

WASHINGTON STATE TOURISM REPORTS A GRADUAL RECOVERY



A recently published report by State of Washington Tourism reveals that the state's economy is gradually recovering from recent years, although it is still in the process.

Washington experienced an increase in visitors, spending, tax revenue, and employment in 2022. However, these positive developments were offset by inflation and slower employment growth than anticipated. However, Washington's recovery needs to catch up with other Western states and the rest of the country.

Visitor spending in 2022 in Washington increased by 24%, reaching \$22.1 billion compared to 2019. However, between 2019 and 2022, the national Consumer Price Index increased by 14.5 percent, resulting in an actual increase in tourist spending of only 86.3 percent from 2019 levels. Most visitors to Washington are domestic - 97.6% of all visitors. Overseas visitors only comprise 2.4% of the total visitors, indicating a significant potential for tourism sector growth.

While the State Authorities are happy to see some after-COVID recovery, they know it is happening at a different rate in different states, economic sectors, and tourism areas. Increasing investment in the state tourism program will yield the necessary returns for tourist spending, tax income, and job creation in Washington.

In 2022, over 220,000 jobs in Washington were tied to tourism, showing a 10.5% increase from the previous year. However, this was still 7.7% lower than the tourism industry's performance in 2019. Due to the pandemic, the food and beverage, recreation and entertainment, hotel, and retail trade sectors have surpassed the leisure and hospitality industry as the state's primary employer.

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