



SAMPLE OP-ED LETTER

(Please confirm the word limit with your local newspaper and revise to meet their maximum limit.)

Travel is the purest form of economic development in Louisiana. In 2024, more than 44 million visitors enjoyed our food, culture, music and outdoor recreation. Travel and tourism fuel the economy, enrich the culture and lay an economic foundation for generations to come.

Visitor spending ripples through Louisiana communities, enhancing quality of life and funding things we need. In 2024, visitors spent \$18.5 billion in our communities, resulting in \$2 billion in state tax revenues not paid by Louisiana citizens. This reduces the tax burden on Louisiana citizens while helping to pay for important public services, including infrastructure improvements and law enforcement.

A travel job can be the first important step down a career-path. For part-time students, the flexibility of travel jobs allows them to pursue their education and training while gaining job experience and valuable, transferable skills that can prepare them to succeed in any profession. Unlike other jobs, travel jobs provide a guarantee because they cannot be outsourced. Jobs tied to Louisiana will always stay in Louisiana. This combination of flexibility and guaranteed stability is another reason why Louisiana tourism jobs result in successful careers for residents.

Today, travel is Louisiana's fourth highest employer. Research has shown that people who start with a job in travel advanced in their career at a more successful rate in comparison to other industries.

Destinations not only create local jobs, but also create a sense of place and pride for residents. Residents who take pride in their community are valuable advocates for its storytelling, serving as a trusted resource to friends, family and other potential visitors. This community pride can strengthen efforts to entice businesses to headquarter or grow in an area.

Destination marketing organizations champion small businesses and create visitor demand for local products. In rural communities, destination marketers shine a spotlight on places that may be otherwise overlooked by visitors and invigorate economies of underserved areas.

As a job creator, tax revenue generator and destination storyteller, travel has ripple effects that touch the lives of all Louisianans. Embracing the travel industry is paramount to the growth of our beautiful state and to the preservation of our historical and cultural landmarks. By supporting travel, Louisiana residents play a major role in shaping Louisiana's success and creating a brighter future.

