

U.S. TRAVEL ASSOCIATION*

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

Steve Mnuchin

U.S. Secretary of Treasury
U.S. Department of Treasury
Washington, DC 20220

April 28, 2020

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

Thank you for your leadership to replenish funds for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and the Economic Injury Disaster Loan program—a necessary step that will help many of America’s small businesses and those across the healthcare system. However, we are disappointed that the latest agreement does not extend much needed relief to a critical segment of our economy, despite widespread bipartisan support in Congress: our country’s destination marketing organizations (DMOs), conventions and visitors’ bureaus (CVBs) and state tourism offices.

Nearly 85% of DMOs are classified as 501(c)(6) or 501(c)(4) nonprofits or travel-related quasi-government organizations, which are currently ineligible for the PPP—and most notably the loan forgiveness the program offers—under the CARES Act. They remain ineligible following the most recent funding agreement. As civic-oriented nonprofits, it is even more difficult for them to qualify for other types of SBA loans, denying them the capital they need to keep hard-working American men and women employed—58% of DMOs have had to lay off or furlough some of their staff and 38% of all DMO travel workers are now out of work. Any shuttering of these organizations jeopardizes the very work that will be integral to our nation’s recovery efforts.

DMOs, CVBs and state tourism offices are some of the primary drivers of economic benefits in our communities and the entire United States. It is their efforts that drive customers to local small businesses and supports local jobs—placing them at the forefront of economic development for communities nationwide. It is their work that will help restore travel, which will power recovery when it is time for our country to rebuild.

The contributions of these organizations are also integral to the broader travel and tourism industry, where \$1.1 trillion in travel spending generated \$2.6 trillion for the economy and supported 15.8 million American jobs in 2019. The estimated \$519 billion decline in travel spending this year due to the coronavirus pandemic will translate into a total economic loss of \$1.2 trillion. Our country is in jeopardy of losing 8 million travel-supported jobs by the end of April. It is estimated the impact of the coronavirus pandemic is having 9x the impact of 9/11 where it took the travel industry two years to recover from the damages. This timeline will only be exacerbated without the critical work of DMOs.

These numbers are staggering, and their very real impact can be seen from New York to California, from Kentucky to Alaska and every state in between. We know you are working around the clock and we are grateful for your continued support, but it cannot be emphasized enough that allowing 501(c) and quasi-governmental DMOs access to the PPP will have a positive and powerful ripple effect across the entire country. Therefore, we respectfully and urgently request that in the next relief package, you allow DMOs of all statuses eligibility to the PPP so these organizations can secure the critical relief they need to be in the best position to help rebuild our country.

Signed,

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Angie Waiss
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Skamania County Chamber of Commerce

Nathan Rafferty
President & CEO
Ski Utah

Jim Epperson
Executive Director
SoIN Tourism (Clark-Floyd Counties, Indiana)

Johnny Smith
CEO/President
Songbirds

Claudia Vecchio
President/CEO
Sonoma County Tourism

Stratton Tingle
Executive Director
SoundCorps

Louise Bishop
President
South County Tourism Council

Speros A. Batistatos, FCDME
President and Chief Executive Officer
South Shore (IN) Convention & Visitors Authority

Monica Smith
President & CEO
Southeast Tourism Society

Lynda LeVan
Executive Director
Southern Lit Alliance

Sarah Bannon
Executive Director
Southwest Montana

Melissa Arnold
Executive Director
Spencer County Visitors Bureau, Inc.

Scott Dahl
Director
Springfield Convention & Visitors Bureau

Kathleen M Ratcliffe
President
St. Louis Convention & Visitors Commission

Richard Goldman
President & CEO
St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra & The Beaches Visitors &
Convention Bureau

Lora Brown
Executive Director
St. Ignace Visitors Bureau

Becky Davis
Executive Director
Statesboro Convention & Visitors Bureau

Kevin Costello
President
Steuben County Conference and Visitors Bureau

Blair McGary
Executive Director
Summit Chamber of Commerce

Pat Bernshausen
Tourism Coordinator / DMO
Surry County, Virginia

Andrew J. Miller
Executive Director
Susquehanna River Valley Visitors Bureau

Larry S Parks
Chairman, CEO
T U Parks Construction Co.

Gena McPhail
Director of Tourism
Tahlequah Tourism

Karolyn Kirchgessler
Chief Executive Officer
Team San Jose

W Keith Sanford
President and CEO
Tennessee Aquarium

Jim Mejias
Tourism & Media Relations
The Dalles Area Chamber of Commerce

Angela Wilson
President/CEO
The Greater Muskogee Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism

Fritz Smith
President & CEO
The Happy Valley (PA) Adventure Bureau

Jules Downum
Director
The Pop-up Project

Brian McCartin
President & CEO
The Tempe Tourism Office

Rebecca Maffei
Director
Tioga County Tourism

Larisa Draves
Administrator
Tourism Industry Coalition of MI

Paulette Lombardi-Fries
President
Travel Costa Mesa

Kari Westlund
President & CEO
Travel Lane County

Susan Estler
Executive Director
Travel Marquette

Danna Stroud
Executive Director
Travel Paso

Jeff Miller
President and CEO
Travel Portland

Liz Bittner
President & CEO
Travel South USA

Dean Burke
President & CEO
Travel Tacoma - Mt. Rainier; Tourism & Sports

Trevor Tkach
President / CEO
Traverse City Tourism

Jessica Waldo
Executive Director
Tucker County Convention and Visitors Bureau

Laura Meadows
Executive Director
Upshur County Convention and Visitors Bureau

Roger Dow
President and CEO
U.S. Travel Association

Mike Bowman
President
Valley Forge Tourism and Convention Board

Maryl Purvis
Director
Van Buren A&P Commission

Brian Tucker
Executive Director
Ventura County Lodging Association

Laura Beth Strickland
Executive Director
Vicksburg Convention and Visitors Bureau

Shyla Beam
Executive Director
Vincennes/Knox County VTB

Rita McClenny
CEO
Virginia Tourism Corporation

Mitch Patel
President & CEO
Vision Hospitality Group, Inc.

Tania Armenta
President & CEO
Visit Albuquerque

Jay Burress
CEO
Visit Anaheim

Julie Saupe
President & CEO
Visit Anchorage

Pam Crain
Director
VISIT Ark City

Bruce Dalton
President/CEO
Visit Aurora, CO

Tom Noonan
President/CEO
Visit Austin

Al Hutchinson
President and CEO
Visit Baltimore

Susan M. Smith
CEO
Visit Bastrop

Paul Arrigo
President/CEO
Visit Baton Rouge

Brad M. Jones
Executive Director
Visit Bellevue WA

Kalene Griffith
President
Visit Bentonville and Bentonville Advertising and Promotion
Commission

Barbara Hillman
President & CEO
Visit Berkeley

Michael Perry
Interim CEO
Visit Big Bear

Candace Carr Strauss
CEO
Visit Big Sky

Alex Tyson
Executive Director
Visit Billings (Montana)

Judi Hess
Director
Visit Binghamton

Michael McAfee
Executive Director
Visit Bloomington

Katie Goenner
President
Visit Brainerd

Sara Copping
Executive Director
Visit Buena Park

Patrick Kaler
President & CEO
Visit Buffalo Niagara

David Peterson
Executive Director
Visit Carson City

Jayne DeLuce
President & CEO
Visit Champaign County

Amanda Wilkin
Executive Director
Visit Charlevoix

Josiah Jones
Executive Director
Visit Clearfield County

Samantha Kudrick
Tourism Director
Visit Coffeyville

Doug Price
President & CEO
Visit Colorado Springs

Nancy Luke Carpenter
CEO
Visit Columbus Mississippi

Christy Burns
Executive Director
Visit Corinth

Christina Rehkla
Executive Director
Visit Corvallis

Jonny Westom
President
Visit Dana Point

Stephen Byrne
Executive Director
Visit Delco, PA

Richard W. Scharf
President & CEO
VISIT DENVER

Aaron McCreight
President & CEO
Visit Dothan

Kevin Manley
Executive Director
Visit Dubois County

Anna Tanski
President/CEO
Visit Duluth

Jennifer Seaton
Director
Visit Edmond

James T. Wood
President & CEO
Visit Evansville

Barry H. Biggar, CDME
President/CEO
Visit Fairfax

Stephanie Busiahn
Executive Director
Visit Fairmont, Minnesota

Joe Gagliardi
CEO/President
Visit Folsom

Robert L. Jameson
President and CEO
Visit Fort Worth

Ellie Westman Chin
President & CEO
Visit Franklin, TN

John Fieseler
Executive Director
Visit Frederick

Kristal Painter
Executive Director
Visit French Lick West Baden

Jane Howard
Executive Director
Visit Gilroy

Elizabeth Fogarty
Director
Visit Grand Junction

Andrew Schmidt
President and CEO
Visit Greenville NC

Brenda Myers
President / CEO
Visit Hamilton County

Mary Smith
President & CEO
Visit Hershey & Harrisburg

Ashley Huckaby May
Director
Visit Hood River

Amanda Hof
Executive Director
Visit Howard County, Maryland

Kelly Miller
President & CEO
Visit Huntington Beach

Beth Javens
Executive Director
Visit Issaquah

Lisa M. Rager
Executive Director
Visit Johnstown (PA)

Jason Fulvi
President & CEO
Visit KC

Jo Wade
President/CEO
Visit Lafayette-West Lafayette

Ashley Johnson, CDME
President & CEO
Visit Laguna Beach

Kyle Edmiston
President/CEO
Visit Lake Charles

Maureen Riedy
President
Visit Lake County

Janet Falotico
Executive Director
Visit Lawrence County

Justin Gifford
Executive Director
Visit Lenawee

Michelle Peters
President/CEO
Visit Lewis Clark Valley

Nancy Rezac
Executive Director
Visit Longmont

Theodore B. Wampole, Jr
Executive Director
Visit Luzerne County

Gary Wheat
President/CEO
Visit Macon, Inc.

Tawana Thomas
Executive Director
Visit Madison

Cassi Weiss
Director
Visit Marshall

Jaki Berggren
Executive Director
Visit McHenry County

Jamie Null
Director
Visit Mercer County CVB

Peggy Mazyck
President/CEO
Visit Mercer County PA

Marc J. Garcia
President and CEO
Visit Mesa

Peggy Williams-Smith
President and CEO
VISIT Milwaukee

David Clark
President & CEO
Visit Mobile

Heather Shirk
Executive Director
Visit Montgomery County Indiana

Kelly Groff, CDME
President & CEO
Visit Montgomery MD

Krista Rupp
Executive Director
Visit Morgan Hill

Robert M. Lukens
Director
Visit Muskegon

Linsey Gallagher
President & CEO
Visit Napa Valley

Gary Sherwin
President & Chief Executive Officer
Visit Newport Beach

Wit Tuttell
Director
Visit North Carolina

Eric C. Wagner
President & CEO
Visit Oak Park

Mark Everton
CEO
Visit Oakland

Leslee Gaul
CEO
Visit Oceanside

Sara Toliver
President & CEO
Visit Ogden

Keith Backsen
Executive Director
Visit Omaha

Jeanne Goldschmidt
Executive Director
Visit Pasadena

Darien Schaefer
President & CEO
Visit Pensacola

Jeff Guaracino
President & CEO
VISIT PHILADELPHIA

Steve Moore
President/CEO
Visit Phoenix

Kari Mobley
Executive Director
Visit Posey County, Inc.

Colleen Hanson
Executive Director
Visit Potter-Tioga

Dave Herrell
President and CEO
Visit Quad Cities

Don Jeffries
President & CEO
Visit Rochester

J. R. Shaw
Executive Director
Visit Rogers

Andy Williams
Executive Director
Visit Roswell, Georgia

Mike Testa
Chief Executive Officer
Visit Sacramento

Terry Mattson
President & CEO
Visit Saint Paul

Cassandra Matej
President & CEO
Visit San Antonio

Kathy Janega-Dykes
President & CEO
Visit Santa Barbara

Margaret Ivy
CEO
Visit Santa Cruz County

Misti Kerns
President & CEO
Visit Santa Monica

Brad Calkins
Executive Director
Visit Santa Rosa

Shelby Sim
President / CEO
Visit Santa Ynez Valley

Virginia J. Haley
President
Visit Sarasota County

Joseph Marinelli
President
Visit Savannah

Tom Norwalk
President & CEO
Visit Seattle

Chuck Davison
President & CEO
Visit SLO CAL

Rob DeCleene
Executive Director
Visit South Bend Mishawaka

Brenda Maas
Executive Marketing Director
Visit Southeast Montana

Lisa Strader
Executive Director
Visit Southern WV

Meg Winchester
President & CEO
Visit Spokane

Steve Hayes
President & CEO
Visit St. Pete/Clearwater

Wes Rhea
CEO
Visit Stockton

Danny Liedka
President & CEO
Visit Syracuse

Santiago C. Corrada
President/CEO
Visit Tampa Bay

Kimberly Adams
President & CEO
Visit Temecula Valley

Nick Wolda
President
Visit The Woodlands

Michael Novakovich
President & CEO
Visit Tri-Cities

Tracy Farhad
President & CEO
Visit Tri-Valley

Brent DeRaad
President & CEO
Visit Tucson

Michael Browne
President & CEO
Visit Vallejo CA

Cliff Myers
President & CEO
Visit Vancouver USA

Marlyss Auster
President/CEO
Visit Ventura

Landon C. Howard
President
Visit Virginia's Blue Ridge

Christine Flohr
Executive Director
Visit Wabash County

Daylan Gibbard
Director
Visit Walla Walla

Tom Kiely
President & CEO
Visit West Hollywood

Susie Santo
President and CEO
Visit Wichita

Vicki Cimino
Chief Executive Officer
Visit Williamsburg

Pat Mutter
Executive Director
Visit Winona

Rhonda Salisbury
CEO
Visit Yosemite | Madera County

John Oliver
President/CEO
VisitErie

Mary Quinn Ramer
President
VisitLEX

David Blandford and Shiloh Burgess
Co-Chairs
Washington Tourism Alliance

Wright Tilley
Executive Director
Watauga County Tourism Development Authority

Christine Worth
Director
Wayne County Tourism

Valerie Earl
Executive Director
Wellington Area Chamber of Commerce/CVB

Summer Rose
Operations Coordinator
West Columbia Gorge Chamber & Visitor Center

Georgia Turner
Executive Director
West Volusia Tourism

Charyl Reardon
President
White Mountains Recreation Association

Dylan Boyle
Executive Director
Whitefish Convention and Visitors Bureau (Explore Whitefish)

Beth Fischer
Executive Director
Willmar Lakes Area Convention & Visitors Bureau

Sarah Werner
CEO
Winfield Area Chamber of Commerce/Winfield Convention and Tourism

John Cooper
President & CEO
Yakima Valley Tourism

Mary Vilbon
Executive Director
Yarmouth Chamber of Commerce

Jessica L. Bacher
President and CEO
Yates County Chamber of Commerce

Robin Hoover
Executive Director
Yellowstone Country Montana, Inc.

Jonathan Farrington
Executive Director/CEO
Yosemite Mariposa County Tourism Bureau

Linda Morgan
Executive Director
Yuma Visitors Bureau

Identical Letter Sent to:

The Honorable Marco Rubio
The Honorable Ben Cardin
The Honorable Nydia Velazquez
The Honorable Steve Chabot