



Commonwealth of Virginia

Office of Governor Glenn Youngkin

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Office of the Governor

Christian Martinez

Email: Christian.Martinez@governor.virginia.gov

Governor Glenn Youngkin Announces Virginia Sets New Tourism Spending Record for Visitors in 2023

RICHMOND, VA — Governor Glenn Youngkin and Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) announced today that Virginia’s tourism industry generated a record high \$33.3 billion in visitor spending in 2023, an increase of nearly 10% from 2022.

“Travel and tourism play an essential role in Virginia’s economy,” **said Governor Glenn Youngkin.** “The Commonwealth’s record-breaking visitor spending numbers are a testament to our abundance of attractions and unique destinations. As the top state for business, our tourism industry is a crucial part of driving economic prosperity, providing jobs, building vibrant communities, and enhancing the quality of life for all Virginians.”

The tourism industry in Virginia directly supported over 224,000 jobs in 2023, an increase of over 13,000 jobs relative to 2022. Direct travel employment is now at 93% of pre-pandemic employment levels.

Travelers spent \$91 million a day in Virginia in 2023, up from \$83 million in 2022. Virginia visitors directly drove \$2.4 billion in state and local tax revenue, an increase of 9% from \$2.2 billion in 2022. Overnight visitation to Virginia increased by 1.4 million to 43.6 million visitors in 2023, up from 42.2 million in 2022, essentially reaching full recovery to pre-pandemic levels.

All five categories of visitor spending in the Commonwealth have now fully recovered to pre-pandemic levels and beyond. Those categories include recreation, transportation, lodging, food & beverage, and retail. Recreation was the fastest growing category in 2023, up 12% over 2022 and 24% beyond pre-pandemic levels, more than any other category, as travelers continue to show a strong preference for

experiences. Transportation saw the second highest growth, up 11% in 2023, placing it 11% above pre-pandemic levels. Transportation captures the largest share of visitor spending at 30% due to Virginia's major gateway airports, Washington Dulles International and Reagan National. Lodging spending grew by 9% in 2023, surpassing 2019 levels by 13%. Throughout 2023, Virginia's visitor economy benefited from balanced hotel performance as business and group demand recovered strongly on weekdays against a backdrop of stable leisure demand during weekends.

"The full recovery and growth of all five categories of visitor spending reflects the diverse and dynamic tourism assets that Virginia has to offer. Recreation and transportation, in particular, have seen remarkable increases, driven by a strong preference for unique experiences and the Commonwealth's strategic position as a major transportation hub," **said Secretary of Commerce and Trade Caren Merrick**. "The attributes that make Virginia the best place to live, work, and raise a family are also some of the same qualities that attract visitors to vacation here. Accelerated tourism growth is a win for all Virginians - visitor spending saves every Virginia household \$955 in state and local taxes, showcasing the tangible benefits of a robust tourism industry."

"We are incredibly proud that Virginia's tourism industry reached unprecedented heights in 2023, with visitor spending hitting a record over \$33 billion," **said President and CEO of Virginia Tourism Corporation Rita McClenny**. "This \$3 billion increase from 2022 not only surpasses pre-pandemic levels by an impressive 14.7% but also underscores the resilience and appeal of our Commonwealth as a premier travel destination. As our current flagship campaign emphasizes, 'Vacation starts with VA,' and as Virginia looks ahead, VTC remains committed to promoting the Commonwealth's unique offerings and supporting the growth of the tourism industry. The success of 2023 sets a strong foundation as we build on this momentum in the years to come."

Virginia Tourism Corporation receives its annual economic impact data from Tourism Economics. The information is based on domestic visitor spending (travelers from within the United States) from per-person trips. Visitors included those who stayed overnight or traveled more than 50 miles to the destination. Detailed economic impact data and methodology are available at vatc.org/research.

About Virginia Tourism Corporation

Virginia is for Lovers is one of the most iconic and recognizable travel brands in the world. Using that powerful brand equity, Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) is charged with promoting the Commonwealth as a premier travel destination by showcasing all there is to love in a Virginia vacation. The dollars spent by travelers fuel the economy, provide jobs for Virginians, and improve communities across the state. For more information, visit virginia.org.