

June 08, 2021

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Thank you for your leadership to defeat the COVID-19 pandemic. As vaccination rates increase, new infections decline, and proven public health protections prevent the spread of the virus, our nation's economic recovery can begin and many activities that benefit our communities and workforce can resume. As leaders of America's top travel destinations, we have seen firsthand the devastating effects associated with the pandemic and the need to accelerate recovery and rehiring in the hard-hit travel economy. To achieve this goal, we respectfully urge your administration to quickly develop a science-based, data-driven plan to safely reopen international travel to the U.S. by this summer.

Last year, \$500 billion was lost in travel spending, which cost the U.S. \$1.1 trillion in economic output. And prior to the pandemic, travel-supported jobs accounted for 11% of the American workforce, but in 2020, total travel-supported jobs accounted for a staggering 65% of all job losses.

With remarkable scientific advancements helping us turn the corner on this crisis, we have begun to see a return of visitors to our cities, hotels and restaurants, attractions, and many travel-oriented businesses. However, a complete recovery will not be possible on the strength of domestic leisure travel alone. The return of jobs lost to the pandemic will require the safe resumption of international travel.

We are eager for the return of international visitation to our cities and states. On average, the length of international travelers' visits and spending outpaces all other segments of travel, making international inbound travel our country's No. 2 overall export. Prior to the pandemic, international inbound travel to the U.S. contributed \$234 billion in export income to the U.S. economy, generated a trade surplus of \$51 billion, and directly supported 1.2 million American jobs. However, the steep decline in travel in 2020 resulted in the loss of \$150 billion in export income and over a million jobs. If nothing is done to lift entry restrictions, the U.S. is projected to lose an additional \$175 billion by the end of this year.

The science and data now tell us that a resumption of travel between low-risk countries, and in particular among vaccinated individuals, should be allowed to resume. The CDC has said as much regarding domestic travel. To that end, we respectfully urge your administration to develop a roadmap and timeframe to ease entry restrictions and quickly and safely reopen our borders to international visitors - beginning with the United Kingdom, which would allow the U.S. economy to recoup \$3.7 billion in direct export income in the second half of this year, even if travel returned to just half of pre-pandemic levels. This step will help our destinations more rapidly recover from the losses of the past year and reconnect us with the world.

Actions your administration could immediately take to reopen international travel include:

1. Starting with the United Kingdom, quickly establish public health corridors (PHCs) between the U.S. and other low-risk countries. We respectfully urge you to engage with Prime Minister Boris Johnson to secure a commitment to quickly establish a travel corridor between the U.S. and the U.K. The federal government should then expand similar PHCs to other low-risk countries.

Establishing a U.S.-U.K. public health corridor would be a crucial step in our country's recovery. A recent study found that restarting travel between the U.S. and the U.K. could deliver over \$4 billion in economic impact and support almost 300,000 jobs in the U.S. over the next several months.

2. Establish a public-private taskforce to develop a risk-based roadmap, starting this June, for safely reopening inbound international travel to the U.S. from countries in addition to the U.K. Similar to our global competitors, the federal government should assign a public-private task force to develop this roadmap using a risk-based data-driven approach to lift international entry restrictions. The data and science show that the right tools are now in place to mitigate risk and safely begin to ease international entry restrictions by July 1, 2021. In particular, as we increase vaccination rates here in the U.S., easing of restrictions should be enhanced.
3. Utilize the upcoming G7 summit to seek commitments from other G7 leaders to develop and implement a global framework for safely and fully reopening international travel between countries. The global framework should focus on leveraging COVID-19 testing, vaccinations, recovery status and digital health credentials to restart international travel as global conditions improve.

We are eager to safely welcome international visitors back to our communities, not only for the significance these travelers create for local businesses large and small, but also for the positive relationships that are established when international visitors experience the warmth and hospitality of the American people.

Thank you again for your leadership on this critical matter. Given the progress that has been made to date, we remain hopeful that the United States will reopen for international travel by this summer.

Respectfully,

Roger Dow

President and Chief Executive Officer
U.S. Travel Association

Marc Anderson

President & CEO
Visit San Antonio

Adam Burke

President & CEO
Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board

Julie Coker

President & CEO
San Diego Tourism Authority

Santiago Corrada

President & CEO
Visit Tampa Bay

Joe D'Alessandro

President & CEO
San Francisco Travel Association

Craig Davis

President & CEO
VisitDallas

Brad Dean

Chief Executive Officer
Discover Puerto Rico

Fred Dixon

President & CEO
NYC & Company

Kyle Edmiston, CDME

President/CEO
Lake Charles/Southwest Louisiana Convention &
Visitors Bureau

Kaitlin Eskelson

President/CEO
Visit Salt Lake

Elliott L. Ferguson

President & CEO
Destination DC

Steve Hayes

President & CEO
Visit St. Pete/Clearwater

Michael Heckman

Acting President & Chief Executive Officer
Houston First Corporation

Steve Hill

President / CEO
Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority

Al Hutchinson

President & CEO
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Kathy Janega-Dykes

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Travel Portland

DT Minich

President/CEO
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