

BATON ROUGE LODGING ASSOCIATION



Dear Legislators:

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 one of the top activities for all travelers. International visitors, on average, spend 20% more than their domestic counterparts and stay at a destination two to three days longer. Your assistance in helping to pass this bill is greatly needed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Blackwell', with a long, sweeping underline.

J. Benjamin Blackwell
President, BRLA
General Manager, Hampton Inn & Suites Baton Rouge Downtown