



HISTORIC DISTRICT BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

Natchitoches, Louisiana

P. O. Box 139

Natchitoches, LA 71457

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 a top activity of all travelers. International visitors, on average, spend 20% more than their domestic counterparts and stay at a destination longer.

In 2015, Natchitoches Parish greatly benefitted from international visitor shopping with purchases made at local merchants. Over 20 retailers in the Natchitoches Historic Landmark District became members of the LTFS Program and created a Tax Free Shopping Zone for International visitors.

Natchitoches parish recognizes the proven success of the LTFS Program as an economic stimulus for the state of Louisiana. An economic impact study conducted by the University of New Orleans reveals that the Program generated a total economic impact of \$73.7M, and almost \$2.7M in new state tax revenue during 2011. It was determined that for every \$1.00 returned to international visitors using the program, an additional \$1.80 is generated in new tax revenue from direct and indirect spending.

Natchitoches parish has a desire to increase its tourism market, and the LTFS Program has significantly contributed to help establish Louisiana and Natchitoches Parish as a prime international tourist destination, I strongly support renewal of the LTFS Program.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sandra Dickens, President
HDBA