

To the Fort Bragg City Council and City Administration:

Re: Support for an Independent, Locally Controlled Visit Fort Bragg DMO

We, the undersigned members of Fort Bragg's lodging community, respectfully encourage the City to begin transitioning Visit Fort Bragg toward an independent, locally controlled destination management organization with professional leadership, dedicated staff, and reliable funding.

We first want to recognize the City, the Visit Fort Bragg Committee, staff, consultants, volunteers, and community partners who have built and supported Fort Bragg's tourism marketing efforts over the past decade. Their work has strengthened the destination's visibility, supported community events, and established a strong foundation for the future.

Our request is not a criticism of those efforts. Rather, we believe tourism has evolved, and Fort Bragg must continue evolving with it.

Successful destination organizations now do more than promote a community. They help manage the visitor economy by supporting overnight visitation, hotel occupancy, tax revenue, events, foot traffic, local business participation, visitor satisfaction, and repeat visitation.

Fort Bragg competes with destinations that have independent governance, professional leadership, dedicated staff, and the ability to respond quickly to changing travel trends and opportunities. To remain competitive and contemporary, we support **an independent Fort Bragg DMO** structured as a locally controlled nonprofit organization.

We also believe this transition should be supported by a stronger and more predictable City investment in tourism. The lodging community supported the City's increases in the transient occupancy tax from 10% to 12%, and subsequently from 12% to 14%, with the understanding that a healthy visitor economy benefits the entire community. We respectfully ask the City to **reinvest a meaningful portion of those revenues** into Visit Fort Bragg at a level that reflects tourism's importance to the local economy and provides the new organization with the resources necessary to succeed.

This model would provide:

- A local board representing lodging, attractions, events, and community interests
- A qualified executive director and support staff
- Predictable funding and clear performance expectations
- Transparent reporting based on economic and community outcomes
- Greater flexibility to pursue emerging trends, partnerships, events, public relations, and new visitor experiences

We believe this approach preserves local control while providing the leadership, capacity, and nimbleness needed to strengthen Fort Bragg's visitor economy.

We respectfully ask the City Council to begin a collaborative process to develop this model, establish appropriate safeguards and accountability measures, identify a sustainable level of City funding, and create a thoughtful transition plan with input from the City, lodging community, local businesses, and other stakeholders.

Tourism supports Fort Bragg's businesses, employees, public services, and community events. A modern, professionally managed DMO is not simply an investment in marketing. It is an investment in Fort Bragg's long-term economic vitality.

Thank you for your service and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Members of the Fort Bragg Lodging Community

[full list of signers attached]