



## UNITED STATES TRAVEL AND TOURISM ADVISORY BOARD

May 10, 2017

The Honorable Wilbur Ross  
Secretary of Commerce  
Washington, D.C. 20230

Re: U.S. Welcoming Message

Dear Mr. Secretary:

On behalf of your Travel and Tourism Advisory Board (TTAB), I am proud to advise you that we stand ready to serve and help the Trump Administration take travel policies, facilitation and promotion to a new and higher level. As your designated advisors on these matters, we look forward to continuing TTAB's unparalleled success over the last two administrations in supporting a vital export for our country while championing a secure America. Security and travel facilitation are not mutually exclusive and, in fact, a secure America is of paramount importance to both our citizens and visitors. Our mission aligns well with the Administration's top priority of secure borders. However, the traveling public frequently confuses secure borders with limiting legitimate travel. It is here that TTAB sees an opportunity for the Administration to have an immediate positive impact on the businesses and jobs in our sector. Pursuant to our recent March board meeting with you, we bring forward the immediate recommendation below, but also are working on developing additional recommendations in response to your tasking. Our proposals will include specific messaging and communications strategies.

Our industry, above all others, depends on the country being secure. If a breach were to occur, the travel industry will be the first to suffer the economic consequences from its impacts. This is why historically your staff and TTAB have worked so closely and effectively with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and in particular Customs and Border Protection (CBP) over the last decade. Successes directly from this working relationship include: Model Ports Program implementation, Expansion of Trusted Traveler's Programs and assistance/improvements in consumer insight research the department conducts annually.

With the public elevation of the security issue, we find an opportunity for the Administration to send a welcoming message to the international traveling public. Although Brand USA is a key messenger of the Administration's travel priorities, we encourage that efforts go one step further due to four critical upcoming datelines in the travel and tourism industry calendar.

- 1) June 2-6 – U.S. Travel's IPW in Washington DC - The premier worldwide travel suppliers and wholesale buyers show in the world.
- 2) September - Los Angeles Olympic Bid versus Paris will be announced in Peru.
- 3) November – Minnesota World Fair Bid versus Poland and Argentina will be announced.
- 4) Summer Travel Booking Season 2017 has already begun and will determine the future balance of trade for at least the next year.

Mr. Secretary, we ask you today to take every opportunity to send the message that the United States is absolutely welcoming to legitimate business and leisure travelers. As you meet with leading private and public figures from around the world, we would ask this becomes one of your key talking points. Your TTAB also recommends that President Trump make a statement from the White House encouraging legitimate travel to the United States. This will go a long way toward providing certainty to millions of business and leisure visitors that the United States welcomes them with open arms. There is some confusion about this issue in the marketplace and we believe this can be cleared up easily by this statement. International inbound travel is our nation's second-largest export, and millions of American jobs depend upon striking the correct balance.

We appreciate your time and pledge to quickly follow up on the other items discussed at our recent Board meeting.

Sincerely,



John Sprouls  
Chairman