



(Note: Delete and Replace IFEA placeholder logo with your own or run on appropriate letterhead.)

(Insert Date), 2009

Dear **(Insert Name of Appropriate Member of Congress)**,

I am writing in my role as the **(Insert Title)** of the **(Insert Event or Organization Name)**. Like you, we are concerned with the current economic crisis and how our industry may best weather the storm and be part of a quicker solution.

Our most immediate concern comes from the potentially damaging ramifications resulting from well-intentioned Congressional responses to abuses by those receiving TARP funds, such as Senator Kerry's TARP Taxpayer Protection and Corporate Responsibility Act. While we are on the same page as most citizens who believe that we are, and should be, operating in a new era of corporate responsibility and share a common disapproval of blatant abuses, we raise extreme caution regarding the tendency to group all scenarios and practices together. This type of knee-jerk reaction is making the proper use of sponsorships, employee motivation/incentive programs, and necessary business marketing, travel and meetings a perceptual misstep, with punishment for all, but with no clear delineation, recognition, or encouragement of the many acceptable models that in fact, continue to drive our economic stability and recovery. This type of over-reaction will only serve to create and feed a witch-hunt mentality that will harm many innocent organizations and businesses that do not need any further hurdles to clear, given our current and substantial challenges.

In this time of economic uncertainty, our industry – the industry of celebration – has felt the impact as strongly as any other. We have seen cutbacks in critical corporate sponsorships and support (some resulting from the direct impact of the economic downturn, with others resulting simply from the new fear of misperception and punishment), municipal and government services (as those bodies do battle with their own budgets), and travel by both families and individuals. These challenges have been coupled with new and rising costs for event insurance, security, taxes, permits, venues, entertainment and other budget-sensitive line-items. We have seen employee layoffs, business closures, and decreases in volunteer hours and discretionary giving. But despite these very real concerns, those in our industry have never lost sight of the especially important and crucial role that we play at the grass roots level in every community, city, state and country.

Much as we saw following the attacks of 9/11 and in recognition of other history changing conflicts; as we have seen and shared during the Olympic Games or the Super Bowl; and as we recently saw emphasized during President Obama's inauguration in Washington, across the country and around the world, events and celebrations - locally and globally - have the unique ability to bond people, communities and countries together; to remind us of all we have to celebrate and be proud of; and to convey a message of optimism, partnership and normalcy, often in the face of great uncertainty. We cannot play this important role, however, if we lose the support of our critical supporters and sponsors, who are fearful of being clumped together with corporate abusers in the minds of congress and the public.

In fact, events and celebrations provide the ideal stimulus model, for **(Insert Appropriate State Name)** and across the country, helping to drive over one trillion dollars in economic impact annually while enhancing the quality of life for our citizens and visitors; employing millions of middle income workers directly and through the vendors and suppliers to our industry; supporting businesses both small and large; building community and encouraging investment in those communities at every level; encouraging inclusiveness and diversity; providing both psychological and physical "calling cards" for host cities, states and countries; offering educational platforms in a non-threatening environment; providing leadership in clean and green programs; and maximizing community volunteerism and training that feeds throughout countless other grass roots organizations and causes every day.

What we need now is the help and partnership of our government officials, yourself included, to clearly delineate the difference between abuse and stimulus; to openly encourage the continued corporate and government support of events, business meetings and employee incentive programs that are non-abusive, nor reliant on TARP funds; to approve of and promote legitimate marketing programs and sponsorships that provide a powerful and cost-efficient return-on-investment through increased retail and business-to-business sales and branding efforts; and to encourage direct economic stimulus aimed at the important community programs, event organizations and their related industries that need it now more than ever.

While partisanship and pessimism can often divide us and prevent us from moving forward constructively, now is the time for us all to work together. I encourage you to consider how our government and your office might use the new stimulus package and the influence that you wield personally to help support and protect this unique industry that is equitable beyond any other, and designed by purpose to bring our communities and country together. This can be done directly, through financial infusion and the creation of community development funds directed at the creation, development and support of local events, as well as insuring the infrastructure - venues, facilities, stadiums, auditoriums and public space - used by those same celebrations; and indirectly, by openly encouraging, approving of and even rewarding investments by corporate industries and businesses of all sizes in these important community and country building celebrations.

I thank you for your serious consideration and response to these concerns and opportunities, and for helping to insure that common sense prevails over first-pass reactions.

Sincerely,

(Insert Name)

(Insert Title)

(Insert Event or Organization Name)