

## Legislation Text

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Authorizing the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development to hold hearings to examine the current mission of the Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau and VISIT Philadelphia as we explore the feasibility of a merger of the two organizations.

WHEREAS, City officials and other stakeholders are considering a consolidation of VISIT Philadelphia and the Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau into one organization, pending a study exploring the possibility; and

WHEREAS, The Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau is a private, nonprofit membership corporation that is the official Tourism Promotion Agency for Philadelphia and the primary sales and marketing agency for the Pennsylvania Convention Center. The organization's mission is to generate economic impact and job growth by increasing the region's hotel occupancy and revenues, while concurrently affecting other diverse segments of the hospitality industry. The Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau does "whatever it takes to attract ethnically diverse regional, national, and international convention and tourism customers through creative sales, marketing, and communications efforts"; and

WHEREAS, VISIT Philadelphia was founded as the Greater Philadelphia Tourism Marketing Corporation (GPTMC) by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the City of Philadelphia, and the Pew Charitable Trusts. VISIT Philadelphia is both the name and mission of the organization. As the region's official tourism marketing agency, VISIT Philadelphia seeks to build Greater Philadelphia's image, drive visitation and boost the economy. The organization's marketing efforts seek to increase the number of visitors, the number of nights they stay, and the number of things they do, while enhancing the quality of life and sense of pride for residents; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia currently has a number of hospitality organizations, each with its own distinct mission. Each of these organizations has contributed to the massive growth of Philadelphia's tourism and hospitality industry; and

WHEREAS, A study conducted by Northwestern University found that successful mergers between nonprofit organizations occur when the structures of the organizations are complementary to each other and when the merger is built on trust from the beginning. Such trust can be built by assuring all staff that jobs are secure and making the objectives of the merger clear and available to all stakeholders; and

WHEREAS, The efforts and goals of VISIT Philadelphia and the Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau complement each other nicely, as the former works to increase leisure tourism among Americans and Canadians, and the latter focuses on increasing customers for conventions, meetings, sporting events, and leisure tourists from overseas. A study could show that the goals of the organizations could be more efficiently reached under a single, united organization for marketing Philadelphia as an all-purpose tourism destination; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby authorize the

Committee on Commerce and Economic Development to hold hearings to examine the current mission of the Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau and VISIT Philadelphia as we explore the feasibility of a merger of the two organizations.