

Dear Colleague:

We invite you join us in signing a letter to Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy seeking their assistance in reauthorizing Brand USA and ensuring it has a reliable funding source.

Travel and tourism are key drivers of the American economy, fueling one in every ten American jobs. According to the U.S. Travel Association, traveler spending in the United States generated \$2.5 trillion in economic output in 2018 and supported 15.7 million jobs. Created by Congress in 2009, Brand USA is a public-private partnership that serves as the nation's first cooperative destination marketing organization. Working with over 800 partners, Brand USA is responsible for increasing international visits to the United States by 6.6 million since fiscal year 2013, generating \$21.8 billion in visitor spending and supporting an average of nearly 52,000 jobs per year.

Brand USA activities are funded at no cost to the taxpayer through a combination of voluntary private sector contributions, matching funds, and an international visitor user fee. The program was unintentionally put at risk when the 2018 budget caps agreement diverted its user fee funding source to general revenue. The uncertainty created by this action is jeopardizing the enormous progress achieved in increasing international visits to the United States.

Please join us in sending the attached letter to House leaders supporting Brand USA. For more information or to cosign the letter, please contact Alexandra Morris (Alexandra.Morris@mail.house.gov) with Rep. Welch or Chris Jones (CJones@mail.house.gov) with Rep. Bilirakis.

PETER WELCH
Member of Congress

GUS BILIRAKIS
Member of Congress

DINA TITUS
Member of Congress

GREG WALDEN
Member of Congress

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy:

Brand USA is a unique public-private partnership established by Congress to promote and market the United States as a destination for international travelers. We write to respectfully and urgently request that you work with us to reauthorize Brand USA and ensure that it has a reliable funding source for fiscal year 2020 and beyond.

Travel and tourism are key drivers of the American economy, fueling one in every ten American jobs. According to the U.S. Travel Association, traveler spending in the United States generated \$2.5 trillion in economic output in 2018 and supported 15.7 million jobs.

Brand USA serves as the destination marketing organization for the United States. Created by the Travel Promotion Act of 2009, Brand USA's chief mission is to encourage visitation to the United States. The program provides multiple platforms to promote all 50 states and the District of Columbia, from our national parks and iconic cities to our smaller, rural and lesser known communities across the country.

Importantly, Brand USA operates at no cost to the American taxpayer. It is funded through a fee paid by international visitors to the United States traveling under the Visa Waiver Program as well as through voluntary private sector contributions.

Since fiscal year 2013, Brand USA's marketing efforts are responsible for a total of 6.6 million additional international visitors to the United States. These visitors spent \$21.8 billion over this time, which has generated a total economic impact of \$47.7 billion and supported an average of nearly 52,000 jobs per year. In 2018 alone, Brand USA marketing brought an additional 1.13 million international visitors to the United States, generating an economic impact of \$8.9 billion. Though the program has been a proven success in boosting tourism to the United States and driving economic growth, the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 diverted Brand USA's user fees to general revenue. We strongly support protecting and renewing Brand USA's funding while upholding its original intent that no taxpayer dollars be used to fund it.

Congress should unite on this bipartisan issue as it has done in the past. We ask for your support and leadership to provide a solution for Brand USA's funding as well as its reauthorization. We are committed to working with you to do so, either as stand-alone legislation or as part of a larger legislative package.

Sincerely,