



March 15, 2016

Dear Legislators,

I am writing on behalf of WITTI, (Women in Travel and Tourism International), in support of extending the sunset provision of the Louisiana Tax Free Shopping program. The enabling legislation, Act 435 of the 2012 Regular Session is set to expire; a bill to renew the program is being submitted in the upcoming 2016 session.

Tourism is among the leading industries in Louisiana and indeed in the U.S. \$11.2 billion in annual spending is generated by tourism in Louisiana with shopping as the top activity. The Louisiana Tax Free Shopping program provides a tangible incentive for international travelers to visit Louisiana by refunding sales tax on qualified purchases.

International travelers are a lucrative market as they spend on average 20% more than domestic travelers and generally stay 2-3 days longer. To us as travel and tourism professionals, the LTFS program is an innovative and inclusive way of attracting this valuable market segment and enabling all businesses in the state to profit.

We strongly support the passage of the legislation to extend this important program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laura J. Mandala". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Laura Mandala
Founder, WITTI