

April 5, 2021

The Honorable Isabel Guzman  
Administrator  
Small Business Administration  
409 Third Street, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20416

Dear Administrator Guzman,

We are writing to respectfully request your assistance in granting eligibility to amusement parks to access funding through the Shuttered Venue Operators Grant (SVOG) program. Like all the live entertainment venues eligible for this program, the attractions industry has suffered tremendous losses due to the pandemic. The Small Business Administration's (SBA) SVOG program could prove to be the emergency funding these parks need to survive. By moving to revise this interpretation to expand eligibility to attractions, the SVOG program would save thousands of jobs nationwide, revitalize local economies, and protect the small businesses that have become cultural institutions in their communities. We understand this goes beyond typical authorities executed by the SBA, but we believe the gravity of the situation calls for swift, corrective action.

As you may know, the amusement parks industry functions as a main driver of travel and tourism in our local communities. Throughout the country, amusement parks and fairgrounds generate thousands in income and stimulate local economies, including the small businesses surrounding the parks themselves. Attractions employ over 1.2 million people and generate \$51.6 billion in economic impact on the US economy.

The COVID-19 pandemic has undisputedly devastated the industry. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reports that wages fell by \$1.1 billion in Q2 of FY20 compared to Q2 of FY19. Peak employment fell by over 125,000 jobs this past summer as well. The International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) estimates the effects of the pandemic will have cost \$23 billion in economic losses in 2020 alone. This is roughly a 45% average loss in earned income, which is coincidentally the maximum grant amount stipulated for SVOG recipients.

Section 324 of The *Economic Aid Act* defines the term "live venue operator" as "an individual or entity-- that, as a principal business activity, organizes, promotes, produces, manages, or hosts live concerts, comedy shows, theatrical productions, or other events by performing artists." This definition fails to include amusement parks and other attractions as live venues, despite hosting a large congregation of parkgoers in an enclosed space for the purpose of entertainment.

Congress signed the *Economic Aid Act* this past December with the intent to provide relief to the struggling small businesses in our community. The amusement parks industry represents a sector of live venue operators that should be eligible under the intent of the law. We urge you to reconsider your interpretation of this definition along with the economic impact of exclusion, and to ultimately take corrective action. Amusement parks and fairgrounds are cultural pillars in our communities. Expanding SVOG eligibility will give these institutions the crucial funding needed to survive this pandemic.

Sincerely,

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Andrew R. Garbarino  
Member of Congress