

**Elsen, Nikki**

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**From:** Eric Filter <EFilter@varcinc.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 29, 2019 12:33 PM  
**To:** ZZ Council Members  
**Cc:** info@lacrossechamber.com  
**Subject:** 9% Room Tax

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Eric Filter, property owner/resident and a La Crosse company employee.

VARC, Inc.  
1601 Ramsay Place  
La Crosse, WI 54603

We are in the industry of employment, any major tax increases drives away potential employees.

Approve 9% room tax, nothing more.

Eric Filter  
General Manager



[efilter@varcinc.com](mailto:efilter@varcinc.com)  
608.782.7010  
Cell: 262-424-5911  
[www.varcinc.com](http://www.varcinc.com)

**Elsen, Nikki**

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**From:** Claire Cina <claire@sscycle.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 29, 2019 1:06 PM  
**To:** ZZ Council Members  
**Cc:** info@lacrossechamber.com  
**Subject:** Proposed Room Tax Increase

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*Sent on behalf of Paul Langley, President - S&S Cycle, Inc.*

Dear Council members,

I believe room tax should remain 9% or less. 10% or over is the psychological price threshold.

--  
Claire Cina, Executive Assistant  
S&S Cycle, Inc., 14025 Cty Hwy G, Viola, WI 54664  
Office: 608-627-0234  
Email: [claire@sscycle.com](mailto:claire@sscycle.com)

**Elsen, Nikki**

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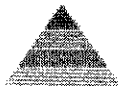
**From:** Hanson, Craig M <craig.m.hanson@ampf.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 29, 2019 2:14 PM  
**To:** ZZ Council Members  
**Cc:** info@lacrossechamber.com  
**Subject:** 9% room tax is ok

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To Whom It May Concern, in response to the potential room tax increase I want to pass along my agreement with both Mayor Kabat and the La Crosse Chamber that a room increase to 9% would be beneficial, while going higher might potentially suppress future downtown business activities, i.e. convections, concerts, etc.

I am both a downtown business owner of 10yrs along with a homeowner for 8yrs in the City of La Crosse. Although the majority of my clients are local, I am also the President of the Board of Directors at the Pump House, and part of our long-term vision is to create an attractive arts district that people around the region will want to attend, and also extend their stay downtown to shop and take in other of our beautiful activities.

Best Regards. Craig Hanson



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**Craig M. Hanson, ChFC<sup>®</sup>, CMFC<sup>®</sup>, CLTC, RICP<sup>®</sup>**  
Private Wealth Advisor

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Ameriprise Financial Services, Inc.  
500 2nd St South  
Suite 101  
La Crosse, WI 54601

O: 608.783.2639 | F: 608.779.4360

5353 Wayzata Blvd  
Suite 201  
St Louis Park, MN 55416

Support staff contact information is available on [my website](#)

[Visit my team website](#)

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Financial

**Elsen, Nikki**

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**From:** Jansen Dahl <JDahl@dahlauto.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 29, 2019 2:24 PM  
**To:** ZZ Council Members  
**Cc:** 'info@lacrossechamber.com'  
**Subject:** Room Tax

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Hello Council,

My name is Jansen Dahl with the Dahl Auto Group. I live in La Crosse at 208 17<sup>th</sup> PL South. The room tax indirectly impacts my business as the higher price per room will detract visitors and groups to La Crosse. Less visitors and groups will lead to less spending in La Crosse. Less spending leads to lower income for employees that translates into less available income to spend on purchasing or servicing vehicles. Our mission at Dahl Auto is To Keep People Moving. A 12% room tax would put La Crosse as the highest in the state. An increase to the average night stay by \$21.39 per night (at 12% tax) is high. Other local community hotels will be at 8% or lower. Increasing taxes are not sound ways to Keep People Moving in the La Crosse community.

I support an increase of the room tax rate to 9%.



**Jansen Dahl** | VP Dahl Automotive Holdings LLC  
Support Center  
3819 Creekside Ln | Holmen WI 54636  
608.791.6452  
[www.dahlauto.com](http://www.dahlauto.com)

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**Elsen, Nikki**

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**From:** Chris Butler <CButler@verveacu.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 29, 2019 2:43 PM  
**To:** ZZ Council Members; Kabat, Tim  
**Cc:** info@lacrossechamber.com; AJ Frels (frels@explorelacrosse.com); Robin Moses (Robin.Moses@lacrossedowntown.com)  
**Subject:** Hotel room tax


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Dear Mayor Kabat and City Council Members,  
As the Regional President of Verve, a Credit Union I have a vested interest in the local and regional economy and factors that impact that economy. Our Credit Union has business relationships with several businesses that would be adversely affected by a decline in tourism.

I have the same concerns mentioned by Explore La Crosse Board and local economic development organizations, The Chamber and DMI. If this room tax increase creates a tourism decline the impact to our region could be significant and irreversible for years to come.

I urge you to move slow, analyze all options and support the industry experts, Explore La Crosse, recommendation for viable tax rates.

Respectfully,

  
a credit union  
verveacu.com | 800.448.9228  
A Credit Union Journal 2017 &  
2018  
Best Credit Union to Work For

**Chris Butler**

Regional President

cbutler@verveacu.com | ☎ 608.779.2402 | 📠 608.784.2692



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**Elsen, Nikki**

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**From:** casinolax <casinolax@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 29, 2019 2:46 PM  
**To:** ZZ Council Members  
**Subject:** Hotel Tax

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What is this tax for? The emails i get don't explain what the extra money will be used for.

Tax what you want less of. I would like to see more hotels. I think the current owners took big risks to build downtown, and if successful they should receive some rewards for those risks.

I think we should reduce the tax to 6% and double the occupancy instead of taking the lazy route.

I feel like everyone thinks downtown is booming, so it is time to extract some rents. Its leaning to good, but its not a boom yet. Their are super high vacancy rates and good businesses are still going out of business (ex. Big Boar, Fat Sams, Stein House, Cheap Shots and many more)

Maybe downtown hotels attract such a huge premium that we can tax them more and all the new ones will still be built here. I don't know that answer, but would hate to see them built somewhere else because of the super tax

Sent from my Sprint Samsung Galaxy S8.

**Elsen, Nikki**

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**From:** sstika@travelproworld.com  
**Sent:** Friday, March 29, 2019 4:12 PM  
**To:** ZZ Council Members; Richmond, Andrea  
**Cc:** info@lacrossechamber.com  
**Subject:** Proposed Room Tax Increase

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Good afternoon,

My husband, Terry, and I are owners of a local travel agency, Travel Professionals, Inc., as well as residents of the city of La Crosse.

We are concerned about the proposed hotel tax increase from 8% to 11%. The restaurants, shops, museums, car rentals all contribute to the tax base as well as hotels. Much of this revenue comes from out-of-town visitors. Increasing the hotel tax to 11% will unfortunately impact these businesses as we see clients deciding on a city to visit based on taxes and fees they are charged. We are fearful the same will happen here in La Crosse, hurting all these businesses and us as taxpayers.

In particular the convention business looks at the tax amount on hotel rooms. Convention business has a huge impact on La Crosse businesses and taxes paid to those businesses.

Local visitors will also look at staying in neighboring cities on staycations instead of La Crosse.

Please consider increasing the tax from 8 to 9 percent, instead of the 37% increase that is being proposed to 11 percent.

Thank you.

Suzanne Stika  
President  
TRAVEL PROFESSIONALS, INC.  
2014 Avon Street  
La Crosse, WI 54603  
608-781-5008  
travelproworld.com  
We Bring You The World

**Elsen, Nikki**

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**From:** Cathy Bauer <cathy.b@cabincoffee.net>  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 30, 2019 11:30 AM  
**To:** ZZ Council Members  
**Subject:** Room tax increase

\*\*\* CAUTION: This email originated from an external sender. **DO NOT** click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. \*\*\*

Honorable Mayor and Councilmembers:

I am a business owner in Downtown La Crosse since 2011. Since that time, the La Crosse area has enjoyed a wonderful surge in business growth in the hospitality industry, which is key to our success. The favorable climate that exists in our area to promote tourism is a key factor in that success. Another key factor is the renovation of the La Crosse Center to allow us to continue that business growth.

We are at a key point when it comes to maintaining this success. Increasing the hotel tax beyond 9% is the line that we cannot cross at this time. Making La Crosse the most expensive area in Wisconsin will stun if not stop our tourism growth. All of the hospitality businesses in this area are dependent on each other to succeed. Without the success of the La Crosse Center, hotels and other restaurants & attractions, we will not succeed. Increased business will yield an increase in revenue. Increasing the tax will yield a decrease in revenue.

As a business owner in this area, I respectfully ask that you vote to draw the line at 9% for this increase so that we can continue our growth & attract visitors throughout this region.

Respectfully,  
**Cathy Bauer**  
**Cabin Coffee Co.**  
**401 Jay Street**  
**La Crosse, WI 54601**  
**PH# 608-519-3055**



**Elsen, Nikki**

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**From:** Mike Brown <mikesloganbar@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 30, 2019 12:45 PM  
**To:** ZZ Council Members; Vicki Markussen; Robin Moses, DMI; Kabat, Tim  
**Subject:** Room Tax

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Att. Mayor and City council members!

The Lacrosse City/County Tavern League has supported modest room tax increases in the past, and we would support a small increase to 9% to help promote Lacrosse's blooming tourism industry. But we agree with our partners, the Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Mainstreet and the Lacrosse County Convention & Visitors and Bureau, that anything above the 9% room tax would have a negative impact on tourism and conventions! Please Vote to only raise the tax to 9% and keep Lacrosse's tourism growing! Sincerely Michael Brown  
President Lacrosse City/County Tavern League

**Elsen, Nikki**

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**From:** Mike Magness (ifixpianos.com) <mike@ifixpianos.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 30, 2019 3:45 PM  
**To:** ZZ Council Members  
**Cc:** info@lacrossechamber.com  
**Subject:** Room Tax Increase Impacts Entire Area

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My business is Tuning and Repairing Pianos.

I have been working and running my business, since 1969 first in LaCrosse, moved to LaCrescent and now West Salem. During the entire nearly 50 years, I have serviced pianos in hotels, restaurants and other tourist attractions that have pianos. The Pump House, Viterbo Fine Arts, LaCrosse Community Theater and various taverns, restaurants too numerous to mention. My Mother was very active in LaCrosse tourism and events, she was present offering advice when the room Tax was initiated in 1967. Ten years later when the LaCrosse Center was being planned, the room Tax was bumped up 1% amidst complaints about it being too much. I realize it is now 2019 but to be the highest room Tax in the State makes lousy marketing strategy! Seems to me to raise funds to pay for the Center expansion, do it with ticket prices! If every ticketed event at the Center had a \$1 or \$2 surcharge added that would bring in a great amount! I doubt it would price anyone out of going to see their favorite artist, show or game.

Michael Magness  
218 N Harmony St  
West Salem, WI 54669  
608-786-4404

Sent from my U.S.Cellular© Smartphone

**Elsen, Nikki**

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**From:** Doyle Pleggenkuhle <goldenviewhomes@charter.net>  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 31, 2019 12:24 AM  
**To:** ZZ Council Members  
**Cc:** La Crosse Chamber  
**Subject:** upcoming vote on room tax

\*\*\* CAUTION: This email originated from an external sender. **DO NOT** click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. \*\*\*

Dear La Crosse City Council,

I am writing concerning the upcoming vote on raising the hotel room tax to 11%.

I am greatly concerned with such action.

This represents about a 40% tax increase and is **TOTALLY** unjustified.

**NO WHERE** in our economy do we have anything near that rate of inflation.

**You CANNOT tax yourself into prosperity;** however just the opposite will happen!

**YOU will drive Convention business (and ALL business) AWAY from our beautiful city and hurt ALL of us, Only resulting in higher taxes on ALL of us in every facet of the city.**

Please vote **NO** on this unjustified tax **INCREASE** and **LISTEN** to the common sense and will of the people: **US!**

If you have to vote an increase, a 1% is a great plenty.

I am a member of the La Crosse Chamber of Commerce and the La Crosse Area Builder's Association; **NONE** of which (to my knowledge) supports this legislation and tax increase.

Sincerely,

Doyle Pleggenkuhle  
Golden View Homes, LLC  
3025 22<sup>nd</sup> St. S.  
La Crosse, WI. 54601  
608-797-2755



Virus-free. [www.avast.com](http://www.avast.com)

**Elsen, Nikki**

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**From:** Sr Sue Ernster FSPA <sernster@fspa.org>  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 31, 2019 7:13 AM  
**To:** ZZ Council Members  
**Subject:** hotel room tax

\*\*\* CAUTION: This email originated from an external sender. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. \*\*\*

Please consider not raising the room tax higher than 9% as it will negatively impact our capacity as a city for tourism and convention usage as La Crosse will have the highest tax in WI.

Thank you,  
Sue Ernster, FSPA

**Elsen, Nikki**

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**From:** Burch, Jennifer <Jen.Burch@marriott.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 1, 2019 10:52 AM  
**To:** ZZ Council Members  
**Cc:** info@lacrossechamber.com  
**Subject:** Please don't increase the Room Tax to 12%.

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Dear Council Member Marcou, Mayor Kabat, and members of the J & A Committee,

On behalf of the Courtyard by Marriott La Crosse Downtown, I am writing to express opposition for the proposed room tax increase from the current 8% to 12%.

The hotels in this city compete with the surrounding area to provide lodging at a competitive price to attract visitors to our city. Those visitors also spend money at local restaurants and businesses. These profits are then recycled in our community. It would be detrimental to our continued shared success to adopt a room tax that would prevent us from being competitive. The proposed 12% room tax would result in La Crosse having the highest in the state; this would definitely put us at a competitive disadvantage.

If the convention center project is completed and we are allowed to remain competitive with the rest of the state, in theory, we would have higher occupancies due to the increased tourism and larger conventions that the new space would allow. The increased occupancy will result in additional tax revenues from the existing room tax.

If an increase to room tax must be imposed, we should only accept a 0.5% to 1 % increase to the existing 8%. (keeping in mind that an additional .5% may yet be imposed in the form of the PRAT.)

Thank you for your consideration,

Jen Burch  
Director of Sales  
O: 608-782-1000  
Courtyard La Crosse  
500 Front Street South  
La Crosse, WI 54601  
courtyard.com

**COURTYARD**  
BY MARRIOTT

*Operated by Graves Hospitality under license from Marriott International, Inc. or one of its affiliates.*

**Elsen, Nikki**

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**From:** Richard Foss <richardfoss@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 1, 2019 7:01 AM  
**To:** ZZ Council Members  
**Cc:** info@lacrossechamber.com  
**Subject:** Room tax

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I think raising the room tax is not a good idea. I have personal experience at trying to get meetings held in LaCrosse and due to the room rates the meetings were held in other Wisconsin cities. Richard L Foss

Sent from my iPad

**Elsen, Nikki**

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**From:** Mark Goede <mgoede@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 1, 2019 11:20 AM  
**To:** ZZ Council Members  
**Cc:** Kabat, Tim  
**Subject:** Hotel room tax increase

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Good afternoon all! I am sending a quick email to all of you to voice my opposition to an increase of the hotel room tax to 12%. As a downtown business owner I fully understand what a remodel of the La Crosse Center would mean to not just downtown businesses but the community as a whole. And it does need the funding to get that done but I believe raising to 12% would price this city out of a lot of long term tourism dollars. I would be in favor of raising to 9 or 10% to stay competitive with all other major cities in the Midwest and not be the highest. The analogy I use when discussing this issue is as follows:

If I have a menu item at my restaurant and were to price it at \$20 I would get many people ordering it once or twice and not come back because it may have been good but not good enough to over charge that much. Now if I price it at \$10 and it's a quality item I won't make a ton of money on that sale but my customers will see it was a good deal and come back in the future to have it again and again!

Thank you all for your time and consideration.

Mark Goede  
Co-Owner  
The Breakfast Club & Pub  
Save Ferris!!

**Elsen, Nikki**

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**From:** Chris <chris@piggys.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 1, 2019 12:21 PM  
**To:** ZZ Council Members  
**Subject:** Room Tax Proposal

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Ladies and gentlemen,

As a small business in downtown La Crosse, I am beyond thrilled with the potential La Crosse Center Expansion. However, I am very concerned with the discussion of raising our hotel room tax rate to 11%. This will put us at a disadvantage when trying to keep existing conventions/conferences or better yet, secure new business. I can speak first hand that our business at Piggy's Restaurant is directly affected by hotel occupancy and LCC functions. Increase overnight stays, increase LCC activity and the entire area will benefit including our 54 employees. La Crosse's convention business is down 50% from its highest point in the 90's, let's not make it harder to attract visitors to this city we all call home. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions and or comments,

Sincerely,

Chris Roderique



**Elsen, Nikki**

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**From:** A Xiong <axiong.biz@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 1, 2019 1:15 PM  
**To:** ZZ Council Members  
**Cc:** info@lacrossechamber.com  
**Subject:** Room Tax

\*\*\* CAUTION: This email originated from an external sender. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. \*\*\*

The City of La Crosse Council:

My name is A Xiong and I am a taxpayer in the city of La Crosse. I am a Hmong resident, student, mother, and volunteer in this area and I reside at 2525 32nd Street in La Crosse, WI.

The room tax increase from 8% to 11% will impact many businesses in the city of La Crosse. I believe that the city can use the benefits of a tax increase and I would support a tax increase from 8% to 9%. The city can still benefit and the 9% tax increase will not alarm and deter people from La Crosse businesses.

I want to speak from a Hmong perspective because we are a pretty quiet community. Currently:

- Tens to hundreds of Hmong families and friends travel into or through La Crosse for leisure activities, reunions/ceremonies, funerals, business, etc. year round.
- It has become a popular idea to book a motel or hotel room for convenience to their local families/friends.
- It has also become a popular idea to eat out and invite their local families/friends to join.

However, with rising costs, we may expect:

- Decline in rooming businesses: Family/friends may no longer recommend hotels/motels and offer up their homes for rest, or visitors may request for rooming at family/friends to save money.
- Decline in local and surrounding area restaurant businesses: In the Hmong culture, if you are hosting families/friends, you cook and provide home-cooked meals and entertainment.
- Decline in transportation businesses: There is no need to travel to and from families/friends, going out to eat, etc..
- Decline in local big box, retail, convenience store businesses: Hosting family provides and shares basic necessities to visitors.

I hope that the City of La Crosse will consider the tax increase from 8% to 9% rather than the increase to 11%. The City of La Crosse is my family's hometown and we would like to see the city and its businesses continue to thrive with breathing room from taxation.

Thank you,

A Xiong

**Elsen, Nikki**

**From:** THOMPSON, MARY K <MARYTHOMPSON1@ALLSTATE.COM>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 1, 2019 1:59 PM  
**To:** ZZ Council Members  
**Subject:** Room Tax Increase

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Dear Council Members,

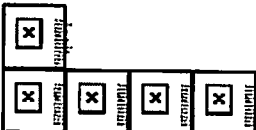
I am writing in regards to the proposed increase in the room tax to 11% from it's current rate of 8%. I have to say that this sounds excessive. La Crosse is a beautiful city, but it is smaller than most cities that offer convention space. Madison, Milwaukee, and Green Bay are all cities with high name recognition. La Crosse does not have that benefit. I have concerns that raising the room tax so high will prevent or decrease the probability that visitors will choose our city. A relatively obscure city with a high cost of holding gatherings.....why bother?

La Crosse deserves to have the chance to attract visitors, so that they may see what a wonderful location it truly is. I think a smaller increase now will increase the likelihood that visitors will choose La Crosse. Once they see how wonderful the area is, they will come back again and again.

Is there an alternative? Could you start at 9% and move up to 10% in a couple years? At that point assess the effect on tourism and decide from there if more of an increase could be tolerated. Could the distribution of the increase itself be re-allocated....at least until the debt of the La Crosse center is reduced?

I believe that getting people here is the #1 goal. Once they see what premiums La Crosse has to offer, premium prices can be charged.

Best Regards,



Life Insurance offered through Allstate Life Insurance Company and Allstate Assurance Co., 3075 Sanders Road, Northbrook IL 60062; American Heritage Life Insurance Co., 1776 American Heritage Life Drive, Jacksonville FL 32224. In New York, life insurance offered through Allstate Life Insurance Co. of New York, Hauppauge NY. Securities offered by Personal Financial Representatives through Allstate Financial Services, LLC (LSA Securities in LA and PA). Registered Broker-Dealer. Member FINRA, SIPC. Main Office: 2920 South 84th Street, Lincoln, NE 68506. (877) 525-5727. Check the background of this firm on FINRA's BrokerCheck website <http://brokercheck.finra.org>. Property casualty products issued by Allstate Fire and Casualty Insurance Company, Allstate Indemnity Company, Allstate Insurance Company, Allstate Property and Casualty Insurance Company, Allstate Vehicle and Property Insurance Company and their affiliates: Northbrook, IL. Allstate County Mutual Insurance Company and Allstate Texas Lloyd's Irving, Texas. Allstate New Jersey Property and Casualty Insurance Company, Bridgewater, NJ.

**Elsen, Nikki**

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**From:** Robin Moses, DMI <Robin.Moses@lacrossedowntown.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 2, 2019 3:01 PM  
**To:** ZZ Council Members  
**Subject:** Room Tax increase  
**Attachments:** La Crosse City Room Tax.pdf

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Dear La Crosse City Council Members,

We greatly appreciate the support that the City of La Crosse gives to downtown. You have been an advocate for downtown and our businesses and we understand the need to find a balance for the expenditures in our community and the La Crosse Center project.

We will be joining Explore La Crosse and our synergy partners to support a moderate increase to the room tax from 8% to 9%. We believe that a higher room tax at this time could make a negative impact on the current growth that we are experiencing, and the positive economic impact that the La Crosse Center must have on our community. We believe that we need to be competitive, and we do not feel that we can be the highest room tax in the State of Wisconsin, and risk losing the conventions that we are seeking by improving the La Crosse Center. We must look for balance. We respect the research that has been done on this issue and we would encourage you to consider the increase to 9% at this time.

We have questions that have not been answered. When would this increase of room tax begin, and would there be a sunset to this increase in room tax?

A room tax that is not competitive could have a ripple effect on the entire community that could directly impact tourism, resulting in a financial impact to all of our hotels, restaurants, retailers and attractions. If the newly opened hotels in our downtown experience low occupancy it could threaten their success, the same outcome could cascade to restaurants, retailers and others. Recent data supports that each tourism dollar has a return of investment seven times within a community (a 7:1 ratio). If we are priced out of attracting conventions and tourist groups to our city, our downtown and our entire community could suffer an economic downturn.

Please take into consideration the impact that your decision could make on the future of our downtown and our entire community.

Robin

Robin Moses  
*Executive Director*  
Downtown Mainstreet, Inc.  
500 Main Street | La Crosse, WI 54601  
Phone: 608-784-0440 | [www.lacrossedowntown.com](http://www.lacrossedowntown.com)