

Erika Boyd

Chairman Schwertner, Vice Chair Holland and members of the commission:

Thank you for allowing me to provide information to you regarding the Sunset Commission's review of the Texas Economic Development and Tourism Office.

My name is Erika Boyd, President & CEO of the Texas Travel Alliance. I am submitting testimony today on behalf of our members and the more than 1.1 million Texans who work in Travel & Tourism across our great state. The travel industry encompasses attractions, arts organizations and entertainment venues, accommodations, destinations which include destination marketing organizations/convention and visitor bureaus, sports teams, sporting destinations, museums, restaurants, airlines and airports, and many more primarily small businesses across Texas and doing business in Texas.

The Texas Travel Alliance appreciates the work of the Sunset Commission studying the effectiveness of the Texas Economic Development and Tourism office and agree with the Sunset Staff Report's finding that: *"Texas benefits from having a centralized entity that offers a statewide approach to highlighting the state's key assets and unique benefits. As a trustee program within the governor's office, EDT is well-positioned to connect and coordinate with local and regional entities to ensure Texas remains economically competitive both nationally and internationally."*

We wholeheartedly support the Sunset Staff Report recommendation to: *"Continue EDT for 12 years and remove the Sunset date of EDT's enabling statute."*

Additionally, we agree with their assessment: *"as the primary governmental entity responsible for promoting and marketing Texas to out-of-state travelers, EDT provides critical assistance to the tourism industry."*

For over 25 years, the Texas travel/tourism industry has supported the work of the Governor's Economic Development and Tourism office ensuring visitors, from both national and key international markets who visit Texas, have memorable and positive experiences of Texas through the vast and varied tourism destinations and experiences we have to offer.

The Texas Travel Alliance and our statewide members believe in the strength of advertising and marketing the EDT Office oversees, offering clear and compelling messaging, with breathtaking imagery that draws millions of travelers to Texas.

In 2021 tourism promotion attributed to direct travel spending of \$76.1 BILLION dollars in Texas, that equates to \$144,596 dollars being spent per minute in the state.

Tourism promotion helps Texas remain a top state that travelers want to visit. The travel industry's collaborative efforts working with the Texas Economic Development and Tourism office have been successful. In fact, the Texas Travel Alliance, a membership organization, built its motto, *Life's Better in a State of Travel*, around the historic success it has had with the Economic Development and Tourism Office.

The Alliance has worked with the Texas Legislature for many years to ensure the funding for tourism promotion to attract visitors from national and international markets remains intact, drawing from 1/12 of the hotel occupancy tax. That funding has an estimated 8-1 Return on Investment, generating over \$7.6 billion in tax revenues for state and local economies.

All this equals great success for the travel/tourism industry in terms of revenues generated, jobs created, and a unique and memorable Texas travel experience.

In conclusion, on behalf of the 1.1 million Texans who work in the travel/tourism industry, the Texas Travel Alliance wholeheartedly supports your efforts and looks forward to working with you to ensure the Texas Economic Development and Tourism office continues to promote Texas as a premier destination.

Thank you for your time today.

Testimony by:
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