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To Whom It May Concern,

Travel and tourism is one of the most valuable industries in Southern Oregon, providing over 5,400 jobs and has an economic impact of over \$548 million for our area. In Oregon, the tourism industry has seen growth in tourist numbers and tourism spending for eight consecutive years.

With this growth comes the need for a well-trained workforce who are educated about the tourism industry as a whole and its many elements, specifically sustainable tourism. Industry professionals knowledgeable in sustainable tourism will help grow Southern Oregon's tourism industry by integrating sustainable practices, planning and policies.

The Sustainable Tourism Certificate will prepare future industry professionals to be leaders in sustainable tourism. On a global level, the United Nations already knows how important sustainable tourism is. In 2017, they encouraged the tourism industry to contribute more to the three pillars of sustainability — economic, social and environmental.

This awareness is just as important in Southern Oregon as it is in other parts of the world. With so many natural treasures in our own backyard, such as Crater Lake, sustainability must be a part of the tourism industry's future planning and initiatives.

Southern Oregon is a desirable tourist destination, largely in part because of our natural beauty. It's imperative to have industry professionals who are experts in sustainable tourism. Travel Medford supports the Sustainable Tourism Certificate because it will ensure our region stays beautiful for future generations of visitors and residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eli Matthews", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Eli Matthews
Senior Vice President
Travel Medford