



Cultural Equity in Tourism Grant Testimony Outline and Talking Points

Bill: H.3244/S.2194, An Act creating a program to increase cultural equity in tourism promotion

Sponsors: Rep. Pat Duffy and Sen. Jake Oliveira

Committee: Joint Committee on Tourism, Arts and Cultural Development

ARTICLES AND STORIES ABOUT THE ISSUE:

Tourism & Hospitality: Rapid Recovery Program Toolkit: https://bit.ly/MOTT_Tourism

Cultural Tourism: Attracting Visitors and Their Spending:
https://bit.ly/AFTA_TourismImpact

Visit MA Industry Portal: 2021 Annual Report:
<https://www.visitma.com/media-industry-portal/stats-reports/>

TESTIMONY OUTLINE:

Below is an outline that you can use to create your own testimony for the Cultural Equity in Tourism Grant Bill.

- I. Intro
 - A. Individual: Hello Chair Mark, Chair Domb, and members of the committee for the opportunity to share my support for the [add actual bill numbers and bill name]. My name is [name] and I live in [town]
 - B. Organization: Hello Chair Mark, Chair Domb, and members of the committee for the opportunity to testify today. My name is [name] and I am testifying on behalf of [organization] in [city/town]. I am here to share our strong support for [add actual bill numbers and bill name].
- II. Why Now?
 - A. Across the Commonwealth - and especially in [town/city], we are missing out on enjoying cultural and historical gems. Our tourism

economy in Massachusetts is strong: in 2022, the Massachusetts travel and tourism industry brought in \$21 billion in spending from 21 million domestic and international travelers, generating \$1.9 billion in taxes for municipalities and the state, and supporting 131,200 jobs. ¹

- B. But we rely on a narrow set of tourist attractions to draw in visitors. When smaller museums, theaters, and galleries lack the additional resources needed to promote their organizations and businesses, we miss opportunities to invest more into our local economies.
- C. It is often historically marginalized, culturally underrepresented, low-income, and rural communities that are kept from benefiting from a rebounding tourism economy.
- D. Share a personal / organizational story about how this is affecting you / your group.
 - 1. How could your business/organization benefit from additional promotional and marketing resources?
 - 2. How would additional resources in turn benefit your community and local economy

III. Share why you believe this bill is part of the solution:

- A. About the bill:
 - 1. The Cultural Equity in Tourism Grant would establish a grant program within the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism to support tourism marketing and promotional expenses for arts and cultural organizations and prioritize amplifying the stories of historically marginalized or underrepresented cultures.
 - 2. Could be used to attract, increase, and elevate local and regional tourism to encourage economic activity at events and locations, especially to elevate cultural, geographic, and creative diversity in the Commonwealth.
 - 3. Eligible uses would include, but not be limited to, tourism publications, media advertisements, press kits, billboards,

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<https://www.mass.gov/news/domestic-tourism-visitation-spending-rebounds-in-massachusetts#:~:text=In%20the%20first%20five%20months,DOR%20and%20Smith%20Travel%20Research.>

sponsorship of tourism trade shows and events, bid fees to assist in bringing events, and website design expenses.

4. Eligible recipients include nonprofit organizations or for-profit creative businesses whose primary missions support arts, culture, the humanities, or interpretive sciences. It would also support co-operatives or partnerships that include at least 70% artists, creative workers, or culture workers.
5. It would be administered by the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism, in consultation with the Mass Cultural Council.
6. Funding for this grant would amount to no less than 1% of the Massachusetts Tourism Trust Fund.

IV. Remind the committee why this is urgent:

- A. Many parts of our tourism industry are rebounding from the damage of the pandemic. We need to invest in our smaller and medium-sized cultural assets now to ensure they are not left further behind. We are at a juncture with a clear opportunity to invest equitably in our tourism industry.
- B. I / We strongly encourage the committee to report the [bill number and name] favorably out of the committee and support its passage this session.

TALKING POINTS:

What is the Cultural Equity in Tourism Grant? Why do we need this?

- H.3244/S.2194, sponsored by Rep. Pat Duffy (D-Holyoke) and Sen. Jake Oliveira (D-Ludlow)
- The Cultural Equity in Tourism Grant would establish a grant program within the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism to support tourism marketing and promotional expenses for arts and cultural organizations and prioritize amplifying the stories of historically marginalized or underrepresented cultures.
- In 2022, the Massachusetts travel and tourism industry brought in \$21 billion in spending from 21 million domestic and international travelers, generating \$1.9 billion in taxes for municipalities and the state, and supporting 131,200 jobs.

- However, we rely on a narrow set of tourist attractions to draw in visitors.
- When smaller museums, theaters, and galleries lack the additional resources needed to promote their organizations and businesses, we miss opportunities to invest more into our local economies.
- It is often historically marginalized, culturally underrepresented, low-income, and rural communities that are kept from benefiting from a rebounding tourism economy.
- By investing in greater resources to increase local and regional tourism to more culturally diverse spaces and events, Massachusetts can support economic vitality for everyone.

Different arguments to consider:

- **Ours is a Commonwealth with rich cultural assets** - the creative sector and creative economy impacts everyone and exists everywhere in Massachusetts. It is critical to amplifying the stories of underrepresented communities, encouraging resilience, celebration, and supporting democracy. As the state with the first and only public college of art and design, MA is regarded as a place where arts and culture can prosper. But only so long as our cultural assets are known and accessible.
- **We need to invest in our local economies with equity at the centerpoint** - investing in local creative ecosystems simultaneously supports local hospitality, restaurants, shops, and other small businesses. As we invest in our local economies, we need to be diligent about using this moment and these resources to reinvest in communities that have historically been marginalized or neglected.
- **Increased tourism at the local level = increased tourism and greater revenues for the entire Commonwealth** - rising tides lift all boats. When we enact policies to support our economy at the hyperlocal level, we in turn elevate the broader Massachusetts economy.

Has it worked in other places? How much would it cost?

The Cultural Equity in Tourism Grant would be the first of its kind. The initial price tag on this program is \$10,000. This is a starting point.