



Prepared for New Hampshire  
Division of Travel of Tourism  
Development

## *Sedona seeks to sustain the beauty visitors desire to see*

Local leaders in Sedona, Ariz., are looking to save the area from the effects of over-tourism.

The Sedona Sustainable Tourism Plan will drive stewardship of Sedona's famous red rocks while reducing traffic congestion, overcrowding and social impacts.

"Our stunning landscape inspires people everywhere," said Sedona Chamber of Commerce & Tourism President and CEO Jennifer Wesselhoff. "The community wants to be sure we aren't loved to death."

Increasing levels of tourism are sparking concern at popular destinations worldwide. Sedona's 10,000 residents see an average of three million visitors a year.

Recent studies found tourism has a \$1 billion annual economic impact and supports 10,000 area jobs.

Among the objectives are:

- Spreading visitation more evenly through the year

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Gallup

## Controversial laws face scrutiny for their potential effect on tourism

DMOs often must react to political decisions that are out of their control and yet potentially could have a detrimental effect on tourism.

The latest example is Alabama, where Gov. Kay Ivey last month signed what has been called the most restrictive abortion legislation in the country. It makes all abortions a felony, except when the mother's life is at risk.

The statute does not make exceptions for cases of rape and incest.

Critics of Alabama's abortion ban used #BoycottAlabama on social media to urge people not to buy Alabama-made products or travel to the state.

The Los Angeles Board of Supervisors passed a one-year ban on travel to Alabama for official business.

Ivey told The Associated Press she expects people will still want to visit the state, despite recent protests over the law.

"Alabama has a lot of different variety of things to visit and enjoy and our visitors will continue to come," Ivey said.

State tourism director Lee Sentell agrees. He spoke at a press conference touting growth in the state's travel industry.

"We're going to continue to market Alabama in the very same positive way we have, to talk about the hospitality and friendliness," Sentell says. "I think we will continue to have a very strong tourism product."

Emory University economist Tom Smith says it's possible the law could hurt Alabama business. He cited North Carolina's 2016 "bathroom bill," which was criticized as discriminatory against LGBTQ people.

The NBA pulled its All-Star game from Charlotte the following year. They held the game there this year after the state repealed parts of the law.

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## Sedona hopes plan saves natural sites

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- Investing in infrastructure improvements and public transit
- Sensitizing visitors to the delicate Sedona environment and small-town quality of life
- Encouraging sustainable experiences such as carbon footprint reduction and 'voluntourism'
- Using technology to reduce traffic and congestion, such as apps that deliver real time parking and trail conditions.

"It is all about balance," Wesselhoff said.

Other initiatives will lessen light and noise pollution; increase water and energy conservation; and improve sustainable practices at Sedona's hotels and hospitality businesses.

Tourism generates more than 75 percent of Sedona's sales tax revenues, according to Sedona Mayor Sandy Moriarty. "But an increase in traffic, short-term rentals and overuse of popular areas makes people feel we are losing something important," she said.

Source: PRNewswire



Theindychannel.com

Indiana Gov. Mike Pence signed RFRA in 2015.

## DMOs face fallout from controversial legislation

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Smith said the abortion law won't necessarily keep all businesses away. Alabama might just have to work harder to get them here.

"Will the state have to add more, let's say, tax incentives to get a company to move there? And they very well might," Smith said.

At least seven other states have recently passed new abortion restrictions.

A Georgia law bans abortions after a doctor is able to detect "a fetal heartbeat in the womb," usually at about six weeks, before many women know they are pregnant.

Georgia tourism faces the same kinds of boycott threats as Alabama, but most of the backlash there has been from Hollywood studios. "The Walking Dead" and the Avengers movies are filmed in Georgia, as well as many other projects. Several major studios have threatened to pull their productions from the state, which could have a large impact on employment, spending and taxes.

Sources: thehill.com, Associated Press, wbhm.com

### Elsewhere...

Both **Texas** and **North Carolina** faced criticism for proposed bathroom access laws that were seen as discriminatory to transgender people.

Tourism boycotts were called for in each case.

In **Indiana**, a bill called the Religious Freedom Restoration Act was passed in 2015. Supporters said it would prevent the government from infringing on a person's ability to practice their religion without a compelling reason. Opponents claimed it would allow businesses to discriminate, especially against the gay and lesbian community.

A storm of criticism led to a quick "fix" of the law being written and passed.

Several big conventions, which had threatened to pull out of the state, returned, but Visit Indy reported 12 conventions would be lost amounting to \$60 million in business.

Source: ncsl.org, indystar.com