

## WHY WE SUPPORT TRAVEL

**TRAVEL AND TOURISM ARE VITAL TO THE TEXAS ECONOMY.** In 2019, the industry had an economic impact of more than \$169 billion dollars to the Texas economy, and had both direct and secondary impacts on many other industries from transportation to construction. Travel and tourism is among the largest export industries in the state, second only to oil and gas, and a significant contributor to tax revenues from hotel occupancy to alcoholic beverage taxes.

**TRAVEL MEANS JOBS.** One out of every 10 Texas jobs is supported by travel and tourism. The industry encompasses hotels, restaurants, airlines and airports, attractions, destinations, and other businesses that create more than 1.3 million jobs in Texas.

**TRAVEL EMBODIES THE SPIRIT OF TEXAS:** our history, our culture, our breath-taking outdoors, our dynamic cities, and most of all, the friendly Texas way of life. Travel evokes a sense of pride and belonging we share with locals and visitors - a quality of life second to none.

On behalf of our 600+ member organizations, the Texas Travel Alliance advocates for legislative policies and priorities that generate significant revenues to the state and local economies, promote economic development in Texas communities, generate revenues to fund schools, create jobs, and improve the overall quality of life across our great State. As the 87th Texas Legislative Session begins, we will actively work to promote the benefits and necessity of a healthy and vibrant travel and tourism industry to the health of the overall economy. Texas communities large and small, as well as the State budget depend upon the revenues generated and supported by the travel industry. Life's Better in a State of Travel is more than a slogan, it is an important step toward getting the Texas economy moving again.

## LEGISLATIVE FOCUS AREAS

### **PROMOTE TRAVEL**

Travel evokes what Texans and visitors love about our State: our history, our culture, our breathtaking outdoors, our dynamic cities, and most of all, the friendly Texas way of life. A sense of pride and belonging we share with locals and visitors – a quality of life second to none. We support state programs and policies that help make Texas a place that visitors want to frequent and locals want to live. We support funding for a robust State Parks system, policies that ensure a full summer travel season, and marketing at levels that will ensure travelers both far and wide know the beauty of Texas and are encouraged to travel here.

### **ECONOMIC GROWTH**

The travel industry is a significant economic driver for the Texas economy. Travel and tourism is among the largest export industries in the state, second only to oil and gas, and a significant contributor to tax revenues from hotel occupancy to alcoholic beverage taxes. Travel spending in Texas helps to lower the overall tax bill for every Texas household. We support policies that will help revitalize our state and local economies, allowing the travel industry to contribute much-needed tax revenues to fuel public services, education, and other critical community needs as we begin to recover from this devastating pandemic.

### **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

Travel and tourism businesses and the jobs they create are a vital part of the State and local economies. Across Texas, more than 1.3 million Texans work in the travel industry. Many Texans' first jobs are in the travel industry, teaching invaluable skills that are carried on to lifelong career successes. The industry offers opportunities for entry, advancement, and full career growth in varied areas from management, finance, marketing, customer service, human resources, and more. We support programs and policies that enhance the vibrancy of the Texas workforce.

### **TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE**

Travel to and within Texas relies on strong infrastructure. Whether visitors drive, fly, or travel by rail, all modes of transportation in Texas are important to the growth of the travel industry and our ability to contribute to the State and local economies. We support programs and initiatives that advance travel mobility to and within Texas, including projects like Ports to Plains, high speed rail initiatives, and the work of the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT).

### **SAFETY, SECURITY, ACCESSIBILITY**

A safe, secure, and accessible Texas is a win-win for all Texans, visitors and locals alike. We support policies and programs that will advance accessibility through education and best practices in the industry for service and support of our visitors and employees.

## LEGISLATIVE FOCUS AREA: PROMOTE TRAVEL

Travel evokes what Texans and visitors love about our State: our history, our culture, our breath-taking outdoors, our dynamic cities, and most of all, the friendly Texas way of life. A sense of pride and belonging we share with locals and visitors – a quality of life second to none.

As an industry, we support local and state programs and policies that help make Texas a place that visitors want to frequent and locals want to live. We support local communities in their efforts to advocate for local tourism promotion funds. We support funding for a robust State Parks system, policies that ensure a full summer travel season, and marketing at levels that will ensure travelers both far and wide know the beauty of Texas and are encouraged to travel here.

Programs supported by the Travel Industry include:

- Local Tourism Promotion funding
- State Tourism Promotion
- Events Trust Fund
- State Programs:
  - Texas Department of Transportation's (TxDOT's) Travel Information Division
  - Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD)
  - Texas Historical Commission (THC)
  - Texas Commission on the Arts (TCA)

## LEGISLATIVE FOCUS AREA: ECONOMIC GROWTH

The travel industry is a significant economic driver for the Texas economy. Travel and tourism is among the largest export industries in the state, second only to oil and gas, and a significant contributor to tax revenues from hotel occupancy to alcoholic beverage taxes. Travel spending in Texas helps to lower the overall tax bill for every Texas household.

For example, in 2018, due to travel spending in Texas, each Texas household paid \$740 less in taxes. In 2018, according to data from the Governor's Office of Texas Economic Development & Tourism Office, a total of \$80.3 billion in direct travel spending was recorded in Texas (by travelers to and within Texas). That travel spending generated \$4.5 billion in state taxes and \$3.0 billion in local taxes. Many local economies have suffered significant financial losses and are now facing massive budgetary shortfalls due to the lack of tax revenues generated by travel and tourism, which they rely on to fund much of their budgets. We help local communities advocate for CVB/DMO funding in support of local tourism promotion and economic growth for their community.

The travel industry in Texas has a significant impact on hotel occupancy taxes, which are a critical funding tool for developing local economies in Texas communities. Local hotel occupancy tax revenues are dedicated by state statute to only fund activities, facilities, and programs that directly promote tourism and hotel activity. We support the dedicated use of travel promotion marketing. It is an industry priority to preserve the integrity of state and local hotel occupancy taxes.

Property taxes are integral to school finance as well as to creating a favorable business climate in Texas. We support property tax reforms that will hold the line on growth as well as preserve Texas' competitive position in the domestic and international travel market. The Texas travel industry supports policies that will help revitalize our state and local economies, allowing the travel industry to contribute much-needed tax revenues to fuel public services, education, and other critical community needs as we begin to recover from this devastating pandemic.

Legislation we will monitor and support may include:

- Hotel Occupancy Tax usage
- Shared economy regulations
- Property tax relief for businesses and consumers

## LEGISLATIVE FOCUS AREA: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Travel and tourism businesses and the jobs they create are a vital part of the State and local economies. Across Texas, more than 1.3 million Texans work in the travel industry. Many Texans' first jobs are in the travel industry, teaching invaluable skills that are carried on to lifelong career successes. The industry offers opportunities for entry, advancement, and full career growth in varied areas from management, finance, marketing, customer service, human resources, and more.

We support programs and policies that enhance the vibrancy of the Texas workforce. We will continue to work with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to preserve and enhance the certification programs that contribute to the readiness of the travel industry's up and coming workforce, create teacher externships and student internships to provide for a more robust learning experience and understanding of the lifelong opportunities for growth that exist in the industry. We will continue to work with other business associations and partners to ensure pro-business policies are enacted that enhance our ability to create jobs.

Cities in Texas have begun passing ordinances that require private businesses to increase wages above the Federal Minimum, provide Mandatory Paid Time Off or Paid Sick Leave, and install Predictive Scheduling. The Texas Appeals Court has ruled these policies unconstitutional, stating that a law mandating sick leave is a law regulating wages and is the State's purview to set, not that of a city. Local employment ordinances often hamper the ability of businesses to grow and hire more Texans. We will continue to work with Legislators, affected businesses and business associations to pass legislation pre-empting local ordinances that interfere with business operations and a business owners' right to make their own business decisions or hamper their ability to succeed.

Legislation we will monitor and support may include:

- Local employment ordinances (monitor/oppose if harmful to business viability)
- Promotion of Texas as a place where businesses and travelers are welcome
- Full summer seasonal employment opportunities

## LEGISLATIVE FOCUS AREA: TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Travel to and within Texas relies on strong infrastructure. Whether visitors drive, fly, or travel by rail, all modes of transportation in Texas are important to the growth of the travel industry and our ability to contribute to the State and local economies. We support programs and initiatives that advance travel mobility to and within Texas, including projects like Ports to Plains, high speed rail initiatives, and the work of the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT).

We also work collaboratively with the Texas Commercial Airports Association (TCAA) to advance and modernize commercial airports in Texas, enhancing their ability to contribute to the State and local economies.

Legislation we will monitor and support may include:

- Funding for Commercial airport modernization/expansion
- Funding for transportation projects such as Ports to Plains or high-speed rail projects

## LEGISLATIVE FOCUS AREA: SAFETY, SECURITY, ACCESSIBILITY

A safe, secure, and accessible Texas is a win-win for all Texans, visitors and locals alike. We support policies and programs that will advance accessibility through education and best practices in the industry for service and support of our visitors and employees.

As an industry, the health and safety of our employees, visitors, and the public is paramount. These priorities also drive the policies and practices of the industry. We continue to strive for a more open, safe, and inclusive travel experience across the State through the policies and programs we support.

Legislation we will monitor and support may include:

- Traveler accessibility programs/education initiatives
- Ride regulations for amusement parks, waterparks, or like entities
- Animal-related legislation that may impact the industry