



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

RICK PERRY
GOVERNOR

May 21, 2014

Dear Texas Congressional Members:

I write to encourage your support of H.R. 4450/S. 2250, The Travel Promotion, Enhancement and Modernization Act of 2014. This bipartisan bill would reauthorize Brand USA, enabling this public-private partnership to continue the important work of promoting and marketing the United States abroad and attracting international travelers to our country.

Brand USA is funded by travel industry contributions and by a nominal fee assessed on visitors from visa waiver countries. By attracting more international visitors, Brand USA increases U.S. economic growth, spurs job creation and creates a more positive impression of the United States around the world. International travelers contribute new money into the U.S. economy when they spend in our communities' hotels, stores, restaurants and attractions.

Inbound international travel is America's No. 1 services export. In 2013, international visitors spent \$180.7 billion in the United States. According to Oxford Economics, Brand USA's worldwide marketing campaigns produced an additional 1.1 million incremental visitors who spent \$3.4 billion in the United States last year. 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.

International visitors are critically important to the growth of travel in Texas. They stay longer and spend more money while in our state compared to domestic travelers. In 2012 alone, 8.2 million travelers from Mexico, Canada and overseas visited Texas and accounted for \$5.3 billion in spending. They directly supported 46,000 Texas jobs and generated more than \$400 million in state and local taxes.

Texas is a growing international transportation hub. Our major international gateway airports in Houston and Dallas-Fort Worth continue adding international flights from destinations around the world, including growth markets such as China, Australia, South Korea and Brazil. Growth in direct international flights is also seen in Austin, San Antonio and border cities. Texas is uniquely positioned to benefit from the expected 20 percent growth in international travel to the United States through 2018.

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The Office of the Governor's Economic Development and Tourism division and Texas cities have successfully leveraged the Brand USA program through strategic partnerships in key international markets to extend our marketing message in both our core international markets and the emerging markets important to the Texas travel industry.

The average overseas visitor spends \$4,500 per trip on American goods and services in communities across the country. Countries around the globe are competing for these dollars, and this competition has resulted in a decline in the United States' market share despite a nearly 60 percent growth in global travel. In 2010, Brand USA was created by the Travel Promotion Act to reverse this trend, and it has begun to show an impressive return on investment.

Reauthorization of The Travel Promotion, Enhancement and Modernization Act of 2014 will help the United States continue to compete with other countries for international travelers and will certainly benefit travel spending in Texas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rick Perry". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Rick Perry
Governor

RP:bsp