

# U.S. TRAVEL ASSOCIATION®

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January 25, 2024

**The Honorable Patty Murray**

Chair  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C.

**The Honorable Susan Collins**

Vice Chair  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C.

**The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen**

Chair  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science,  
and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C.

**The Honorable Jerry Moran**

Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science,  
and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C.

**The Honorable Kay Granger**

Chair  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C.

**The Honorable Rosa DeLauro**

Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C.

**The Honorable Hal Rogers**

Chair  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science,  
and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C.

**The Honorable Matt Cartwright**

Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science,  
and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Chair Murray, Chair Granger, Vice Chair Collins, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chair Shaheen, Chair Rogers, Ranking Member Moran, and Ranking Member Cartwright:

We urge you to include language in the final FY2024 Commerce, Justice, & Science appropriations bill that ensures the Commerce Department can fund the position of the [Assistant Secretary for Travel and Tourism](#). Specifically, please include (1) bill text that explicitly allows the International Trade Administration (ITA) to use its funds to implement sections 604 and 605 of the Visit America Act (as enacted in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023), as well as (2) language in the accompanying Joint Explanatory Statement that strongly encourages ITA to establish the office of the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Travel and Tourism.

As you know, travel is a major contributor to the nation's economy, generating \$2.6 trillion in economic activity annually, which supports 15 million American jobs. However, even though every other industry depends on travel to drive growth, innovation, education, and operations—from

agriculture and healthcare to defense and energy—the travel experience is often encumbered by archaic, confusing, and disjointed government policies and processes.

A recent analysis of key travel metrics across the globe—such as connectivity, leadership, security and facilitation—found that the United States ranks 17th out of the top 18 travel markets in terms of global competitiveness. Key among the findings is that the U.S. ranks last when it comes to government leadership on travel-related issues and the strength of its national travel strategy.<sup>1</sup>

Since travel touches so many areas of the government—from TSA, CBP, and FAA to the Department of Commerce, the Department of State and more—a senior federal official is needed to streamline government processes and services that affect travel. Without such, the U.S. will continue to lag behind its rivals and struggle to consistently implement a national travel and tourism strategy governmentwide, to the benefit of all types of travelers.

The Visit America Act, which received broad bipartisan support in both the House and Senate,<sup>2</sup> created the office of the Assistant Secretary for Travel and Tourism to:

- Develop and implement a national strategy to grow domestic and international inbound travel,
- Help streamline government processes affecting both business and leisure travel, and
- Help U.S. cities and counties in their bids for large international meetings and events.

With the rest of the world becoming more open to large-scale meetings and events, and the U.S. remaining the only G20 country without a federal agency or cabinet-level official in charge of travel policy, more needs to be done to ensure America remains a competitive place to host international events and attract new investors and visitors.

That's why we urge you to support language in FY24 appropriations that ensures the International Trade Administration can fund the position of the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Travel and Tourism as soon as possible. Thank you for your time and attention on this issue.

Sincerely,

U.S. Travel Association

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<sup>1</sup> [Euromonitor International - Competitive Analysis of Top Travel Destinations \(2024\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> The House passed H.R. 6965 by a vote of 325–93. The Senate Commerce, Science & Transportation Committee approved S.3375 unanimously by voice vote.

**ALABAMA**

Gulf Shores & Orange Beach Tourism  
Madden Media  
Greater Birmingham CVB  
Huntsville/Madison County Convention & Visitors Bureau

**ALASKA**

Alaska Travel Industry Association  
Explore Fairbanks Alaska  
Visit Anchorage

**ARIZONA**

Arizona Lodging & Tourism Association  
Arizona Office of Tourism  
Experience Scottsdale  
Visit Mesa  
Visit Tucson  
Coraggio Group  
Tempe Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Visit Phoenix  
Destination Rogers

**ARKANSAS**

Little Rock Convention and Visitors Bureau  
Visit Bentonville

**CALIFORNIA**

Afar  
America 4 You L.L.C.  
AMERICANTOURS INTERNATIONAL (ATI)  
Beverly Hills Conference & Visitors Bureau  
California Travel Association  
Catalina Island Tourism Authority  
Discover Torrance Visitors Bureau  
Hotel Nikko San Francisco  
Incredible Adventures  
LA City Tourism Department  
MMGY NextFactor  
Monterey County CVB

Roaring Camp Railroads  
San Diego Tourism Authority  
San Francisco Travel Association  
Sonoma County Tourism  
South Coast Plaza  
The San Francisco Peninsula  
Travdek  
Travel Costa Mesa  
Travel Santa Ana  
USS Midway Museum  
Visit Anaheim  
Visit Huntington Beach  
Visit Napa Valley  
Visit Santa Barbara  
Visit SLO CAL  
Visit Stockton  
Visit Temecula Valley  
Visit Tri-Valley, CA  
Visit Yosemite | Madera County  
Citadel Outlets  
Los Angeles Tourism and Convention Board  
San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance  
Tour America LLC  
Visit California  
Visit Rancho Cordova  
Visit Santa Ynez Valley  
Visit West Hollywood

**COLORADO**

Better Destinations LLC  
Richard Reasons  
Visit Colorado Springs  
Visit Estes Park  
Rocky Mountain Holiday Tours  
The Broadmoor  
Visit Aurora

**CONNECTICUT**

ConferenceDirect  
WorldTek Travel & Event Management

## **DELAWARE**

Kent County Tourism Corporation

## **DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

American Society of Association Executives  
(ASAE)

Cultural Heritage Economic Alliance, Inc.

Destination DC

Destinations International

American Resort Development Association

## **FLORIDA**

Accor

Adara

Amelia Island Convention & Visitors Bureau

Chicago's First Lady Cruises

Discover Crystal River FL

Discover The Palm Beaches

Sawgrass Recreation Park

The Zimmerman Agency

Visit Orlando

Visit Tampa Bay

SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment

Carnival Cruise Line

Experience Kissimmee

Florida's Sports Coast

G2 Travel

Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau

Historic Tours of America

IAAPA

Miles Partnership

OTS Americas

Paradise Advertising

Rosen Inn Lake Buena Vista

The Breakers Palm Beach

TRAVALCO USA, Inc.

Visit Panama City Beach

## **GEORGIA**

Explore Brookhaven

Explore Newnan-Coweta

Herschend Family Entertainment

Destination Augusta

Discover Destinations

Esra Calvert Consulting

Georgia Association of Convention & Visitors  
Bureaus

IHG Hotels and Resorts

Southeast Tourism Society

Travel South USA

## **HAWAII**

Hawaii Tourism Authority

SUN ISLANDS HAWAII, INC.

Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association

## **IDAHO**

Boise Metro Chamber/Visit Boise

## **ILLINOIS**

360 CHICAGO

Encore

Experience Champaign-Urbana

Great Rivers Country Tourism

Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau

Choose Chicago

Department of Commerce & Economic  
Opportunity, Office of Tourism

Hyatt Hotels Corporation

## **INDIANA**

Visit Lafayette-West Lafayette

SolN Tourism

## **IOWA**

Catch Des Moines

Visit Quad Cities

## **KANSAS**

Visit Kansas City Kansas

Travel Industry Association of Kansas

## **KENTUCKY**

Bullitt County KY Tourism

Lake Cumberland Tourism  
Louisville Tourism  
National Tour Association  
Paducah Convention & Visitors Bureau  
See Somerset  
ShelbyKY Tourism  
Visit Richmond KY  
Georgetown/Scott County Tourism Commission  
International Inbound Travel Association  
meetNKY  
VisitLEX

### **LOUISIANA**

Alexandria/Pineville Area Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Lafayette Convention & Visitors Commission  
Visit Lake Charles  
Louisiana Travel Association  
New Orleans & Company  
Visit Baton Rouge  
Visit Shreveport-Bossier

### **MAINE**

Maine Office of Tourism  
Maine Tourism Association

### **MARYLAND**

Gray Research Solutions  
Marriott International  
National Aquarium  
Maryland Tourism Coalition  
Visit Baltimore

### **MASSACHUSETTS**

Greater Springfield Convention and Visitors Bureau  
Martha's Vineyard Chamber of Commerce  
See Plymouth  
Tourism Cares  
TourMappers North America LLC  
Tripadvisor  
Railbookers Group

### **MICHIGAN**

Mackinac Island Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Michigan Association of Convention & Visitors Bureaus  
Michigan's Upper Peninsula Travel & Recreation Association  
Visit Detroit  
Greater Lansing Convention & Visitors Bureau

### **MINNESOTA**

Meet Minneapolis  
SearchWide Global  
University of Minnesota Tourism Center

### **MISSISSIPPI**

Mississippi Tourism Association  
Coastal Mississippi Tourism  
Friends of Vicksburg National Military Park and Campaign  
Visit Mississippi

### **MISSOURI**

Branson/Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce & CVB  
Destination Services  
Maritz  
Springfield MO Convention and Visitors Bureau  
Enterprise Mobility

### **MONTANA**

Visit Big Sky  
Yellowstone Country Montana, inc.  
Montana Chamber of Commerce

### **NEBRASKA**

Nebraska Tourism Commission

### **NEVADA**

Caesars Entertainment  
Indigo  
Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority  
MGM Resorts International

Resorts World Las Vegas  
Carson Valley Visitors Authority  
Travel Nevada

### **NEW HAMPSHIRE**

New Hampshire Division of Travel and Tourism  
White Mountains Attractions Association

### **NEW JERSEY**

Esposito Global Partners  
Wyndham Hotels & Resorts  
Greater Newark Convention Visitors Bureau  
Montclair Center BID

### **NEW MEXICO**

Visit Albuquerque  
AIANTA

### **NEW YORK**

Broadway Inbound Inc.  
Cortland County Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Discover Long Island  
Loews Hotels & Co  
New York City Tourism + Conventions  
AlliedTPro  
Alon Tourism Solutions  
Destination Niagara USA  
Emirates Airline  
Guides Association of New York City  
JP Morgan Chase  
The Broadway League  
The Shubert Organization  
United States Tour Operators Association  
Valerie Wilson Travel  
Visit Buffalo Niagara

### **NORTH CAROLINA**

Blowing Rock Tourism Development Authority  
Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau  
Craven County Tourism Development Authority  
CRVA/Visit Charlotte

Mount Airy Tourism Development Authority  
Tourism/Oxford Economics  
Visit NC  
Watauga County Tourism Development  
Authority  
Currituck Travel & Tourism  
Friends of Johnston County Parks

### **NORTH DAKOTA**

North Dakota Chamber of Commerce

### **OHIO**

Dayton Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Longwoods International  
Travel Butler County Ohio

### **OKLAHOMA**

Oklahoma Travel Industry Association  
Visit Stillwater

### **OREGON**

Travel Oregon  
Travel Portland  
Washington County Visitors Association

### **PENNSYLVANIA**

Discover Lancaster  
HHM  
Philadelphia Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Visit Philadelphia  
PA Tourism Office

### **PUERTO RICO**

Discover Puerto Rico

### **RHODE ISLAND**

Providence Warwick Convention & Visitors  
Bureau

### **SOUTH CAROLINA**

Visit Myrtle Beach

Discover Greenwood  
National Golf Course Owners Association  
South Carolina Parks, Recreation and Tourism

## **SOUTH DAKOTA**

Travel South Dakota  
Experience Sioux Falls

## **TENNESSEE**

Nashville Convention & Visitors Corp  
Chattanooga Tourism Co.  
Pigeon Forge Department of Tourism

## **TEXAS**

Citrus Advertising  
International Association of Exhibitions and  
Events  
Irving Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Omni Hotels & Resorts  
OVG 360 - American Bank Center  
South Texas Botanical Gardens & Nature Center  
Beaumont CVB  
DFW International Airport  
Freeman  
Port Aransas Tourism Bureau & Chamber of  
Commerce  
Texas Travel Alliance  
Tourism Economics  
Visit Corpus Christi  
Visit Dallas  
Visit Fort Worth  
Visit San Antonio

## **UTAH**

Visit Salt Lake

## **VERMONT**

Vermont Department of Tourism and  
Marketing

## **VIRGINIA**

2synergize  
AMC Institute  
Student & Youth Travel Association  
VisitNorfolk  
Wytheville Convention & Visitors Bureau  
American Airlines  
Capital Region USA  
Hilton  
Luray Caverns  
Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority  
Virginia Tourism Corp  
Visit Virginia's Blue Ridge  
Visit Williamsburg

## **WASHINGTON**

State of Washington Tourism  
City of Bothell  
Visit Seattle

## **WEST VIRGINIA**

West Virginia Department of Tourism

## **WISCONSIN**

Destination Madison  
DMOproz  
Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Sister Bay Advancement Association  
Destinations Wisconsin  
Discover Green Bay

## **WYOMING**

Wyoming Office of Tourism