

111TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 3225

To direct the Secretary of Commerce to establish a competitive grant program to promote domestic regional tourism.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 19, 2010

Mr. BEGICH (for himself, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mr. SCHUMER) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Commerce to establish a competitive grant program to promote domestic regional tourism.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Travel Regional Invest-
5 ment Partnership Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) The importance of travel and tourism can-
9 not be overstated: travel and tourism employs Amer-
10 ica.

1 (2) Approximately 8,300,000 domestic jobs de-
2 pend on the travel and tourism industry.

3 (3) The United States travel and tourism in-
4 dustry—

5 (A) generates more than
6 \$691,000,000,000 annually in direct spending,
7 of which more than 85 percent is the result of
8 domestic travel; and

9 (B) generates more than
10 \$1,200,000,000,000 in total spending, if indi-
11 rect spending is included.

12 (4) The travel and tourism industry accounts
13 for 2.6 percent of the Nation's gross domestic prod-
14 uct, nearly 4 times that of the automotive industry.

15 (5) Domestic employment related to the travel
16 and tourism industry cannot be outsourced to other
17 countries.

18 (6) The current economic downturn has created
19 the most difficult economic environment for the do-
20 mestic travel and tourism industry since the period
21 following the terrorist attacks of September 11,
22 2001.

23 (7) Travel and tourism revenues dropped by
24 nearly \$130,000,000,000 during 2009. The domestic
25 tourism economy has fallen by nearly 4.5 percent

1 during 2009, twice the rate of the overall economy
2 of the United States.

3 (8) Domestic spending on travel and tourism
4 has been in decline since the fourth quarter of fiscal
5 year 2008, while employment in the travel and tour-
6 ism industry has been falling since the second quar-
7 ter of such year.

8 (9) Public-private partnerships have been un-
9 derutilized in the promotion of travel and tourism
10 and are a dynamic tool in creating new domestic
11 tourism markets and promoting domestic regional
12 tourism growth.

13 **SEC. 3. DOMESTIC REGIONAL TOURISM GRANT PROGRAM.**

14 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of Commerce
15 shall establish a competitive grant program, to be adminis-
16 tered by the Office of Travel and Tourism Industries, to
17 promote domestic regional tourism growth and new do-
18 mestic tourism market creation.

19 (b) RANGE OF GRANT MONETARY AMOUNTS.—The
20 amount of each grant awarded under this section shall be
21 at least \$100,000 and not more than \$1,000,000.

22 (c) GRANTEE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS.—

23 (1) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—Grants may be
24 awarded under this section to—

25 (A) State tourism offices;

1 (B) local convention and visitors bureaus;
2 and

3 (C) partnerships between a State or local
4 government and local tourism entities.

5 (2) REGIONAL DIVERSITY.—In awarding grants
6 under this section, the Secretary may consider—

7 (A) giving priority to regions with low con-
8 tributions to tourism marketing;

9 (B) maintaining regional diversity of grant
10 recipients; and

11 (C) providing benefits to rural and less-
12 marketed destinations.

13 (3) USE OF FUNDS.—Grants awarded under
14 this section may be used to—

15 (A) promote domestic regional tourism
16 growth; and

17 (B) create new domestic tourism markets.

18 (4) APPLICATION PROCESS.—

19 (A) SUBMISSION.—An eligible entity seek-
20 ing a grant under this section shall submit an
21 application to the Secretary at such time, in
22 such form, and with such information and as-
23 surances as the Secretary may require.

24 (B) CONTENTS.—Each application sub-
25 mitted under subparagraph (A) shall include—

1 (i) a description of the tourist pro-
2 motion activities to be funded by the grant;
3 and

4 (ii) in the case of a partnership be-
5 tween a State or local government and
6 local tourism entities—

7 (I) a list of the specific tourist
8 entities that such government has
9 partnered with in order promote tour-
10 ism within the relevant domestic re-
11 gion;

12 (II) the details of the partnership
13 agreement;

14 (III) specific information explain-
15 ing how such partnership will increase
16 regional tourism; and

17 (IV) the anticipated positive im-
18 pact of the partnership on job cre-
19 ation and employment in the relevant
20 domestic region.

21 (d) MATCHING REQUIREMENT.—

22 (1) NON-FEDERAL FUNDS.—As a condition for
23 receiving a grant under this section, the grant recipi-
24 ent shall provide, either directly or through dona-
25 tions from public or private entities, non-Federal

1 matching funds, in cash or in-kind, in an amount
 2 equal to the amount of the grant.

3 (2) SPECIAL RULE FOR IN-KIND DONATIONS.—

4 Of the amount of non-Federal matching funds re-
 5 quired under paragraph (1), not more than 25 per-
 6 cent may be provided through in-kind contributions.

7 (e) REPORTS.—Not later than 6 months after the end
 8 of each fiscal year in which grants are awarded by the
 9 Secretary under this section, the Secretary shall submit
 10 a report to Congress that details—

11 (1) travel-generated expenditures;

12 (2) travel-generated tax receipts; and

13 (3) travel-generated employment.

14 (f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

15 (1) LOCAL TOURIST ENTITY.—The term “local
 16 tourist entity” means any public or private sector
 17 business engaged in tourism-related activities.

18 (2) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
 19 the Secretary of Commerce.

20 (g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
 21 authorized to be appropriated, for each of the first 5 fiscal
 22 years beginning after the date of the enactment of this
 23 Act, \$10,000,000, which shall be used for grants under
 24 this section and shall remain available until expended.

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