

MN legislators mull reimbursement of business losses for warm weather

In response to the challenges the tourism industry faced, a bipartisan group of Minnesota legislators wants extra funds for businesses affected by Minnesota's mild winter.

Some tourism spots have seen up to a 40% decrease in customer traffic this year.

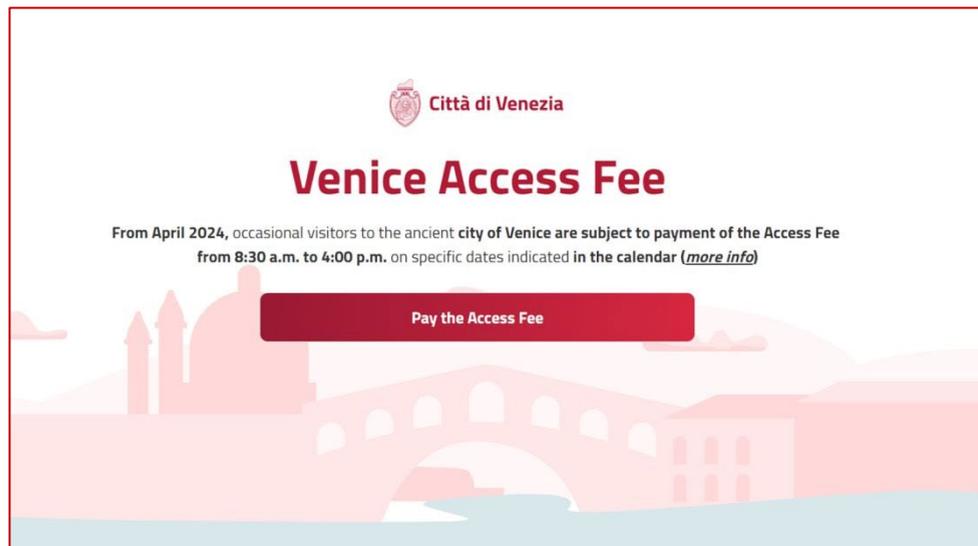
While a dollar amount has not been decided on, industry leaders say the revenue loss is in the millions, something that earlier small business loans promoted by Gov. Tim Walz were not enough to address.

The bills would give forgivable loans to businesses that experienced a 20% loss in revenue due to this winter's lack of snow and ice.

There had been hope that the small business loans would cover businesses hurt by the mild winter, but they turned out to not be enough, bill co-author, Sen. Grant Hauschild said.

While Minnesota tourist locations reported a dramatic decline in customers this winter due to the lack of snow and ice, those same businesses saw increased traffic due to record snowfall the year prior. These extremes are the byproduct of climate change, something scientists say is here to stay. It may force businesses to work differently if they want to survive.

– dl-online.com



Venice has created this online payment portal.

Comune di Venezia

Venice rakes in \$1 million in initial fees

Venice's newly introduced entrance fee for day-tripping tourists brought the city €975,000 (\$1.1 million) in revenue over the first 11 days of a test run.

The entrance fee, introduced for the first time from April 25 to May 5, is charged at a standard price of €5 or \$5.40. The city reported selling a total of more than 195,000 tickets, slightly exceeding expectations.

The admission fee will be charged on nearly all Saturdays and Sundays until

mid-July, when the city will re-assess the fee.

As a general rule, all day visitors between 8:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. are required to pay the fee and obtain a QR code, which serves as proof of payment.

Failure to do so could result in a fine of up to €300 (\$323.60).

Local residents, overnight guests, students and children under the age of 14 are exempt from paying the fee.

– German Press Agency via Yahoo.com

Destinations look at fees to control crowds

Visitor fees or taxes or penalties are in play across the world as destinations struggle to balance an influx of visitors, aging infrastructure, local resentment and sustainability.

Here are a few examples:

In **Hawaii**, the concept of charging a new fee for tourists to help offset their impact drew overwhelming support in the state legislature.

An effort to increase the state hotel tax

by \$25 to offset the impact of visitors on the environment and climate change stalled this legislative session but the concept of a "green fee" remains alive and will likely return with a new funding plan next session.

The proposal would have added another \$25 to the state's transient accommodations tax that would go into a new Climate Health and

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Study: Charge international tourists more to visit parks like Yellowstone

Charging international tourists more to visit U.S. national parks has the potential to raise millions of dollars in fees that could help offset costs for park infrastructure, staffing and maintenance.

That's the gist of a new study written by Tate Watkins, a research fellow at the Bozeman-based Property and Environment Research Center. The center touts as its goal finding market solutions for conservation issues.

Based on his research, Watkins said about 14 million people from other countries visit a national park each year. If they paid a \$25 surcharge the parks system could raise around \$330 million annually, he calculated.

"At Yellowstone National Park, a modest surcharge on overseas visitation would likely double revenues from gate fees, while a higher one could triple current



(National Park Service / Jacob W. Frank)

receipts," Watkins wrote. Yellowstone and Glacier charge \$35 per private vehicle to enter the park. An annual pass is \$70 and an interagency pass, good at all national

parks, costs \$80. Eighty-percent of entrance fees remain in the parks. Those fees generated an estimated \$12.1 million for Yellowstone.

– *spokesman.com*

Authorities propose fees, raise taxes to control number of visitors

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Environmental Action Special Fund, "to minimize the impacts of, and respond to, climate crises," the administration wrote in support of the bill.

The fund would be available for a wide range of uses including, "wildfire prevention and response strategies, flood prevention, emergency drinking water supplies, shoreline restoration and coastal management, and preparation of climate crises prevention and response strategies and plans," according to testimony from the administration.

Tourism arrivals peaked at over 10

million before the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, which led to wide-spread calls among island residents to limit visitors.

In **Turkey**, tourists can't visit Hagia Sophia for free anymore. Since January, foreign tourists have had to pay an admission fee of €25 (about \$27) to enter the mosque and UNESCO World Heritage Site, according to Turkey's Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

Hagia Sophia has admitted tourists free of charge since 2020 when the government designated it a mosque and restarted Muslim worship there. It was built nearly 1,500 years ago as

a Byzantine cathedral and is one of Turkey's most popular attractions. The government has separated how tourists and worshippers enter the building. Instead of the main entrance, tourists will now enter through a ramp and tunnel. They will have access only to the gallery floor. "In some ways, it may be better to separate the crowds," said Alper Ertubey, founder of Hike n' Sail Turkey. "It was getting too chaotic in the lower area."

Muslim visitors wishing to worship can still enter the areas for worship for free.

– *aol.com, skift.com*