



## Florida Airports Council

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Tampa International Airport

March 25, 2019

The Honorable Jose Oliva  
Speaker, Florida House of Representatives  
The Capitol  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Speaker Oliva:

I write on behalf of the Florida Airports Council to express our strong support for VISIT FLORIDA and the outstanding service it performs for the people of Florida. VISIT FLORIDA is an essential – and successful – component of Florida's most important industry, and we believe it must be allowed to continue its important mission.

Florida's more than 120 airports recognize that our state's economy is flourishing, thanks in no small part to our innumerable assets as a tourism destination. But the memories of the recent recession are still fresh, and we recognize that tourism is a fragile industry. We therefore need to do everything possible to support this vital economic engine, which supports some 1.4 million jobs in our State.

VISIT FLORIDA plays a central role in telling others what we Floridians already know about our wonderful state, and Florida's airports are a beneficiary of its success. Last year our state welcomed a record-setting 126.1 million tourists, and almost half of all visitors to the Sunshine State arrive by air. If tourism declines, so too will airport travel – and that will mean lost jobs not only in the tourism sector but also in transportation and associated industries and businesses. The Legislature's own chief economist has said that VISIT FLORIDA returns \$2.15 back to taxpayers for every dollar invested.

VISIT FLORIDA is doing its job exceptionally well, fueling our economy while delivering a significant return on investment. The Florida Airports Council strongly encourages you and your fellow legislators to reauthorize and fund this important economic driver to the fullest level possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Lisa Lyle Waters'.

Lisa Waters  
President/CEO