

**RALEIGH, N.C.** (May 9, 2023) — Governor Roy Cooper announced today that the North Carolina tourism economy reached its highest level ever with travelers spending more than \$33.3 billion on trips to and within the state. The previous record of \$29.22 billion was set in pre-pandemic 2019.

“Tourism is a vital economic force in our state supporting thousands of small businesses and hundreds of thousands of jobs,” Governor Cooper said. “We can take pride that visitors see North Carolina as a diverse, inclusive and welcoming place and we all need to work to keep it that way.”

Governor Cooper’s announcement coincides with [National Travel and Tourism Week](#) (May 7-13), when travel and tourism professionals across the country unite to underscore the value of travel to the economy, businesses, communities and personal well-being. The state’s nine Welcome Centers will host activities throughout the week.

North Carolina has invested hundreds of millions of dollars from the American Rescue Plan into helping the tourism industry to recover and thrive following the COVID-19 pandemic. Whether funding Business Recovery Grants, the Moonshine to Motorsports Trail, or investing in Tourism Marketing, the state is committed to supporting the tourism industry’s return to record-breaking heights.

The state’s tourism-supported workforce increased 9.8 percent to 216,900 jobs in 2022. That figure reverses the more than 26 percent loss in employment suffered in 2020. Tourism payroll increased 13.5 percent to \$8.7 billion. Also, as a result of visitor spending, state and local governments saw rebounds in tax revenues to nearly \$2.5 billion.

The figures are preliminary findings from research commissioned by [Visit North Carolina](#), a unit of the [Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina](#), and conducted by Tourism Economics. In measuring the economic value of the travel sector, the research incorporates a broad range of data sources to ensure that the entire visitor economy is quantified in detail. The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, OmniTrak visitor profiles, the U.S. Census, STR, AirDNA and KeyData lodging reports and the N.C. Department of Revenue are among the sources included in this comprehensive model. More information about the study can be found online at [partners.visitnc.com/economic-impact-studies](https://partners.visitnc.com/economic-impact-studies), which also links to archived reports dating back to 2005.

“The new report gives North Carolinians plenty of reasons to celebrate,” said N.C. Commerce Secretary Machel Baker Sanders. “Visitor spending sustains more than 45,000 small businesses that meet travelers’ needs for lodging and dining, transportation, retail, and recreation. Tourism means jobs in all 100 counties, and we will continue our efforts to grow our first-in-talent workforce in travel and other North Carolina industries.”

Secretary Sanders noted that as a result of travelers’ contributions to state and local tax revenue, North Carolina households averaged about \$512 in yearly savings.

#### **N.C. Tourism facts:**

- Total spending by domestic and international visitors in North Carolina reached \$33.3 billion in 2022. That sum represents a 15.2 percent increase over 2021 expenditures. The figure falls 14 percent above the record \$29.22 billion spent in 2019.
- Domestic travelers spent a record \$32.4 billion in 2022. Spending was up 13.4 percent from \$28.6 billion in 2021.
- International travelers spent \$910 million in 2022, up 170 percent from the previous year.

- Visitors to North Carolina generated \$4.2 billion in federal, state and local taxes in 2022. The total represents a 7.9 percent increase from 2020.
- State tax receipts from visitor spending rose 6.5 percent to nearly \$1.3 billion in 2022.
- Local tax receipts grew 3.5 percent to nearly \$1.2 billion.
- Direct tourism employment in North Carolina increased 9.8 percent to 216,900.
- Direct tourism payroll increased 13.5 percent to \$8.7 billion.
- Visitors spend more than \$91 million per day in North Carolina. That spending adds \$6.7 million per day to state and local tax revenues (about \$3.5 million in state taxes and \$3.2 million in local taxes).
- Each North Carolina household saved \$512 on average in state and local taxes as a direct result of visitor spending in the state. Savings per capita averaged \$230.
- North Carolina hosted approximately 43 million visitors in 2022.

**About Visit North Carolina:**

Visit North Carolina is part of the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina. Established in 2014, the EDPNC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation that oversees the state's efforts in business and job recruitment and retention, international trade, and tourism, film and sports development. The mission of Visit North Carolina is to unify and lead the state in developing North Carolina as a major destination for leisure travel, group tours, meetings and conventions, sports events and film production. For more information on North Carolina's destinations and travel assets, go to [VisitNC.com](http://VisitNC.com).

###

**CONTACT:**

N.C. Governor's Office  
919-814-2100  
[govpress@nc.gov](mailto:govpress@nc.gov)

Margo Metzger  
919-410-4640  
[margo.metzger@visitnc.com](mailto:margo.metzger@visitnc.com)

---

<https://media.visitnc.com/N-C-Visitor-Spending-Soars-15-Percent-in-2022>