

U.S. TRAVEL ASSOCIATION

June 5, 2017

The Honorable John Thune
Chairman, Commerce, Science, and
Transportation Committee
511 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Nelson
Ranking Member, Commerce, Science, and
Transportation Committee
716 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Enzi
Chairman, Senate Budget Committee
379A- Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bernard Sanders
Ranking Member, Senate Budget Committee
332 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman, Senate Appropriations Committee
113 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman, Senate Appropriations
Committee
437 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

On behalf of the 15 million Americans whose jobs depend on a vibrant travel sector, we are writing in opposition to a provision in the President's fiscal year 2018 budget proposal to eliminate funding for Brand USA.

Brand USA was created by statute in 2010 to help address the post-9/11 decade of declining U.S. share in the booming global travel market, costing the U.S. economy nearly a half-million travel-related jobs. The United States was one of the few developed countries in the world without a national destination marketing organization. The Travel Promotion Act, reauthorized through 2020 with large bipartisan congressional majorities, sought to restore our leading position in the highly competitive worldwide travel marketplace.

By attracting international visitors, Brand USA enhances economic growth in all 50 states and territories, spurs job creation and advances public diplomacy – all at no expense to American taxpayers. Its activities are supported by private sector contributions and matched by a \$10 fee paid by international visitors from Visa Waiver Program nations.

Business and leisure travelers from abroad are critical to local economies across our nation. To help attract these visitors, Brand USA has forged working relationships with hundreds of communities – large and small, urban and rural – and leveraged their varied promotional efforts into a coherent, cost-effective and productive national marketing campaign.

According to Oxford Economics, over the last four years Brand USA has attracted 4.3 million incremental visitors; \$13.6 billion in related spending; and \$29.5 billion in total economic impact,

including nearly \$3.9 billion in federal, state and local taxes. This has supported 50,900 incremental jobs annually and overall yielded an astonishing 27-to-1 return on investment.

In addition to marketing the U.S. as a destination, Brand USA is charged with communicating our evolving visa and entry policies, by addressing confusion about our security protocols that can discourage potential visitors from choosing U.S. destinations. Brand USA helps ensure they get accurate explanations of our changing rules – and ultimately return home to spread the word about America's attractions and hospitality, generating goodwill for years to come.

In short, Brand USA is an extraordinarily successful public-private partnership – the type of joint initiative advocated by the Trump administration. Its work has been particularly beneficial for small destinations with limited marketing resources that can leverage Brand USA's coordinated outreach to market their brands in the global marketplace.

As Congress deliberates on next year's federal budget, we urge you to examine closely the uniformly positive impact of Brand USA's work that adds so much value to America's economy without cost to America's taxpayers. With so much at stake, never has the crucial work of Brand USA been more important in our communities.

Sincerely,

Cities & States

Alabama Tourism Department
Albany County Tourism Board
American Samoa Visitors Bureau
Arizona Office of Tourism
Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism
Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau
Atlantic City Convention & Visitors Authority
Beaumont Convention & Visitors Bureau
Beverly Hills Conference & Visitors Bureau
CalTravel
Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce/Convention & Visitors Bureau
Casper Area Convention & Visitors Bureau
Central Oregon Visitors Association
Charleston Area Convention & Visitors Bureau
Charlotte Regional Visitor Authority
Choose Chicago
Cincinnati USA Regional Tourism Network
Citrus Co. Visitor and Conventions Bureau

Colorado Springs Convention & Visitors Bureau
Colorado Tourism Office
Destination DC
Destination Gettysburg
Destination Irvine
Discover Lancaster
Durham Convention & Visitors Bureau
Dutchess County Tourism
Experience Columbia SC
Experience Columbus
Experience Kissimmee
Fort Worth Convention & Visitors Bureau
FRISCO Convention & Visitors Bureau
Georgia Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus
Glacier County Regional Tourism Commission
Great Lakes Bay Regional Convention & Visitors Bureau
Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau

Greater Des Moines Convention & Visitors Bureau
Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention & Visitors Bureau
Greater Ontario California Convention & Visitors Bureau
Greater Palm Springs Convention & Visitors Bureau
Greater Portsmouth (NH) Chamber of Commerce
Greater Raleigh Convention & Visitors Bureau
Gulf Shores & Orange Beach Tourism
Hawai'i Department of Transportation
Hawai'i Tourism Authority
Heritage Corridor Convention & Visitors Bureau
Illinois Office of Tourism
Indiana Office of Tourism Development
Iowa Tourism Office
Irving Convention & Visitors Bureau
Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism
Kentucky Travel Industry Association
Lafayette Convention and Visitors Commission
Lake Charles/Southwest Louisiana Convention & Visitors Bureau
Lake Erie Shores & Islands
Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority
Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority
Little Rock Convention & Visitors Bureau
Los Angeles Tourism and Convention Board
Louisiana Travel Promotion Association
Louisiana's Cajun Bayou Tourism
Louisville Convention & Visitors Bureau
Louisiana Association of Convention & Visitor Bureaus
Louisiana Office of Tourism
Mammoth Lakes Tourism
Memphis Convention & Visitors Bureau
Minneapolis Northwest Tourism
Monroe-West Monroe Convention & Visitors Bureau

Monterey County Convention & Visitors Bureau
Monterey County Hospitality Association
Mt. Hood Territory
Naples, Marco Island, Everglades Convention & Visitors Bureau
Nashville Convention & Visitors Corp.
Nebraska Tourism Commission
Nevada Commission on Tourism
New Orleans Convention & Visitors Bureau
New Smyrna Beach Area Visitors Bureau
North Dakota Department of Commerce
NYC & Company, Inc.
Oklahoma City Convention & Visitors Bureau
Oklahoma Travel Industry Association
Oneida County Tourism
Orange County Visitors Association
Oxnard Convention & Visitors Bureau-California Welcome Center
Park City Chamber/Convention & Visitors Bureau
Pasadena Convention & Visitors Bureau
Philadelphia Convention & Visitors Bureau
Plymouth County Convention & Visitors Bureau
Providence Warwick Convention & Visitors Bureau
Rancho Cordova Travel & Tourism
Richmond Region Tourism
San Diego Tourism Authority
San Francisco Travel
San Mateo County Convention and Visitors Bureau
Santa Monica Convention & Visitors Bureau
Sheridan Travel & Tourism
Shreveport-Bossier Convention & Tourist Bureau
Sioux Falls Convention & Visitors Bureau
Snohomish County Tourism Bureau
Sonoma County Tourism
South Caroline Parks, Recreation & Tourism
South Dakota Department of Tourism
Southeast Tourism Society

St. Tammany Parish Tourist and Convention
Commission
Tennessee Department of Tourist
Development
Texas Travel Industry Association
The Greater MIAMI Convention & Visitors
Bureau
The Oklahoma City Convention and Visitors
Bureau
The Peachtree City Convention and Visitors
Bureau
Travel Michigan, MI Economic
Development Corp.
Travel Oregon
Travel Portland
Tuolumne County Visitors Bureau
Visit Anaheim
Visit Anchorage
Visit Baltimore
Visit Buffalo Niagara
Visit Charlotte
VISIT DENVER
Visit Duluth
Visit Fairfax
Visit Frederick
Visit Huntington Beach
Visit Jacksonville
Visit Lafayette-West Lafayette
Visit Laguna Beach
Visit Mesa
Visit Myrtle Beach
Visit NC
Visit Oakland
Visit Oceanside Conference & Visitors
Bureau
Visit Panama City Beach
Visit Pensacola
VISIT PHILADELPHIA
Visit Phoenix
Visit Rapid City
Visit Redondo Beach
Visit Santa Barbara
Visit Santa Cruz County

Visit Sarasota
Visit Seattle
Visit SLO CAL
Visit St. Pete/Clearwater
Visit Tampa Bay
Visit Temecula Valley
Visit Tri-Valley
Visit Tucson
Visit Vallejo
Visit Vancouver USA
Visit WeHo
Visit Wichita
VisitDallas
VisitLEX
VisitPITTSBURGH
Wild, Wonderful West Virginia
Wyoming Office of Tourism

Business Leaders

A Chateau on the Bayou Bed & Breakfast
ADARA
Adventure Photo Tours, Inc.
Alaska Latin Tours, LLC
Alaska Railroad
ALON Marketing Group
Amadeo Travel Solutions
AMC Institute
American Alliance of Museums
American Executive International
Corporation
American Gaming Association
American Hotel & Lodging Association
American Resort Development Association
(ARDA)
American Society of Association Executives
American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA)
Aquarium of the Bay
American Tours International (ATI)
Backwards Distilling Company
Bayou Belle Plantation Home
Best Western Clocktower Inn Billings
Best Western Plus/Dragon Gate Inn/Royal
Pagoda Motel

Best Western Pony Soldier Inn & Suites
B-FOR International
Bike and Roll DC
Bike and Roll NYC
Broadway Inbound
Broadway Life: Student Group Travel
Business Travel Coalition
Caesars Entertainment
Café Beignet
California Association of Boutique &
Breakfast Inns
California Hotel & Lodging Association
California Lodging Industry Association
California Ski Industry Association
Caribe Royale Orlando
Carpe DC Food Tours
Casper KOA Kampground
Cat Pear Consulting
Certified Folder Display Service, Inc.
Chicago Architecture Foundation
Chicago Helicopter Experience
Chicago's First Lady Cruises
Choice Hotels International, Inc.
Circle Wisconsin
Citadel Outlets
CityPASS
CoCo Key Hotel & Water Resort
Cornet Restaurant
Cruise Lines International Association
Destination Marketing Association
International (DMAI)
DogTrekker
DoubleTree by Hilton Orlando at SeaWorld
East West Marketing
Enterprise Holdings Inc.
Entertainment Cruises
EuroUSA Seva Global Destination
Management
Events Industry Council
Expedia, Inc.
FestiGals
Financial & Insurance Conference Planners

Florida Association of Destination Marketing
Organizations
General Growth Properties (GGP)
Global Business Travel Association
Global Hospitality Marketing Link
Goulding's Lodge & Tours
Grand Teton Lodge Company
Gray Line New Orleans
Greater Orlando Aviation Authority
HAT Tourism Marketing
HelmsBriscoe
Hilton Los Angeles Airport
Hilton Worldwide
Hornblower Cruises & Events
Hospitality Management Services
Host Hotels & Resorts
Hostelling International USA
Hotel Beacon NYC
Hotel Council of San Francisco
Hotel Whitcomb
Houston First Corp.
HSMIA- Greater New York Chapter
Independent Lodging Industry Association
InterConnect-USA
InterContinental Hotels Group
International Association of Amusement
Parks and Attractions
International Association of Exhibitions and
Events (IAEE)
International Franchise Association (IFA)
International Inbound Travel Association
International Spy Museum
Interstate Hotels & Resorts
Irvine Company Retail Properties
John G. Shedd Aquarium
Kimpton Shorebreak Hotel and Pacific
Hideaway
Knott's Berry Farm
Knott's Soak City Waterpark
LA City Tours
Lakeside Shopping Center
Longwoods International USA Inc.
M&R Hotel Management

Macerich Shopping Centers & Fashion Outlets
Macy's
Mall of America
MapWest Publications
Mardi Gras Hotel & Casino
Marriott International, Inc.
Marshall Hotels & Resorts
Martiz Global Events
Meredith Travel Marketing
Merlin Entertainments
Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority
MGM Resorts International
Miles Partnership
Mise en Place
National Aquarium
National Restaurant Association
National Tour Association
New Orleans Steamboat Company
New World Travel
Northstar Travel Group, LLC
Palm Springs Aerial Tramway
Papillon Group
Paradise Cove Luau
Paramount Hospitality Management
PIER 39
Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA)
Ramkota Hotel and Conference Center
Randy A. Garfield & Advisors LLC.
Real Racine
Rezdy
Ripley's Believe It or Not! Times Square
Roaring Camp Railroad
Rock Springs Holiday Inn, Express and Quality Inn
Rocky Mountain Holiday Tours, LLC.
Rocky Mountain International
Sabre
San Francisco Electric Tour Company
San Francisco Travel Media Relations
SeaWorld Parks and Entertainment

Sirata Beach Resort
Smart Destinations, Inc.
Society for Incentive Travel Excellence (SITE)
South Coast Plaza
STR, Inc.
SYTA and SYTA Youth Foundation
Temple University-School of Sport, Tourism and Hospitality Management
The Best Hotels & Ranches in the West
The Hiltons of Union Square
The Midtown Hotel
The Shops Buckhead Atlanta/River Oaks District Houston
The Travel Technology Association
Tour America, LLC.
Tourism Economics
Transdev On Demand, Inc.
TRAVALCO
Travel Lane County
Travel Tech
Trek America Travel Ltd
Twin America LLC d/b/a Gray Line/CitySightseeing New York
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
U.S. Travel Association
U.S. Travel Association Experience Network
UnCruise Adventures
Unique New England
United States Tour Operators Association
Urban AdvenTours
USA Luxury Shopping Consortium/Anderson Retail Tourism Marketing
Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort
Wellington Hotel
Wendoming Food Service d/b/a Wendy's
Where New Orleans
Xanterra Parks & Resorts
Yankee Leisure Group
Young Strategies, Inc.
Zimble Rentals, Inc.

