

MEETING, EVENT, AND INCENTIVE TRAVEL  
NOTE: PLEASE PERSONALIZE WITH RELEVANT DATA FROM YOUR CITY

[Date]

The Honorable [Member of Congress]  
[United States Senate or House of Representatives]  
[Office Address]  
Washington, DC [ZIP]

Dear [Salutation]:

I am writing to express my concern about a disturbing trend that has the potential to inflict significant damage on our local economy.

Recently, high-profile public companies that received emergency funding from the government have been vilified for using taxpayer dollars on travel for meetings, events and incentive programs. Critics of these companies have mislabeled meetings and events as lavish and unnecessary. As a result, any business that holds meetings or rewards its employees is thinking twice before it devotes resources to travel.

The consequences of a decline in travel for meetings and events are significant, considering that this type of travel creates \$101 billion in spending and one million jobs. Every community in the country pays a high price when visitors decline.

When business meetings and incentive travel programs are demonized and cancelled, American workers – not CEOs – are the ones who pay the price. Bellmen, maids, wait staff and other hourly wage employees – the backbone of our domestic workforce– are the first to lose their jobs as travel declines. In fact, without the jobs generated by meetings and events, the unemployment rate in the United States would jump from 7.6 percent to 8.2 percent.

Meetings and conventions also contribute nearly \$16 billion in tax receipts at the federal, state and local level. Given the poor financial situation of America's cities and states, cuts to the tax base of communities could mean additional cuts to essential public services.

Travel for meetings, events and incentives is a cost-effective tool that companies use to strengthen business relationships; align and educate employees and customers; and compensate employees for business performance. Even Members of Congress have shared this perspective when reflecting on the benefits of their annual retreats.

In our weak economy, the last thing Congress should do is implement policies or spout overheated rhetoric that jeopardizes jobs and the local tax revenue my community depends upon. I urge you to oppose any measure that would unfairly restrict companies' ability to use meetings, events and incentive travel as a legitimate business tool.

Sincerely,

[Contact]  
[Title]