

PROJECT SNOWBIRD

Chairperson: Will Klein

Goals for this committee include:

- Support bills allowing Canadians to stay in the U.S. for up to eight months
- Influence the state to put data collection, marketing research, and a recognition of Canada as a priority into their tourism marketing efforts
- Track all snowbirds better, not just single family home owners
- Encourage mayors to put together a standard questionnaire form that they might use to collect data from their visitors
- Work with smaller cities and counties with significant snowbird populations
- Determine how to compete for snowbirds who are going to other places like Texas and Sonora

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The CABC's Project Snowbird is one of the most important initiatives, as Canadian tourism is historically the catalyst for the strong Arizona-Canada relationship that exists today.

Canadians have been coming to the state to escape harsh winters since Arizona's territorial days. While visiting, Snowbirds saw the opportunities for ranching and mining and settled down creating settlements that later became towns and or cities, like Douglas and Chandler. Canadian Snowbird foreign direct investment dates back and today remains a major contributor to Arizona's economic base.

The real amount of the Canadian economic contribution into Arizona, is difficult, but not impossible to track. Project Snowbird hopes to encourage tracking, quantifying and recognizing the dollar amount of how much the state's economy grows when Snowbirds are visiting. These gathered statistics will assist in deducing patterns and trends of the visiting Snowbird, further assisting private, public and educational entities in their marketing strategies. Proactive efforts in research and marketing will help to further our tourism and business relationships with our neighbor to the North.

With competing international countries and sunbelt states like Florida, California, Nevada and Texas, Arizona is positioned to take advantage and grow this Canadian tourism market or lose market share to these states and countries. These states have long-term strategies and big budgets allocated to large marketing campaigns that showcase their tourism packages to Canadian Snowbirds, and that also offer many other tourism incentives other than the usual sun and golf. Throughout the state of Arizona there is fine dining, world-class concerts/shows, shopping and outdoor activities. Canadian Snowbirds staying in Arizona, often go to Sonora, Mexico to enjoy its sandy beaches. Likewise they come to Arizona and enjoy the Tribal Nation's casinos luxurious resorts. The Grand Canyon isn't the only draw to Arizona and Canadians love to come and enjoy the hundreds of nature trails for hiking, biking, lakes for boating, paddle boarding, and snow skiing and winter sports in nearby Flagstaff.

There are nearly 1,000,000 Canadian short-term tourists visiting the state each year. Over 100,000 Snowbird residences are owned or rented, and should be counted as Canadian Snowbird tourists. The residential tourists have a much broader economic impact with a usual extended stay. Snowbirds with second homes in Arizona, bring in an even larger amount of investment into the state. With these homes, larger purchases are made with services like interior design, landscaping, property management, and cleaning, as well as furniture, water, electric, automobiles, taxes and more. Extended stay visitors, whether it's for six months or less, utilize local medical care, food, entertainment, dining/shopping, and other services. Their contributions to the economic base while visiting, are much greater for a longer period of time. Snowbirds should be considered as tourists not visitors, and counted as such.