



MERGER OF TOURISM FUNDING PROGRAMS

POSITION: The Pennsylvania Tourism & Lodging Association supports legislation that would merge the Regional Marketing Partnership (RMP) and the Matching Grant Program for the purpose of tourism marketing.

BACKGROUND: On March 12, 2008, legislation that would merge two tourism funding program was introduced and referred to the House Tourism & Recreational Development Committee. House Bill 2302 defined who is eligible for funds under each program, set guideline requirements, and established specific funding percentages of the total appropriation allocated to each program, The bill also provided an appeal process for both the determination of ineligibility for tourist promotion agencies and the grant award decision for the Regional Marketing Partnership. Act 50 of 1961 created the Matching Grant Program and allowed the State to provide matching grants to local and regional tourist promotion agencies for destination marketing. The Regional Marketing Partnership was created in the 1990s. There was no state law that governed the Regional Marketing Partnership and determined how regional marketing grants were to be awarded by the PA Department of Community & Economic Development. In the past, there was a separate line item for each funding program in the PA Department of Community & Economic Development budget.

Under House Bill 2302, the two line items were merged into one with the following funding distribution:

Fiscal year 2008-2009: Matching Grant portion is 63% and the RMP portion is 37%;

Fiscal Year 2009-2010: Matching Grant portion is 57% and the RMP portion is 43%;

Fiscal year 2010 and thereafter: Matching Grant portion is 50% and the RMP portion is 50%

STATUS: The PA House of Representatives unanimously approved (199-0) House Bill 2302 on June 11, 2008. The State Senate unanimously endorsed (50-0) the measure on July 4, 2008. Governor Rendell signed the bill into law as Act No. 50 of 2008 on July 4, 2008.