

SB 5005-S - DIGEST

(SEE ALSO PROPOSED 2ND SUB)

Finds that there is general agreement among the hospitality industry, tourism interests, local governments, and watchable wildlife organizations that owners of working farms, woodlands, and rural open space lands provide a significant portion of the key areas for the wildlife which in turn attract the nature-based tourists.

Declares that, while tourism promotion interests seek to provide incentives to these landowners to maintain these key areas in a manner that benefits wildlife, and to assist them in managing the tourists that seek to appreciate this wildlife, there is a need to ensure flexibility in existing tourism promotion programs to provide this assistance.

Declares that it is the purpose of this act to clarify that the existing program for distribution of lodging tax revenues to promote tourism and to acquire, develop, and operate tourist facilities may include assistance to private landowners for this purpose, consistent with existing local strategies and priorities for tourism promotion.

Declares that "tourism promotion" also includes payments to the owners of farms, forests, and open lands under an agreement with the owners to provide public access to lands and to manage wildlife habitat in a manner that promotes tourism.