

112TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1663

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

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

OCTOBER 6, 2011

Mr. BEGICH (for himself, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. SCHUMER, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Mr. PRYOR) 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
10 America.

1 (2) Approximately 7,720,000 domestic jobs de-
2 pend on the travel and tourism industry.

3 (3) The travel and tourism industry accounts
4 for 2.8 percent of the Nation's gross domestic prod-
5 uct.

6 (4) The travel and tourism industry generates
7 \$1,300,000,000,000 in total expenditures.

8 (5) The travel and tourism industry lost
9 392,000 jobs in 2009.

10 (6) In 2009, tourism output declined by
11 \$100,000,000,000.

12 (7) Total direct tourism employment decreased
13 by 0.5 percent in 2010.

14 (8) Public-private partnerships have been un-
15 derutilized in the promotion of travel and tourism
16 and are a dynamic tool in creating new domestic
17 tourism markets and promoting domestic regional
18 tourism growth.

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

20 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall establish
21 a competitive grant program, to be administered by the
22 Office of Travel and Tourism Industries, to promote do-
23 mestic regional tourism growth and new domestic tourism
24 market creation.

1 (b) RANGE OF GRANT MONETARY AMOUNTS.—The
2 amount of each grant awarded under this section shall be
3 not less than \$100,000 and not more than \$1,000,000.

4 (c) GRANTEE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS.—

5 (1) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—Grants may be
6 awarded under this section to—

7 (A) State tourism offices;

8 (B) local destination marketing organiza-
9 tions; and

10 (C) partnerships between a State or local
11 government and local tourism entities.

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

14 (A) giving priority to regions with low con-
15 tributions to tourism marketing;

16 (B) maintaining regional diversity of grant
17 recipients; and

18 (C) providing benefits to rural and less-
19 marketed destinations.

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

22 (A) promote domestic regional tourism
23 growth; and

24 (B) create new domestic tourism markets.

25 (4) APPLICATION PROCESS.—

1 (A) SUBMISSION.—An eligible entity seek-
2 ing a grant under this section shall submit an
3 application to the Secretary at such time, in
4 such form, and with such information and as-
5 surances as the Secretary may require.

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

8 (i) a description of the tourist pro-
9 motion activities to be funded by the grant;
10 and

11 (ii) in the case of a partnership be-
12 tween a State or local government and
13 local tourism entities—

14 (I) a list of the specific tourist
15 entities that such government has
16 partnered with to promote tourism
17 within the relevant domestic region;

18 (II) the details of the partnership
19 agreement;

20 (III) specific information explain-
21 ing how such partnership will increase
22 regional tourism; and

23 (IV) the anticipated positive im-
24 pact of the partnership on job cre-

1 ation and employment in the relevant
2 domestic region.

3 (d) MATCHING REQUIREMENT.—

4 (1) NON-FEDERAL FUNDS.—As a condition for
5 receiving a grant under this section, the grant recipi-
6 ent shall provide, either directly or through dona-
7 tions from public or private entities, non-Federal
8 matching funds, in cash or in-kind, in an amount
9 equal to the amount of the grant.

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

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

14 (e) REPORTS.—Not later than 6 months after the last
15 day of each fiscal year in which grants are awarded by
16 the Secretary under this section, the Secretary shall sub-
17 mit a report to Congress that details—

18 (1) travel-generated expenditures;

19 (2) travel-generated tax receipts; and

20 (3) travel-generated employment.

21 (f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

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

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

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

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