

U.S. TRAVEL ASSOCIATION

April 4, 2014

The Honorable Gus Bilirakis
United States House of Representatives
2313 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC, 20515

The Honorable Peter Welch
United States Senate
2303 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC, 2051

Dear Representatives Bilirakis and Welch:

On behalf of the 14.6 million Americans whose jobs are supported by travel, I am writing to thank you for introducing the Travel Promotion, Enhancement, and Modernization Act of 2014 to reauthorize the work of Brand USA to promote the United States as an international destination. By attracting more visitors, Brand USA enhances U.S. economic growth, spurs job creation and advances public diplomacy – all at no cost to taxpayers. We strongly support your legislation.

In March 2010, the Congress overwhelmingly approved the Travel Promotion Act, to establish a public-private partnership – now called Brand USA – to help regain the U.S. share of the booming global travel market and to better communicate U.S. security policies. The cost is underwritten jointly by private sector contributions, matched by a \$10 fee on visitors from Visa Waiver Program nations.

Because overseas business and leisure travel to the United States is critical to local economies across the nation, the President's National Travel and Tourism Strategy set an ambitious goal in 2012 of attracting 100 million additional international visitors within 10 years. To help realize this objective, Brand USA has forged working relationships with American communities – large and small, urban and rural – and leveraged their promotional efforts into a coherent, cost-effective and successful national marketing campaign.

According to Oxford Economics, during 2013, Brand USA's worldwide marketing campaigns generated 1.1 million incremental visitors to the United States – a 2.3 percent increase that generated an additional \$3.4 billion in revenues. This spending generated \$7.4 billion in business sales, \$3.8 billion in GDP and \$2.2 billion in personal income, as well as supporting 53,000 new jobs. That equates to a remarkable return on investment of 47 to one.

Travel is already America's top services export. International visitors spent nearly \$181 billion in the U.S. on travel-related goods and services last year, an increase of more than nine percent over 2012. U.S. travel exports now account for over 26 percent of all U.S. service exports and nearly eight percent of total U.S. exports. On average, overseas visitors spend \$4,500 per trip, yielding a travel balance of trade surplus exceeding \$50 billion. Moreover, these visitors then return home to spread the word about America's attractions and hospitality, generating goodwill for years to come.

That is why we are so enthusiastically supportive of your bill to reauthorize Brand USA. Through Brand USA and at no public expense, the United States can continue to expand its share of the

extraordinarily lucrative international travel market. Toward that end, we are very pleased that you—
with Senators Klobuchar and Blunt, the lead Senate sponsors – are working on a bipartisan,
bicameral basis for its reauthorization. We appreciate your leadership and stand ready to help in any
way possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roger J. Dow". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Roger J. Dow
President and CEO
U.S. Travel Association