



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jose Peralta

Senator Jose Peralta unveils bill to promote local tourism with small portion of hotel occupancy tax

JOSE PERALTA May 18, 2015

| ISSUE: **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TAXES**



State Senator Jose Peralta (D-East Elmhurst), joined by Assemblyman Luis Sepúlveda (D-Bronx), Bronx Borough President Rubén Díaz Jr., and Wildlife Conservation Society Executive Vice President John Calvelli today unveiled at the Bronx Zoo a bill that would provide each New York City borough with a portion of city hotel occupancy tax it collects to promote local tourism. Senator Peralta is the prime sponsor of the bill in the Senate and Assemblyman Sepúlveda is carrying the measure in the Assembly.

Senator Peralta said the bill (S.2238/A.6960) would offer boroughs four percent of the city hotel occupancy tax revenue collected annually within a specific borough, up to a maximum of \$300,000 per year. The money would allow each borough to promote their own tourist attractions from famous sites such as Coney Island, Flushing Meadows Corona Park, Alphabet City, and The Bronx Zoo, to their hidden gems. The new revenue can also be used to promote for-profit venues, like bars, restaurants, bookstores and coffee shops.

In 2014, a record-breaking 56.4 million visitors came to New York City, generating \$61.3 billion in overall economic impact. Tourists bought more than 32 million hotel room nights. “This legislation will help foster the growth and expansion of New York City’s tourism industry,” **Senator Peralta said**. “Every borough will be able to better promote their destinations and attractions. They have so much to offer and this bill would highlight their hidden and visible gems.” The Senator noted the tax revenue would go to each of the borough’s tourism council or similar entities designated by local law and approved by the Economic Development Corporation for the promotion of local sights, attractions and restaurants.

Senator Peralta added, “By capturing this small portion of the hotel occupancy tax we will help our tourism boom in a long-term and sustainable fashion. We will promote the boroughs’ wonders to visitors from across the country and the globe. My bill would help grow tourism in all boroughs.”

“I fully support Senator Jose Peralta’s bill that would help promote tourism throughout the entire city,” **said Bronx Borough President Rubén Díaz Jr.** “Tourism has never been stronger as we have seen a steady increase in our borough’s tourism. Sen. Peralta’s proposal would help us build on the great strides we have made over the years, using the revenue collected to help promote our tourist sites such as The Bronx Zoo and events such as the annual Tour de Bronx.”

“Statistics show that in 2013 visitors to New York City spent nearly \$39 billion during their visits. This industry is a powerful and profitable economic engine which has sustained combustion reliably,” **Assemblyman Sepúlveda said**. “With the burgeoning neighborhoods of the outer boroughs finally receiving new attention, it only makes sense to spread this economic growth more equitably among them. This bill will draw tourism to these areas and more importantly sustain the tourism trade within them instead of simply funneling it toward Manhattan. The entire city has the potential to become an economic powerhouse, all we have to do is nurture its development.”

“From Inwood to the Rockaways, the unique neighborhoods found throughout all five boroughs have so much to offer visitors that they simply don’t know is there,” **said Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer**. “I thank Senator Peralta for leading the charge for resources to promote our boroughs’ unique sights, scenes, and experiences.”

"I applaud Senator Peralta for his forward-thinking legislation that will ensure the popularity of New York City translates into prosperity for every borough. Brooklyn is eager to welcome visitors to its attractions both large and small, but we lack the bright lights and big funders of sites like Times Square to let people know about the excitement that is just a short train ride away,” **Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams said**. “Tourism promotion is an essential component of local economic development that helps businesses across the spectrum benefit from increased traffic, bringing in additional tax revenue to the community. I look forward to doing all I can to help this important measure pass this legislative session."

“Queens has an amazing array of attractions that reflect our incredibly diverse population,” **said Queens Borough President Melinda Katz**. “This bill offered by Senator Peralta and Assemblyman Sepúlveda would better enable Queens to promote these fabulous attractions to a wider audience and would generate economic growth that would strongly benefit our

borough's hard-working families. Thanks to Senator Peralta and Assemblyman Sepúlveda for introducing this common sense legislation that would take our borough's hidden gems out of hiding."

Staten Island Borough President James Oddo said, "With nearly a billion dollars in private investment coming to the North Shore, including the iconic New York Wheel and the Empire Outlets, this legislation would help Staten Island at a critical time in its history". He added, "The revenue would help Staten Island market many of our lesser known sites and attractions to a whole host of tourists who will be paying attention to us for really the first time."

"The cultural experiences, parks, and restaurants throughout the outer boroughs are a vital tourist draw for New York City," said **John Calvelli, Wildlife Conservation Society Executive Vice President of Public Affairs**. "This legislation will have a distinct financial impact on small businesses, non-profit culture, and the communities they serve – vastly improving the economic outlook for neighborhoods in all five boroughs."