



Governor's Office of Economic Development

BUSINESS • TOURISM • FILM

State of Utah

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Q. VAL HALE
Executive Director

VICKI VARELA
Managing Director

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Dear Kanab City Council,

On behalf of the Utah Office of Tourism, I am writing to support your community in taking the initiative to protect and promote your dark skies, and thereby enhance the opportunities for your visitors to enjoy stunning starscapes while they are in Kanab.

About 80% of Americans, and one third of the planet can't see the Milky Way from their homes, and studies show they are willing to pay to have the experience. Utah already has the highest concentration of dark sky parks certified by the International Dark Sky Association (IDA), and our partners at Utah State Parks are working toward getting a total of fourteen parks certified by the IDA this year. Starry skies are part of Utah's brand identity, and the unique stargazing experiences visitors have under clear skies among the redrocks are a distinctive asset that helps set us apart from other destinations.

Dark skies give visitors a compelling reason to stay overnight at a destination, resulting in substantial increased spending. Instead of stopping in for a day trip, visitors looking for an astronomy tour will stay for dinner, hire local guides and book hotel rooms. We anticipate that the potential for Kanab to keep visitors overnight rises tremendously with programs to experience night skies without light pollution in the area.

Dark sky programs can also help alleviate some of the crowding in certain areas of our national parks during peak times of the day, by encouraging guests to visit the surrounding area at night.

The Utah Office of Tourism is actively promoting the state's remarkable dark sky programs, and we would be happy to include yours in our strategy. Stories about Utah's night skies have been among our most successful public relations pitches, and we have seen a considerable coverage, including stories in *The Telegraph* and *Dallas Morning News*. We hope to see even more headlines as Utah advances initiatives to expand opportunities to explore the wonders of the universe.

From Torrey's recent commitment to become an official IDA Dark Sky Community, to star parties at Cedar Breaks National Monument, and Utah being the home of the Consortium for Dark Sky Studies, Utah is leading the world in protecting the dark, and we support every community's dedication to enhancing the experience.

Sincerely,

Vicki Varela
Managing Director, Utah Office of Tourism, Film and Global Branding

