Dear Senators Sullivan and Schatz and Representatives Case, Titus, and Bilirakis,

On behalf of the undersigned businesses, organizations and industry representatives, we wanted to thank you for introducing S. 3831 / H.R. 4840, the “Visit America Act.”

In 2019, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, spending by resident and international travelers totaled $1.1 trillion, which generated a total of $2.6 trillion in total economic output that supported 15.8 million jobs. U.S. travel exports totaled $255 billion while travel imports totaled $196 billion, creating a $59 billion travel trade surplus. Travel and Tourism is America’s largest service export, yet the U.S. is the only country among the top 30 international destinations without a cabinet, sub-cabinet or equivalent leadership position dedicated to travel and tourism.

The Visit America Act would create an Assistant Secretary for Travel and Tourism position at the Department of Commerce, providing the industry with invaluable leadership within the government to find new ways to boost travel exports, including by helping the U.S. compete for international conferences and events. This new position would be responsible for setting international arrivals and travel spending goals, with the ability to work across agencies and stakeholders to develop strategies and plans to pursue these goals.

The position would also be crucial in the effort to help the U.S. recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. The new Assistant Secretary would be responsible for developing a recovery plan for the industry, which has been devastated by the pandemic, and develop plans to help protect the industry in the event of a future emergency. This is leadership and direction the industry greatly needs. Since the beginning of March, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in over $402 billion in cumulative losses for the U.S. travel economy. The leisure and hospitality industry accounted for 11% of pre-pandemic employment in the United States, yet has suffered 36% of all job losses in 2020. A coordinated approach to supporting travel exports have long been in need, but the pandemic has made the urgency even more clear.

We appreciate your work to introduce the Visit America Act. We fully support this legislation and are ready to help in whatever way possible to help move this legislation forward.

Thank you,

November 20, 2020

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Asian American Hotel Owners Association (AAHOA)
Accor
AMC Institute
American Gaming Association
American Hotel and Lodging Association
American Resort Development Association
American Society of Association Executives
American Society of Travel Advisors
Arlington Convention and Visitors Bureau
Associated Luxury Hotels International
Association Forum
Best Western Hotels & Resorts
California Travel Association
Choose Chicago
CityPASS
Cruise Lines International Association
Destination DC
Destinations International
Experience Kissimmee
Global Business Travel Association
Greater Orlando Aviation Authority
Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau
Hilton
Hyatt
International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA)
International Association of Exhibitions and Events
InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG)
Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority
Leisure Pass Group
Loews Hotels
Longwoods International
Marriott International
MGM Resorts
Meeting Professionals International (MPI)
Miles Partnership
Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce and CVB
National Retail Federation
National Tour Association (NTA)
New Orleans & Company
Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau
PSAV
Sabre Corporation
San Francisco Travel Association
Samantha Brown Media
SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment
Society of Incentive Travel Excellence
Society of Independent Show Organizers (SISO)
South Dakota Department of Tourism
STR
Travel Michigan
Travel Oregon
Travel Technology Association
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
U.S. Travel Association
United States Tour Operators Association (USTOA)
Utah Office of Tourism and Film
Virginia Tourism Corporation
Visit Baltimore
Visit Denver
Visit Myrtle Beach
Visit Philadelphia
Visit Seattle