March 10, 2020

Dear Senator:

Respectfully, now is not the time to expand use of Tourist Development Tax (TDT) revenues and divert funding of marketing the Florida destination.

That is why the South Florida Business Council, representing the counties of Miami-Dade, Palm Beach and Broward — the 12th largest economy by Gross Domestic Product in the United States -- urges you to oppose expansion of TDT funds proposed in HB 7097 and SB 334.

Over the years, the Florida Legislature has added more uses of the TDT, diluting funds available for promotion and marketing Florida as a destination. This assault must stop.

Tourist tax dollars can currently be used for everything from promotion to building sports stadiums, to canals, estuary, or lagoon improvements, to emergency medical and law enforcement services.

In HB 7097, TDT revenues could be used for parks or trails, and water quality improvements. Water quality improvements alone would significantly drain TDT funds and significantly reduce our ability to market the destination.

Another bill, SB 334, would divert TDT funds to incentivize film or television production in Florida.

Both pieces of legislation seek to undermine the lynchpin of our tourism economy by reducing our ability to effectively market Florida to leisure and business travelers.

It is for these reasons and others we urge you to vote NO for any expansion of the use of Tourist Development Tax revenues. Now more than ever before we must remain focused on our efforts to market Florida as a tourism destination.

Thank you for your attention to and consideration of the South Florida Business Council position.

Sincerely,

John P. “Jack” Seiler

Chairman