

**WASHINGTON** - U.S. Rep Harry Mitchell today cosponsored a bill to help boost international tourism in Phoenix and other U.S. destinations.

"Tourism is one of the most important economic engines in Arizona," Mitchell said. "Unfortunately, during these tough economic times travel and tourism have declined nationwide and the entire industry has suffered. This bill will help protect the jobs that are directly and indirectly impacted by tourism in our state."

Scottsdale Convention and Visitors Bureau President Rachel Sacco expressed support for the bill and thanked Mitchell for his work.

"Congressman Mitchell's work on this bill underscores his tremendous support for the tourism industry in Arizona," Scottsdale Convention & Visitors Bureau President Rachel Sacco said. "Hotel workers, waiters, retail store owners, and all of the other workers whose jobs rely on tourism have been impacted by the decline in travel. This bill will help bring in new visitors and new business to Arizona, which in turn will stimulate the local economy and put people back to work."

The Travel Promotion Act, H.R. 2935, would create a Corporation for Travel Promotion specifically designed to promote increased international travel to the U.S through advertising, outreach to and other promotional activities. The independent, non-profit corporation would be run by a panel consisting of members who have professional expertise in international travel marketing.

Tourism has a multi-billion dollar impact on Arizona's economy. In 2007, travelers spent \$19.3 billion in Arizona equating to almost \$53 million pumped directly into the state's economy every day. Almost 80 percent of all travel spending in Arizona comes from out-of-state and international visitors, which represents new money introduced into the economy. Visitor spending generated 171,500 jobs, \$5.1 billion in employee earnings and \$2.7 billion in local, state and federal taxes in 2007. [Source: [Arizona Hotel and Lodging Association](#) ]

The difficult economy has negatively impacted tourism in Arizona. State figures show that the

37.4 million people that visited Arizona in 2008 represented a 3 percent decline from 2007 and that direct spending by visitors was down as well. [Source: [Phoenix Business Journal](#) , July 9, 2009]

In Scottsdale, May 2009 tourism figures show major decreases in occupancy, average daily room rate and revenue per available room. Scottsdale's occupancy in May 2009 was 54.6 percent, a 14.2 percent decrease from 2008 while revenue per available room decreased 30 percent. For the year-to-date, Scottsdale's occupancy is down 13 percent, room rate is down 20.6 percent, and revenue per available room is down 31.0 percent. [Source: [Tourism Industry Measurements, Scottsdale Convention and Visitors Bureau](#) ]

Increasing promotional efforts to boost tourism have proven to be effective. According to the Arizona Hotel and Lodging Association for every \$1 the Arizona Office of Tourism spends on marketing, it generates \$180 in direct visitor spending and \$14.95 in state and local taxes. The association also reports that every dollar the State of Arizona invests in promoting tourism returns \$8 to the state general fund. [Source: [Arizona Hotel and Lodging Association](#) ]