The Honorable **[Full Name of Legislator]**

418 Capitol

402 S Monroe St

Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear **[Senator/Representative]** **[Last Name]**:

The overall economic vitality of the state relies heavily on tourism and the ability of VISIT FLORIDA to attract the millions of visitors who generate billions of dollars in spending. In 2015, the Sunshine State proudly welcomed more than 106.6 million out of state and international visitors.

With Florida on pace to have its sixth consecutive record year for tourism, it’s imperative we continue to ride the incredible wave of momentum and collectively invest in the marketing efforts of VISIT FLORIDA. The success of our hotels, restaurants and attractions contributes to a stronger state economy and creates more opportunities for Florida’s families. Per the Florida Office of Economic & Demographic Research Return on Investment study of VISIT FLORIDA, for every $1 the state invests in VISIT FLORIDA, the state sees a $3.20 return.

Recently, VISIT FLORIDA restructured its leadership and accentuated its civic responsibilities as a public-private agency to be efficient and transparent. Acting as the state’s official tourism marketing corporation, VISIT FLORIDA is the catalyst that brings the public and private sectors together, creating programs that promote the Sunshine State.

The Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association (FRLA) is vehemently opposed to any legislation that removes VISIT FLORIDA's ability to operate as a separate agency and inhibits their efforts to successfully market the state as a global destination. A reduction in VISIT FLORIDA funding puts Florida at a competitive disadvantage in the global marketplace. In 2010, the BP Oil Spill threatened Florida’s iconic pristine beaches and fresh seafood. VISIT FLORIDA responded promptly initiating new marketing tactics, including the educating of visitors about the Florida’s geography as well as emphasizing the safety of local seafood dining. VISIT FLORIDA played a role during the recent hurricane season by providing lodging availability to displaced families, first responders and utility crews. Then, after communities were up and running, the agency worked diligently with local destination marketing organizations to spread the simple message, “Florida is open for business.”

Florida cannot afford to put its top industry at risk. I urge you to support the state’s commitment and the Governor’s recommendation to invest $76 million in VISIT FLORIDA’s marketing efforts, not only for the industry’s sake, but for the 1.4 million employees the tourism industry represents.

Sincerely,

**[Name]**

**[Title]**

**[Organization]**