

March 5, 2014

Congressman Gus M. Bilirakis
2313 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-0909

Dear Rep. Bilirakis:

On behalf of the nearly 1.1 million Floridians employed in the tourism industry, thank you for your leadership on the reauthorization of Brand USA.

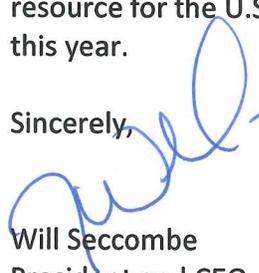
Brand USA has proven to be extremely successful in increasing international visitation to the United States. A recent Oxford Economics report on the impact of Brand USA shows that their marketing efforts in 2013 increased inbound international travel to the United States by 2.3 percent, spurred \$3.4 billion in new visitor spending, supported 53,000 jobs and generated \$972 million in taxes. Brand USA returns \$47 in direct economic benefits for every \$1 spent on travel promotion.



VISIT FLORIDA's partnership with Brand USA is extremely important as we work to establish Florida as the No. 1 travel destination in the world. Brand USA allows VISIT FLORIDA and our Florida tourism industry partners to leverage our international resources, increase our presence in the global marketplace and participate in innovative global marketing partnerships that could only be implemented on a national scale. VISIT FLORIDA was the first destination marketing organization to sign on as a Brand USA Founding Partner and because of the value that they add to our destination marketing efforts and their success in growing the number of international visitors to the U.S. we will continue to increase our investment moving forward.

VISIT FLORIDA is proud to have supported Brand USA from their inception and remains committed to working with them to create co-op marketing programs that allow Florida's tourism businesses to advertise on a world stage at a scale not otherwise possible. We urge Congress to keep this vital resource for the U.S. travel and tourism industry by reauthorizing Brand USA this year.

Sincerely,


Will Secombe
President and CEO
VISIT FLORIDA