



January 21, 2016

To the Members of the 2016 Legislature:

I am writing this letter in support of extending the sunset provision of the Louisiana Tax Free Shopping Program.

Act 435 of the 2012 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature is set to expire, and a new bill to renew the LTFS Program is being submitted in the upcoming 2016 Regular Session.

The Tax Free Shopping Program is an essential tool used to encourage international tourists to visit Louisiana by offering a sales tax refund on qualified purchases.

Tourism is one of Louisiana's top industries, generating \$11.2 billion in annual spending for Louisiana businesses, and shopping is a top activity of all travelers. International visitors, on average, spend 20% more than their domestic counterparts and stay at a destination two to three days longer.

The numbers are enthusiastic. Here are the total purchases done by tax free shopping customers in Orleans Parish alone since 2013.

<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>
\$7,459,423	\$10,644,199	\$16,097,441

Since 2013 international visitors have more than doubled their shopping in New Orleans, especially since the re-opening of the Outlet Collection at the Riverwalk by the Howard Hughes Corporation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark Romig".

Mark Romig  
President and CEO  
New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation

