps. Rachel Storch of St. Louis, Rep. Tom Loehner of Koeltztown, Rep. Vicki England of St. Louis, and Rep. Denny Hoskins of Warrensburg.

If one of these legislators is your representative, you may want to contact them and thank them for being pro-tourism.

Legislation to correct Supreme Court decisions relating to sales tax charges on tour packages and purchases by tax exempt entities was heard in the House Ways and Means Committee this past week. A large number of business and tourism groups testified in support of the legislation (HB 2048). The bill addresses complications caused by two separate Supreme Court cases, both of which could have an impact on tourism and travel entities. Missouri Travel Council joined a long list of other organizations in support of this bill. No one testified in opposition.

A similar bill (SB 928) will be heard in the Senate Ways and Means Committee on Feb. 24.

