

The Honorable Mitch McConnell

Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi

Speaker of the House of Representatives
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer

Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy

Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

March 19, 2020

Dear Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, and Leader McCarthy:

We are America's travel industry, an economic sector that directly employs 9 million American workers and supports a total of 15.8 million jobs. The travel and tourism industry— including but not limited to transportation, lodging, recreation and entertainment, food and beverage, meetings, conferences and business events, travel advisors, destination marketers—is comprised of businesses of all sizes, but the vast majority, 83%, are small businesses.

Together we are grappling with the immediate and devastating impact of the current health crisis. Furloughs of American travel workers are happening right now. Travel to and within the United States has essentially ground to a stop due to the actions needed to halt the spread of coronavirus.

Aggressive financial relief is needed immediately.

Taking care of our employees will always be our top priority, but the hard fact is we cannot continue supporting them through this disaster without relief.

To that end, we greatly appreciate and strongly support provisions in the "Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act" that provide:

- **\$300 billion for enhanced Small Business Administration (SBA) loans** distributed through an expedited process and can be partially forgiven for employee retention; and
- **Tax relief to mitigate economic losses**, including deferral of tax liability, extension of the Net Operating Loss deduction, and delay of estimated tax payments.

Unfortunately, the unprecedented shutdown of the travel economy requires an even greater and more aggressive response to prevent millions of Americans from losing their jobs.

New analysis from Tourism Economics in conjunction with the U.S. Travel Association revealed that 4.6 million Americans—50% of the travel industry's workforce—could lose their jobs within six weeks, by the end of April. That will take unemployment to 6.3%.

This loss of jobs will simply not be solved by getting people to travel in the near term. We are calling on Washington to take immediate action on the following recommendations and include in the “Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act”:

- 1. \$150 billion in Travel Employment Grants:** Through the U.S. Department of Treasury, provide \$150 billion in grants to travel-dependent businesses to maintain employment at pre-coronavirus levels. Severely impacted travel businesses, which are empty or shuttered in the interest of public health, should not be shut off from grants or loan forgiveness to retain employees, simply because they employ too many people to qualify for the CARE Act’s SBA support.
- 2. Provide greater financial assistance to severely impacted businesses** by increasing the aggregate loan amount for severely distressed industries above \$150 billion and providing the assistance through unsecured loans and loan guarantees. Businesses and employees who, through no fault of their own, are about to lose everything should not have to offer up what’s left in order secure the financing they need to survive the crisis; and
- 3. Provide at least \$10 billion in airport grants** to pay debt service, maintain operations, and provide critical services, along with ensuring additional support for airport businesses and essential aviation service providers. The entire aviation ecosystem that powers commercial air travel must be supported.

Time is of the essence. Immediate Congressional action is needed to protect travel workers who, through no fault of their own, are experiencing significant economic harm from this national disaster. The goal of this legislation must be to ensure that the travel workforce can emerge from this crisis strong and intact, so they can power the economic recovery.

Thank you for your immediate consideration of this request.

Signed,

U.S. Travel Association

ALL SIGNERS LISTED BY ORGANIZATION