

VIRGINIA BEACH
VISION

January 6, 2021

The Honorable Robert M. "Bobby" Dyer
And Members of City Council
City of Virginia Beach

Dear Mayor Dyer and members of City Council:

On behalf of the Virginia Beach Vision Board of Directors and its member business and civic leaders, we solicit City Council's inclusion of a request for General Assembly authorization for a Virginia Beach Tourism Authority to be established. We believe having this enabling authority from the 2021 legislature is essential to provide options for restructuring the city's existing Convention and Visitors Bureau.

As detailed in the Virginia Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau Management Analysis and Recommendations, Virginia Beach is "falling behind its competitors, relative to product development, community collaboration and marketing/sales innovation." We know the visitor industry is vital to our city's economy, attracting millions of annual visitors, \$132 million in local and state tax revenue and 14,000 jobs. As Virginia Beach's greatest economic engine, we can ill afford the degradation of the industry to continue.

Virginia Beach Vision has previously endorsed the findings and recommendations of the Virginia Beach Resort Area Strategic Action Plan. These and other investments in our resort area will reposition the city as a top tourist destination and economic engine but not without concurrent effective and robust marketing within and outside the region.

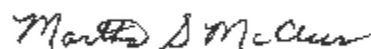
The VBCVB Conclusions and Recommendations management analysis clearly demonstrate the need for a high performing CVB in Virginia Beach. The best practices recommended in the report are utilized by some of the nation's highest performing destination marketing organizations (DMOs). Today, Virginia Beach stands alone among the industry's top competitors as the only government run CVB. As such, we are deterred by government procurement regulations, compensation levels well below market, and a structure that does not encourage industry support and collaboration.

Following the departure of the CVB's director and other key employees, the organization is at a pivotal point. We must embrace the opportunity to redefine how the CVB is managed. Our ability to do so is dependent upon the General Assembly enabling the city's option of establishing a tourism authority. We can ill afford delay of another year in furthering these critical changes.

Respectfully submitted,



President



Executive Director