

U.S. TRAVEL ASSOCIATION®

December 10, 2024

Dear Speaker Johnson, Minority Leader Jeffries, Majority Leader Schumer and Minority Leader McConnell:

As travel destination leaders and small business operators in communities and states devastated by recent severe disasters, we urge you to immediately enact a disaster supplemental appropriations bill. Recovery cannot wait. From the Atlantic coast to the Hawaiian island of Maui and in states that span our great nation, our businesses and workers have experienced substantial losses that can only be reversed with federal support from Congress.

The damage caused by Hurricane Helene alone is estimated to total up to \$53 billion dollars, with continued impacts on local economies. To begin the long journey to recovery, disaster relief legislation funds are necessary to support the travel industry and related businesses that have been impacted by these events.

Travelers and the travel industry are critical drivers of our economy. The severity of recent disaster events has resulted in steep losses in visitation to our destinations and our local small businesses who depend on the travel economy for their livelihood.

We have seen how travel recovery efforts from past hurricanes can take up to a year before the industry returns to baseline levels. In one example, since the end of September, North Carolina's Mountain region – home to 47,000 travel industry workers – stands to lose \$2.1 billion in visitor spending this fall alone. With the winter holidays fast approaching, and without income from seasonal shopping, travel and visitation, many local business owners are left contemplating how their operations will make it to 2025.

For our states' immediate and long-term economic recovery, it is essential for Congress to provide emergency supplemental funding, including for the Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Relief (CDBG-DR) program and the Economic Adjustment Assistance program, to ensure the hardest hit communities receive the support they need, where travel has dropped to record lows in the aftermath of these storms. These programs provide funds that can be used for activities that are vital to restoring travel, including grants to businesses, rebuilding travel infrastructure, and destination marketing, which helps inform potential visitors about areas that remain open for business and draws visitors back when appropriate to impacted areas. Without these visitors, small travel businesses like ours struggle to meet payroll and basic operating expenses, threatening the livelihoods of thousands of families and employees.

Federal disaster relief grants are necessary to revive travel across our states and support the businesses that rely on the travel economy. By providing resources for small businesses and rebuilding critical infrastructure, these grants can be the first step to securing further state, local and private investment.

Our communities have been strong in the face of widespread devastation, but we cannot continue for long without federal support. We ask Congress to pass disaster relief legislation urgently to help our communities recover and avoid further economic damage.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

360 Destination Group (FL)	Dollywood Parks and Resorts (TN)
AG Hospitality Group (FL)	Eagle Property Management, Inc (TN)
Alamance County Tourism Development Authority (NC)	Easy Time Travel LLC (FL)
Alleghany County Chamber of Commerce (NC)	Eco Everglades LLC dba Jenny's Eco Everglades Wilderness Tours (FL)
Amelia Island Convention & Visitors Bureau (FL)	Elkin Tourism Development Authority (NC)
Ark Holdings (FL)	Evermore Orlando Resort (FL)
Ashe County Chamber of Commerce (NC)	Excellent Vacation Homes (FL)
Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau (GA)	Experience Kissimmee (FL)
Avery County Chamber of Commerce (NC)	Explore Asheville (NC)
Beech Mountain Tourism Development Authority (NC)	Explore Charleston (SC)
Black Mountain Swannanoa Chamber of Commerce (NC)	Explore Gwinnett Tourism + Film (GA)
Blount Partnership (TN)	Explore Newnan-Coweta Inc (GA)
Blowing Rock Tourism Development Authority (NC)	Express Travel/Gray Dawes (FL)
Burke County Tourism Development Authority (NC)	EZ Hospitality Mgmt (FL)
Caldwell County Chamber of Commerce (NC)	Fernandina Beach Main Street (FL)
Camden County Tourism Development Authority (NC)	Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association (FL)
Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority (NC)	Florida's Sports Coast (FL)
City of Pigeon Forge (TN)	Glbal Vision Network LLC (FL)
Craven County Tourism Development Authority (NC)	GoPegasus (FL)
Crystal Coast Tourism Development Authority (NC)	Graham County Travel and Tourism (NC)
Destination Augusta (GA)	Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau (FL)
Destination North Myrtle Beach (SC)	Greater Raleigh Convention & Visitors Bureau (NC)
Discover Foco, Forsyth County Chamber of Commerce (GA)	Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association (HI)
DistiNCTly Fayetteville (NC)	Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HI)
	Haywood County Tourism Development Authority (NC)
	Hickory Global Partners (FL)
	Hilton Head Island—Bluffton Chamber of Commerce (SC)
	Jackson County North Carolina Tourism Development Authority (NC)

KF Conference Management Inc. (FL)
Kinston-Lenoir County Tourism Development Authority (NC)
Large Cabin Rentals/Hearthside Cabin Rentals (TN)
Madison County Visitor Center (NC)
McDowell County Tourism Development Authority (NC)
Mitchell County Tourism Development Authority (NC)
Mount Airy Tourism Development Authority (NC)
Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce (SC)
Nashville Convention & Visitors Corp (TN)
Northeast Tennessee Tourism (TN)
Outer Banks Visitors Bureau (NC)
Pigeon Forge Department of Tourism (TN)
Pinehurst-Southern Pines-Aberdeen Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (NC)
Plott Consulting Group (FL)
Relebrand (FL)
Richmond County Tourism Development Authority (NC)
Richmond Region Tourism (VA)
Rowan County Tourism Development Authority (NC)
Rutherford County Tourism Development Authority (NC)
Sampson County Visitors Bureau (NC)
Sanford Tourism Development Authority (NC)
Sevier County Government Tourism Department (TN)
Student and Youth Travel Association (VA)
SV Hospitality, LLC (FL)
Taffy Event Strategies (VA)
TBO LLC (FL)
The Las Olas Company dba Riverside Hotel (FL)
The Ramsey Hotel (TN)
Tortugas de Mar (FL)
Tourism Partnership of Surry County (NC)
Travel Resort Services, Inc. (FL)
Village of Sugar Mountain Tourism Development Authority (NC)
Virginia Tourism Corp (VA)
Visit Fairfax (VA)
Visit Florida Keys (FL)
Visit Greenville, North Carolina (NC)
Visit Hickory (NC)
Visit High Point (NC)
Visit Lake Norman (NC)
Visit Loudoun (VA)
Visit North Carolina (NC)
Visit Panama City Beach (FL)
Visit Pensacola (FL)
Visit Raleigh (NC)
Visit Tampa Bay (FL)
Visit Williamsburg (VA)
Walsh Chauffeured Transportation (FL)
Washington County Travel & Tourism Authority (NC)
Wilkes County Chamber of Commerce (NC)
Wilkes County District W Tourism Development Authority (NC)
Wytheville Convention & Visitors Bureau (VA)
Yadkin Valley Heritage Corridor (NC)
Yancey County Chamber of Commerce (NC)
Z-Media, Inc. (FL)