

July 28, 2009

Dear Board of Supervisors

We apologize for not being with you in person today but unfortunately we were previously committed to a meeting here in South Lake Tahoe and thus we hope that this letter can be read into your record.

On behalf of the entire tourism community and the jobs represented by this primary industry, we are asking you to please hold steadfast in your ongoing commitment to support tourism in El Dorado County. Now is not the time to cut the hand that feeds us, and tourism is most definitely the hand that feeds the TOT funds under consideration. Your local chambers and tourism entities continuously strive to invest these funds in a fiscally responsible manner which provides a generous ROI for the county.

It has been proven numerous times that when a destination or business stops marketing, their share of the pie gets smaller, and the slice of pie gets larger for those who continue or increase their business or destination's marketing. Case in point would be the state of Colorado where after eliminating its marketing funds in 1992 it took eight years after restoring the funds in 2000 for the state to begin to reclaim its previous ranking. During this time the state lost a total of \$2 billion dollars and experienced a market share decrease of 30%. Certainly El Dorado County cannot afford to lose either the TOT income or the loss of jobs and sales tax revenues that would surely result from a cut in our marketing efforts. In fact what is needed now more than ever is a refinement of marketing efforts and a commitment to advanced and unique tactics to encourage increased visitation.

We understand that drastic times call for drastic measures and thus we appreciate the challenges that you are facing in light of the current budget crisis. However, we urge you to maintain the TOT funds for the purpose they were intended which is to continue to strengthen the tourism economy of El Dorado County, providing a return on your investment. We are just now beginning to see the results of programs like Experience El Dorado, the Geo Tourism initiative and a planned travel writers Familiarization trip for January 2010 which will result in thousands of dollars worth of travel press for our county. Please consider the impact a cut in the promotional funds would have on the overall health of the community as you deliberate this important matter.

Sincerely,



Carol Chaplin  
Executive Director  
Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority



Betty "B" Gorman  
President & CEO  
Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber