

U.S. Commercial Service, Louisiana
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March 1, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

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 Louisiana 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.

As one of America's largest employers, the U.S. travel and tourism industry is profoundly important to the U.S. economy. 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.

Everyone benefits from travel and tourism, not just the travel and tourism industry. Travelers—and their spending—help support local communities and small businesses; schools, banks, and infrastructure; farms, museums, shopping malls and family-owned restaurants.

The U.S. Commercial Service in Louisiana believes that not renewing the sunset provision for this program would negatively affect not only the retail and tourism industries in the state, but also local businesses and communities. As such, we support the passage of legislation to extend the Louisiana Tax Free Shopping program.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "ECM", followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Erin Butler
Director of U.S. Commercial Service, Louisiana