



Legislation Text

File #: 09-0154R, Version: 0

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Welch

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning
Congratulations Visit Baltimore!

FOR the purpose of congratulating BACVA on changing its name to Visit Baltimore; commending the members of the association on its many tourism sales and marketing accomplishments for Fiscal Year 2009; and applauding the past accomplishments and future successes the change heralds.

Recitals

On July 30, 2009, the Baltimore Area Convention and Visitors Association (BACVA) issued a press release at its annual meeting, announcing that the organization had changed its name to Visit Baltimore, in step with the industry standard to have a name that reflects the association's mission, is easily identifiable with Baltimore and the association's role as the official sales and marketing organization that generates economic benefits for stakeholders through the attraction of convention, group, and leisure visitors.

Visit Baltimore officials predict that the name change "will better position the destination in this increasingly competitive marketplace and make it easier for potential travelers to find us". In the past, although tourism is a \$3 billion industry in Baltimore, very few locals or visitors were aware of BACVA, much less its mission. The name change clearly identifies both the genesis and the mission of the association - other city bureaus that have taken this strategic step include Destination D.C., Visit Charlotte, Positively Cleveland, Choose Chicago, Meet Minneapolis, Visit Tampa Bay, Go to Louisville, Visit Pittsburgh, and Visit Milwaukee.

Also unveiled on the occasion of announcement of the name change were the key accomplishments for FY 2009 that include:

- booked a high of 522,541 room nights for future years, marking a 15.7% increase over the previous year. This is the 5th consecutive year that sales bookings have increased.
- Achieved a record \$10.9 million in advertising equivalency through public relations efforts, including segments on the CBS Early Show and hosting the NBC travel editor for a live 3-hour radio show. This marks a 34% increase in free media coverage for Baltimore over last year.
- Leveraged social media channels into marketing efforts and became first destination in the country to generate 3,000 followers on Twitter.

- Launched the Certified Tourism Ambassadors Program and trained more than 730 frontline employees to assist visitors in enhancing their trip to Baltimore.
- Launched “Expect the Unexpected” campaign in new geographic markets to expand the reach of Baltimore’s tourism message.
- Achieved designation as an accredited destination management organization by demonstrating expert proficiency in meeting standards for performances and measurements, utilizing best practices and techniques, and providing excellent service. This is a prestigious designation issued by the Destination Marketing Association International, the governing body of convention and visitor bureaus around the world.

In Fiscal Year 2010, Visit Baltimore plans to extend and form new strategic partnerships with leading meeting industry associations; build upon marketing and public relations programs for niche markets; launch a new magazine-style visitor publication; promote a new online booking engine that allows visitors to bundle tickets, hotel reservations, and other services; and conduct quarterly business roundtables for the leadership associations to meet in Baltimore and network with peers.

The Baltimore City Council is proud to have such an innovative and exemplary association leading the charge to encourage the rest of the world to Visit Baltimore!

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That this Body congratulates BACVA on changing its name to Visit Baltimore; commends the members of the association on its many tourism sales and marketing accomplishments for Fiscal Year 2009; and applauds the past accomplishments and future successes the change heralds.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the President and CEO of Visit Baltimore, and the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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