



**MICHIGAN SNOWSPORTS INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION**

7164 Deer Lake Court, Clarkston MI 48346 • Phone (248) 620-4448 • Fax (248) 620-9238  
www.goskimichigan.com • Email info@goskimichigan.com

Good morning and thank you Chairman Snyder and members of the committee for taking time to hear my testimony. My name is Mickey MacWilliams and I am the president of the Michigan Snowsports Industries Association, the trade organization representing the ski industry. I'm here to ask you to increase the funding for the Pure Michigan campaign to \$50 million for the coming fiscal year and to do it before summer recess. I want you to be aware that if funding isn't approved in a timely manner, and with a large enough budget, the winter advertising campaign will be either cut or greatly diminished.

It takes time to create ad campaigns and to buy media. When the folks at Travel Michigan don't know their budget, they can't plan. Unfortunately, the winter campaign is the one that suffers, since it is the first season in Michigan's fiscal year. If the budget isn't approved until October, Travel Michigan doesn't have the time to create a winter campaign.

Plus, with the current Pure Michigan ad budget the way it stands now, Travel Michigan doesn't have ample funds to offer a winter partnership program, where travel and tourism entities like MSIA match Travel Michigan's investment, creating a 50 percent increase in marketing dollars. Not knowing if this Pure Michigan Partnership program is going to be available makes it extremely difficult for MSIA to plan our advertising for the winter. We have skin in the game and want to invest in the Pure Michigan program but can't unless there is a program in place.

This past winter was the warmest and most challenging that I have experienced in my 30+ years with MSIA. In total, Michigan ski areas have incurred losses of over \$41 million due to the lack of snow and unseasonably warm temperatures. This is money that they can't

recoup. Winter tourism accounts for nearly one third of the \$22.8 billion Michigan travel industry. Ski areas are a driving force for tourism and especially this coming winter, desperately need an early marketing push to encourage travelers to visit our slopes and trails, stay in our world-class resorts, hit the water parks, zip lines, and enjoy our other winter recreational activities as we compete for travelers from the surrounding Great Lakes states.

The importance of a strong winter season plays into the financial viability of resorts in Michigan. A marketing push this fall can help set the tone, create excitement for snowsports and remind visitors that we do have snow, even if there isn't any in their backyard. Our industry is a vital part of Michigan's economy and cultural identity. In many cases the ski resort is the largest employer in the county. The jobs that the ski industry creates can't be outsourced. It would be hard to move one of our ski hills to another state or outsource the ski lift attendants that go with them! Our government is aggressively marketing for businesses to relocate here, and our ski areas contribute directly to this appeal, since no matter where you live, you are within a 2 1/2 -hour drive of a ski area. No other state has that bragging right!

In conclusion, I urge you to approve a budget of \$50 million for the Pure Michigan campaign and do it swiftly, so that there is ample time to promote winter tourism, this year, when it is desperately needed. Thank you.