

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 16, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy:

As you work to draft additional legislation to strengthen America's response to the Coronavirus outbreak, we urge you to support the travel and tourism industry by including destination marketing organizations (DMOs) as eligible entities for federal support. The coronavirus has affected all sectors of the U.S. economy, but it has had a disproportionate impact on restaurants, hotels, and the hospitality industry. The actions we take now will have a significant impact on the speed and sustainability of our economic recovery. Supporting DMOs that are promoting travel and tourism spending in the U.S. will help generate lasting prosperity as we begin our recovery.

The travel and tourism industry is a major economic driver. In 2018, domestic and international travelers contributed nearly \$1.1 trillion to the U.S. economy. Of that, 80 percent came from domestic travelers. This spending, in turn, creates job opportunities across the country. In 2017, travel and tourism directly supported approximately 5.29 million jobs. For workers of all ages and skill levels and in cities, towns, and rural areas, domestic travel creates economic opportunities.

Much of the strength in the domestic travel and tourism sector can be attributed to statewide and regional DMOs. These organizations create and manage initiatives that fuel the economic support to drive tourism and visitor spending across the U.S. Because DMOs are located throughout the country, they have been able to expand the reach and scale of domestic tourism. While DMOs have been successful in bringing tourists to gateway cities like Los Angeles and New York, they also drive tourists to visit smaller or mid-size markets, generating billions of dollars in economic activity for these communities. However, the severity of the coronavirus' economic disruption to domestic travel has threatened the financial viability of many DMOs.

Most DMOs are small, 501(c)(6), 501(c)(4), or quasi-governmental organizations that are dependent on tourism revenues for their operating budgets. With the precipitous drop in travel and tourism, DMOs have been required to severely limit or freeze operations and lay-off countless employees. Despite this, DMOs' status as 501(c)(6), 501(c)(4), or quasi-governmental organizations has meant that recovery funding made available in the CARES Act (Public Law

116-136) like the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) is unavailable to them. To ensure DMOs can continue to do their crucial work of driving domestic travel and tourism, we urge you to include them as eligible entities for federal support in programs like the PPP. Additionally, providing targeted support for DMOs can be a powerful tool in generating the domestic spending we need to kick-start the economy.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. We look forward to working with you on legislation to contain the spread of the Coronavirus and strengthen our economy.

Sincerely,



Doris Matsui
Member of Congress



Gus M. Bilirakis
Member of Congress



Dina Titus
Member of Congress



Joe Wilson
Member of Congress

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