United States Travel and Tourism Advisory Board
March 1, 2012

The Honorable John E. Bryson
Secretary of Commerce
U.S. Department of Commerce
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Bryson:

As chairman and vice-chairman of the United States Travel and Tourism Advisory Board (TTAB) and on behalf of the TTAB, please accept these recommendations to the National Travel and Tourism Strategy established by Executive Order 13597, issued by President Barack Obama on January 19, 2012.

Situation Analysis

With travel to the United States reviving – yet still falling short of the high water mark established in 2001, the opportunity for, and ability to, substantially increase the vitality of tourism and travel both within and to the United States is at its apex. The five key findings emphasized in the following pages clearly formulate the logic of this need from both a short- and long-term goal-oriented perspective.

The first initiative is to **increase demand for travel and tourism to and within the United States.** The U.S. has the opportunity to create up to 500,000 new jobs and generate up to USD 60 billion of additional exports annually by recapturing its lost international travel market share in the next several years. This, in conjunction with a concerted effort and strategic political support of domestic leisure and business travel, will competitively position the U.S. in a global market.

In both domestic and international travel, **a high quality visitor experience** is crucial for growth. Higher levels of satisfaction can be achieved by reducing barriers to travel and reminding those workers in private industry and government who interact with visitors of the importance of creating a positive experience for all visitors. Lowering barriers to travel needs to take place both when visitors are thinking about travel, for example, increasing the efficiency of visa processing and, while traveling by, implementing strategies such as keeping wait times low, all while maintaining the proper high level of security for all travelers.

International and domestic travelers relish in their **access to, and sustainability of, our nation's diverse tourism resources**. Being able to travel in an environmentally friendly manner while having access to the natural splendor and cultural and heritage resources of our country are crucial components of this initiative. These components will work to encourage millions of travelers to acknowledge that travel is worthy of reasonable consumption of resources and reasonable impacts to afford its educational, spiritual, and otherwise redeeming qualities and are, therefore, crucial to both the growth of the travel and tourism economy and the broader economy of the U.S.

Currently, the United States does not have a comprehensive means of accurately measuring and analyzing international tourism and travel. The necessity to have data on international tourism and travel is immense from a national security standpoint as well as an international market decision-making perspective. **Accurately measuring, monitoring, and evaluating** this information can have enormous economic impacts for the United States.

The most integral aspect of the efforts to positively grow the travel and tourism economy in the United States is **constructing a synchronized approach** so that all invested parties are able to effectively and efficiently execute the goals suggested in this document. Without this fundamental ability grounded in a coordinated manner, any efforts, despite being for the betterment of travel and tourism, will have a diminished effect.

Increase Demand for Travel and Tourism To and Within the United States

As it relates to the international traveler, we believe the federal government is best suited to relegate the principal effort of increasing demand from international travelers to Brand USA. Therefore, in this area, the federal government's role should be limited to preserving the funding source to maximize the benefit to the broader economy.

Goal: Support Funding Mechanism for Brand USA

The Travel Promotion Act and the resulting creation of Brand USA represent a no-cost boost to the U.S. economy that will pay dividends for years to come. Compared with domestic travel, international inbound travel presents a more significant growth opportunity. A reclaiming of just half of our lost market share over the past decade would have dramatic effects on exports and unemployment. Current forecasts, based on global economic trends reveal that international inbound spending (exports) will increase its share to 23 percent of total U.S. traveler spending by the end of this decade, compared with 15 percent in 2006 and 17 percent in 2010. As such, funding sources for Brand USA must be preserved.

Short-Term:

1. ***Oppose Congressional attempts to increase fees or redirect funds from ESTA for non-travel programs.*** The Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) fee, including the Brand USA portion, was set at a level that is a very small part of the overall cost of travel to the U.S. This fee covers multiple trips over a two-year period – trips which generate significant ROI for the U.S. economy. Congress should decline to increase the fee in order to increase funding on non-travel programs, as well as ensuring that current fees only go to Brand USA, travel facilitation, or deficit reduction.

Long-Term:

1. ***Work with travel industry and Congressional leaders to secure the ESTA fee as a permanent funding source for Brand USA.***

GOAL: Attract Major International Meetings, Conventions and Events to the United States

The next available Winter Olympiad is the 2022 Olympics, coinciding with the 20 year anniversary of the last time the United States played host to a significant event on the world stage (Salt Lake City 2002). By 2024, it will have been 28 years since the last time the United States played host to a summer games. The next available FIFA World Cup will take place in 2026. The bids for these events will be awarded in the next five years and if the United States wishes to compete to host one of these events, the effort must get under way in short order. We are long overdue to host such an event, and should put forth maximum effort to provide the U.S. an opportunity on the world stage to roll out the welcome mat. In addition to making a concerted effort to host the Olympics or World Cup, the U.S. should also focus on recruiting other global conferences, like the past APEC Summit and other global annual summits and conferences.

Short-Term:

1. ***Make public proclamation and establish accountability for providing federal support to state and local entities seeking to attract major international meetings, conventions, and events to the United States.***

Long-Term:

1. ***Attain goal of attracting at least one major international event to the United States by 2017.***

GOAL: Increase Domestic Leisure Travel through a Federal Communications Campaign and a "Share America" Platform that Advocates and Promotes the Positive Benefits of Travel

Compared to citizens of many other developed countries, Americans by and large take fewer vacation days. While our industriousness is indeed a part of our culture, we are learning through research that our health, personal and family well-being, as well as our productivity, can actually be enhanced by taking time to travel and recharge. Our federal leaders can play a role in encouraging Americans to modify their attitudes toward vacation – which will produce the dual benefit of a healthier and more productive workforce and create the economic activity associated with travel that will help to create jobs.

President Obama raised the travel and tourism industry to its highest levels of awareness with his January 19, 2012 press event at Walt Disney World in Florida where he issued an executive order "Establishing Visa and Foreign Visitor Processing Goals and the Task Force on Travel and Competitiveness" and calling for a National Travel and Tourism Strategy. We need to capitalize on this momentum not only as it relates to international travel facilitation and promotion, but also by promoting all the benefits of travel as a birthright and as the quickest way back to jobs and economic development domestically.

There have been and will continue to be collaboration and cooperation between the public and private sectors as it relates to publicly and privately owned accommodations, assets and infrastructure that are the fabric of what there is to see and do in the United States. If asked, any state or local destination in the country would identify their #1 source market to be Americans traveling throughout America.

We should create a "Share America" advocacy and marketing platform that is destination agnostic and encourages visitation throughout the United States, both leisure and business. There are very valuable roles the federal government has and can continue to play in this space.

Short-Term:

1. ***Encourage the White House and Cabinet Secretaries to highlight the benefits of travel associated with their domain.*** For example, the Secretary of State can hold public events discussing the diplomatic benefits of travel, the Secretary of Education could hold public events discussing the educational benefits of travel and learning about our history. The Secretary of Health and Human Services could hold public events discussing the health and wellness benefits of domestic travel. Moreover, Cabinet Secretaries should ensure that rules and regulations promulgated by their agencies do not negatively impact travel and tourism.
2. ***Set the table for a "Share America" campaign with a Presidential PSA during National Travel and Tourism Week.*** The first full week of May is annually recognized as National Travel and Tourism Week, established when the U.S. Congress passed a joint resolution in 1983 and first celebrated in 1984. In a White House ceremony, President Ronald Reagan signed a Presidential Proclamation urging citizens to observe the week with "the appropriate ceremonies and activities." Historically, localized events are presented in cities, states and travel businesses nationwide to champion the power of travel. This year, the federally designated week, May 12-19, is a perfect opportunity for maintaining the momentum of President Obama's January press event and directives. We should create a Presidential "Share America" PSA that promotes the positive health, educational, and economic benefits of travel and encourages Americans to invite families, friends and relatives to visit and/or travel with them. The PSA would generate a lot of publicity when aired during National Travel and Tourism Week, other major industry days, like Travel Rally Day and beyond. It would also set the table to build a more robust "Share America" platform to market and promote from each year thereafter. Appropriate tourism industry partners would, no doubt, donate studio and production time to produce the spot and we could rally support from the national broadcast community to air it.

Long-Term:

1. ***Recognize Travel and Tourism Week on an annual basis:*** Each year, the Executive Branch and the travel industry should partner to promote National Travel and Tourism Week. Throughout the week, grassroots rallies and events take place across the country to highlight the importance of the travel industry to the U.S. economy, creating an annual opportunity for federal officials to once again highlight the various benefits of travel and note the progress in increasing travel to and within the U.S.
2. ***We have tremendous institutional knowledge and expertise within destination marketing organizations at the state and local levels that could be tapped to create and***

promote a "Share America" campaign. Around the notion that a rising tide raises all ships, we can rally support and build upon this year's presidential PSA and create a more robust "Share America" platform that resonates throughout the country. The state of Florida has created a Share A Little Sunshine platform including a rally video and video invites for that exact purpose. If we're able to integrate the "star power" exemplified in a recent California Ad into a "Share America" platform, we could create a compelling national campaign that advocates and promotes the positive benefits of travel and encourages Americans to invite families, friends and relatives to visit and/or travel with them to all corners of the United States. It could become a very compelling platform with lots of legs and possibilities for extension. In order for this "Share America" platform to have a life beyond this year's initial Presidential PSA, it needs a permanent home. In addition, the long –term growth and success of a platform like this will require funding and is dependent on private sector engagement and ownership. In the absence of public authorization and funding in the nearer long-term, it could be launched in partnership with the U.S. Travel Association's National Council of State Travel Directors and Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI). A longer-term consideration could be with Brand USA. The Corporation for Travel Promotion (d.b.a. Brand USA) is the nation's destination marketing organization (DMO) and its enabling legislative mandate focuses on cooperative marketing and promotion to and within international markets. Once Brand USA has fully launched and demonstrated success in international markets, we should explore expanding the enabling legislation to include cooperative marketing and promotion within domestic markets as the nation's DMO.

GOAL: Increase Domestic Business Travel through a Federal Communications Campaign that Highlights the Benefits of Group Meetings, Trade shows, and Conferences

Business travel connects American firms directly with the global marketplace. For every $1 increase in business travel spending by an organization, company profits increase by $20 on average, according to the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA). Additionally, data proves that large group meetings, trade shows and educational conferences will effectively enhance revenue, increase productivity and support hotels, car rental companies, airlines and other hospitality and transportation sectors.

Short-Term:

1. ***The White House should lead a communications campaign that encourages business travel as a means of growing the U.S. economy.*** This campaign could have a similar premise to the "Meetings Mean Business" initiative conducted by the U.S. Travel Association in 2009 and should focus on encouraging participation in large trade shows, meetings, and conventions that connect U.S. companies with each other and to the global marketplace.

Long-Term:

1. ***Develop policies to encourage business travel.*** Develop federal policies that encourage and incentivize business travel for meetings and conventions, legitimizing this behavior as culturally significant and economically beneficial. Furthermore, oppose measures that unnecessarily restrict the accessibility of meetings and events of this nature.

GOAL: Support Business Travel by Improving Federal Agency Travel Guidelines and Best Practices

While we recognize constraints on the federal budget, travel by federal officials produces benefits for Americans and for the agencies comparable to business travel in general. Similarly, public statements and actions of federal officials can have a negative influence on private sector decision-making and business practices. For example, in 2009, high-level policy officials in Washington, D.C. publicly criticized a meeting held by insurance giant AIG. These remarks fueled public outrage over the AIG meeting and contributed to the cancellation of thousands of business meetings and related events across the country. In the first half of 2009 alone, the U.S. Travel Association estimated that domestic hotels lost $1 billion in revenue from cancelled meetings as a result of this newly-proclaimed "AIG Effect."

Short-Term:

1. ***Protect federal travel opportunities.*** Ensure that language for federal travel guidelines does not discourage federal employees from legitimate travel opportunities.
2. ***Allow federal participation in large meetings and events.*** Encourage federal employee attendance at trade shows, educational conferences and conventions by permitting trade associations and not-for-profit groups to host participants – as long as these events align with agency goals and missions.

Long-Term:

1. ***Improve accuracy of the GSA per diem rate.*** Revise the formula for GSA per diem formula so the rates more accurately reflect real-time prices for meals, transportation and lodging.

Provide a High Quality Visitor Experience for International and Domestic Travelers

At a time when the country is initiating the process of promoting travel to the U.S. in international markets, it seems appropriate and imperative to address any obstacles to a high quality visitor experience, lest we ruin our opportunity to make a positive, lasting impression. We see three areas requiring particular attention: visa process (recognizing that more than 60 percent of foreign visitors do not require visas to enter the U.S.); point of entry; and air travel.

GOAL: Continue to Increase Visa and Immigration Processing Efficiency

Approximately one year ago, the preceding TTAB highlighted the importance of improving visa processing by reducing wait times and reducing the need for interviews. In the time since those recommendations were presented, the Administration made remarkable progress: wait times have been reduced; staff has been added; there is an interview waiver pilot program; and Taiwan may be added to the Visa Waiver Program. In spite of all the excellent progress to date, we still see an opportunity to offer a number of recommendations to build upon this momentum.

Short-Term:

1. ***Establish a maximum wait time of 5 days for visa processing to make it competitive with the European countries.*** Out of the 222 overseas posts that the State Department operates, the wait time for an in-person interview was less than seven days at 164 posts. However, the wait times in key markets such as China and Brazil still remain higher than the wait times for the countries that the U.S. is competing with. As of today, visa waiver

interview wait times are down to 13 days in Brasilia, three days in Recife, 18 days in Rio de Janeiro, and 15 days in São Paulo. In China, wait times are six days in Beijing, four days in Chengdu, five days in Guangzhou, two days in Shanghai, and five days in Shenyang. These wait times, while still higher than our competitors, are a tremendous improvement over prior year – and those responsible deserve credit for their tremendous focus on this effort.

2. ***Rightsize Consular Staffing.*** We commend the State Department for quickly ramping up the staffing of visa processing centers in emerging economies (notably China and Brazil) by more than 100 consular officers in 2012. It is also our understanding there are plans to add 70 new adjudicators in Brazil, and 68 new adjudicators in China over the next several months. According to the State Department, this incremental staffing partially consists of visa officers with limited appointments to meet the surge in demand. Also, we recognize that the State Department has considered the extent to which implementing video conferencing would be useful and has determined that it does not optimize deployment of its staff, would lead to greater processing inefficiencies and is not consistent with security demands. The actual staffing requirement may eventually be reduced if and when recommendations number 5, 6 and 7 are implemented. We applaud the Department's quick response and the immediate addition of incremental staff because of the immediate benefit to new and returning foreign visitors requiring visas and the flexibility of limited term appointments.
3. ***Add visa processing locations each in China and Brazil.*** We commend the State Department for considering options to quickly increase the number of processing locations in the key emerging countries such as Brazil and China. The key criteria for choosing the additional cities should be their size and economic importance. Priority cities in China should probably include: Chongqing, Dalian, Tianjin, and Wuhan.
4. ***Enable the State Department to retain all the visa processing and consular fees to cover the costs of its consular staffing and visa processing activities.*** The rationale for this recommendation and the expected benefits are to enable the State Department to develop its visa processing activities with a focus on full cost recovery, i.e., keep adding officers until demand is met.
5. ***Explore increasing the validity of nonimmigrant visas for Chinese visitors.*** The rationale for this recommendation and its expected benefits are to reduce the workload of the officers as visa renewals represent a significant share (over 20 percent) of the current workload in China and to reduce the burden for Chinese visitors. We note that such a measure has been taken for other countries, including Brazil and India. We recognize that increases in validity are based, insofar as practicable, on reciprocal treatment for American citizens.
6. ***Maximize the benefit of the interview waiver pilot program:*** In January, the Department of State, in consultation with the Department of Homeland Security, established a pilot program to waive in-person interviews for certain categories of low-risk visitors from non-visa waiver countries who are renewing their visas in the same category. The State Department is in fact making it easier for certain categories of qualified applicants to apply for visas, including younger and older Brazilians, and certain, qualified applicants whose visas have expired less than four years ago.
7. ***Restore the ability of the Secretary of Homeland Security to admit countries into the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) with a refusal rate of 10% or less by decoupling the air exit requirement from the VWP.*** Work with key strategic partners to facilitate their entry

into the program. As was experienced with South Korea, including a country in the visa waiver program has a large positive impact on the volume of international travel from that country to the U.S. We recommend that you ask the State Department to nominate additional countries for inclusion in the visa waiver program over the next few years. To this end, The TTAB recommends that you ask Congress to separate the requirement to implement a biometric air exit system from the Visa Waiver Program. Such a change would once again allow the Secretary of Homeland Security to designate new countries as Visa Waiver Program members by restoring the visa refusal rate cutoff of 10%. This action would pave the way for several strategic markets to join the program, facilitating the entry of millions of new visitors to the United States. Major international partners around the world that merit consideration include, in particular, Brazil as well as other key countries from South America, e.g., Argentina and Chile. According to the Department of Homeland Security, there are other factors, beyond the refusal rate issue, which make Brazil, Argentina, and Chile ineligible for VWP membership under current law. For example, they have not signed the required information sharing agreements (PCSC and HSPD-6); the required reporting of lost and stolen passports to INTERPOL is either rare (in the case of Brazil) or non-existent (Argentina, Chile); Brazil does not offer visa-free travel to US passport holders, and charges a combined $160 fee for entry; and only Brazil currently issues biometric passports – another legal requirement for entry into the VWP. While it may take a while before these countries are ready, we recommend that the administration take a proactive approach to moving the process forward, given the economic weight of these countries and that Brazilian citizens do not need a visa to visit the Schengen countries today.

8. ***Communicate visa processing improvements.*** Progress in visa processing wait times, hiring additional staff, and improving or expanding facilities should be communicated in-country. Through collaboration with private sector allies, develop strategies to disseminate positive messages to in-country travelers.

GOAL: Improve Visitor Experience at Ports of Entry

It is critical to make a good first impression on international visitors at our ports of entry.

Short-Term:

1. ***Establish a goal for wait time at international airports, U.S. border points of entry, and cruise terminals of less than 20 minutes and measure the performance against that goal, including a full staffing analysis systemwide.***
2. ***Strengthen the implementation of the Model Ports of Entry program, through an increased staffing flexibility and customer service focus and through a public/private partnership established at each model port.*** Building on a number of current initiatives, steps can be taken to reduce peak wait times and improve the customer service experience at key ports. They include: increasing staffing flexibility of the CBP officers, e.g., enabling the use of flexible working hours and part-time labor to be better able to meet fluctuations in the number of incoming travelers, and enhancing the use of scheduling system and staffing models; enhancing the overall customer service focus, , including a component on the role and importance of the travel and tourism industry to the U.S. economy, e.g., deploying the traveler satisfaction survey developed by the Department of Homeland Security, updating the Explore America International Travelers survey last conducted in 2006, continuing to deploy customer service training, and

directing CBP officers to greet arriving passengers with "Welcome to the United States" or "Welcome home." A promising approach to get this done that would make the arrival experience more welcoming would be to establish a public/private partnership at port level with the local port authority, DHS representatives, airlines and local travel and tourism companies.

3. ***Ramp up the Global Entry Program for U.S. citizens, permanent residents, and trusted international visitors to reach a number of participants sufficient to materially reduce the workload of the Customs and Border Protection officers.*** Ramp up the Global Entry Program for U.S. citizens and permanent residents, e.g., by: continuing to support the program's marketing in the private sector including leveraging the loyalty program of global travel and tourism industry players; encouraging the State Department to provide information about Global Entry to U.S. passport applicants; and by continuing to increase the number of participating airports, e.g., by adding any airport with international arrivals that requests kiosks; ensuring that the Global Entry kiosks are well placed in the arrival halls of participating airports; utilizing the Department of Commerce posts around the world to educate travelers about the program. Expand the Global Entry Program to international visitors, e.g., by: finalizing negotiations with the U.K., France, Germany and Japan to allow reciprocal use of the Global Entry Program; opening the Global Entry Program to holders of long-term, non-immigrant visas such as E, L or O visas; and integrating the APEC Business Travel Card (ABTC) in the program. The ABTC allows travelers designated by governments of the APEC region as key business leaders to receive expedited visa interviews and to use specialized entry lines upon arrival in APEC countries.

Long-Term:

1. ***Create a role for community service partners who focus on welcoming, directing and creating positive first impressions at ports of entry.***
2. ***Establish a public-private partnership with hospitality industry partners to create and operate this community service partner program.*** Reminiscent of the Peace Corps concept, these roles would be filled by individuals seeking an opportunity to serve their country. The program to train and manage the individuals would be coordinated through a joint effort between the Department of Commerce and other appropriate departments and funded/operated by the private sector.

GOAL: Improve Visitor Experience at Airports

Inefficiencies in the aviation security screening process impose a staggering cost on the economy, hampering job creation and economic growth. Recent studies have found that the problem is getting worse. A 2010 survey conducted by Consensus Research found that American travelers would take an additional two to three flights per year if the hassles in security screening were eliminated. These additional flights would add nearly $85 billion in consumer spending and support 900,000 American jobs. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) recently launched a trusted traveler pilot program called Pre√™ that allows elite frequent fliers of certain commercial airlines and members of the U.S. Customs and Boarder Protection trusted traveler program (Global Entry, NEXUS, and SENTRI) to provide personal information to TSA in exchange for access to an expedited screening lane at U.S. airports. Pre√™ is an essential first step in creating a more efficient, secure, and risk-based passenger screening process. However, participation in the program is still extremely limited. While TSA recently announced that it would expand Pre√™ to 28 airports in 2012, Pre√™ passengers only have access to one screening lane at one terminal in each of the participating airports. Moreover, Pre√™ passengers enrolled through a commercial carrier can only utilize the program when flying with their sponsoring air carrier.

Short-Term:

1. ***Provide Alternative Enrollment Opportunities for Pre√™*** TSA should expand participation in Pre√™ by providing more widely accessible opportunities for enrollment. Specifically, TSA should examine partnerships with private sector companies that can enroll travelers using commercial data vetting, in depth background checks, and identity verification services.
2. ***Further increase participation in Pre√™ by marketing Global Entry.*** The U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) should enter into public/private partnerships to market Global Entry as a means of increasing participation in Pre√™.

Long-Term:

1. ***Make the Pre√™ pilot program permanent.***
2. ***Expand the Pre√™ program to all available gates at every major airport.***
3. ***Reduce duplicative TSA screening for international arrivals.*** DHS should enable certain low-risk passengers who are traveling to another domestic airport to forego checked baggage and passenger screening upon landing in the U.S.
4. ***Expand trusted traveler programs to qualified international passengers.*** DHS should expand access to international trusted traveler programs for international passengers entering the U.S., as well as lead efforts to establish a multinational network of streamlined entry procedures for low-risk travelers.
5. ***Implement well-defined risk management processes.*** The Administration should convene an external panel of experts with appropriate security clearances to review TSA aviation security programs, assess the risk each is designed to mitigate and develop metrics for measuring progress to lessen that risk.

Provide access to and sustainability of our nation's diverse tourism resources

GOAL: Enhance Transportation Infrastructure

The federal government can play a meaningful role in making sure that travelers have safe, reliable, and affordable travel options to get to their destination of choice.

Short-Term:

1. ***Ensure that the Federal Aviation Administration is adequately staffed, funded, and equipped to fully implement all NextGen components.*** Recently, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has begun transitioning to a next generation air transportation system (NextGen) designed to increase the efficiency of routing and reduce delays by upgrading the air-traffic control system to a modern, satellite and digital-based infrastructure supported by key policy and process changes that together will increase capacity and reduce delays. The FAA's most recent estimates indicate that by 2018, NextGen will reduce total delays (in flight and on the ground) by about 35 percent compared with business as usual. Estimated delay reductions will provide $23 billion in

cumulative benefits to aircraft operators, the traveling public and the FAA by 2018. In the process, the industry will save about 1.4 billion gallons of aviation fuel, reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 14 million tons. In its March 2011 NextGen Implementation Plan, the FAA identified a handful of key challenges to the system's successful rollout. Key among these challenges is the investment that will need to be made by industry in order to fully utilize NextGen features. In many cases, the industry has already begun to invest in NextGen equipage, but current processes and procedures have fallen behind the technology. To address this problem, in February 2012, the four-year FAA Modernization and Reform Act was signed into law. This long-term authorization bill included $10.9 billion to accelerate the implementation of NextGen, which is a positive step forward. However, consistent with concepts discussed in the Implementation Plan, FAA should also carefully consider providing tax incentives and/or funding to private industry in order to facilitate investment in the technology and equipment needed to fully utilize NextGen.

2. ***Expedite High-Priority Projects within NextGen (NowGen) and Fully Implement the air space redesign program for NYC/Philadelphia region***.
   Sixteen percent of U.S. air traffic passes through the New York/Philadelphia region with four of the airports in the region consistently ranking in the top 10 most delayed airports in the U.S. Thus, implementation of NextGen projects in that region as well as full implementation of the New York/New Jersey/Pennsylvania air space redesign plan will deliver the most significant amount of improvement in the shortest period of time.
3. ***Expedite High-Priority Surface Transportation Projects***. The Department of Transportation (DOT) should identify opportunities to expedite the federal approval process for transportation projects that can increase transportation capacity, decrease congestion, and provide greater access to U.S. destinations within the next year. The DOT could partner with State tourism offices (STOs) and Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) to identify which projects would have the greatest impact on travel businesses.
4. ***Award TIGER Grants for Travel and Tourism Projects.*** The DOT could use the existing TIGER Grants program to award funding for projects that would facilitate or increase travel and tourism – provided that these projects already meet the existing criteria for TIGER Grant awards.

Long-Term:

1. ***Commission research to implement a national plan to alleviate congestion and increase capacity on highways and roads that suffer from high rates of seasonal congestion.***
2. ***Identify the needs of the national passenger rail system.*** Conduct a national study of the needs of the U.S. passenger rail system to identify how service and capacity can be improved to facilitate travel and tourism. A national passenger rail and travel plan should then be created to set out specific action items that will increase travel through the use of passenger rail.
3. ***Adoption of a National Aviation Policy.*** Coordinate federal government policy to enhance global competitiveness of the U.S. aviation industry, with specific emphasis on ports of entry, and recognize aviation's unique contributions to travel and tourism and the U.S. economy both as a creator of jobs and as an exporter of services through the creation of a national policy that promotes the vital role that aviation plays in the United States.

GOAL: Provide Support for Small Business and Workforce Training in Tourism Sector
Small business plays a large role in the visitor experience. Tourism related small businesses employ people with all levels of education, contribute to the health and culture of a community creating a sense of place across America and contribute substantially to the impact of tourism on the U.S. economy. The SBA has delivered millions of loans, loan guarantees, contracts, counseling sessions and other forms of assistance to small businesses. The U.S. Small Business Administration should create a specific focus for the small businesses in the hospitality industry. The Small Business Administration's Loan Programs must be restructured to be more accessible to the hospitality and travel industry – referred to hereafter as the Tourism sector.

Additionally, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) authorizes $10 billion annually for job training and employment services. Opportunities exist to partner with local workforce development offices to create training curriculum and internship opportunities to help develop and train the next generation of tourism and hospitality leaders.

<u>Short-term:</u>

1. ***Designate a month, perhaps in May to coincide with National Tourism Week, to market the SBA programs specifically to small businesses in the Tourism sector.***
2. ***Schedule and administer information, training and counseling sessions at locations and times convenient for the Tourism sector.***
3. ***Support and help to communicate changes in both the Small Loan Advantage and Community Advantage loans currently being explored and then instituted by SBA.*** These loans are geared to smaller of small business now but specific adjustments to fit the Tourism sector are in the works.
4. ***Initiate a dialogue with the Department of Labor to identify opportunities to utilize current job training and employment services to assist in helping build curriculum and training programs for travel industry, including consideration of a pilot program.***
5. ***Support and engage the private sector through the TTAB with current SBA efforts to improve existing programs, with a focus on access to capital.*** These programs would increase small business access to capital, access to federal contracts, access to counseling and access to private sector supply chains.

<u>Long Term</u>

1. ***In the SBA 504 loan program, financing contributions could be augmented to allow for more that 50% of eligible costs to come from federal sources for loans in the Tourism sector.***
2. ***Small businesses in the Tourism sector should be allowed to use its 504 proceeds for inventory and working capital, similar to the SBA 7(a) and microloan program.***
3. ***The current maximum loan amount in the SBAs Microloan program is $50,000.*** The Tourism sector would benefit from an increase in that maximum loan amount.
4. ***Create strategic partnerships with colleges and universities, workforce training programs and job re-training programs to create an education track to build essential skills for jobs in the tourism industry.***
5. ***Develop the next generation of travel leaders.*** Support tourism education and workforce development services to increase the competitiveness of the U.S. in the global marketplace, increase the value of the visitor experience, and facilitate travel throughout the country, regions and rural communities. Potential partners in this effort including:

DMAI, Partners in Tourism, universities, community colleges, the U.S. Travel Association, and other trade associations focusing on tourism education.

GOAL: Provide Support for Secondary Markets

Major cities, large National Parks and family attractions in the United States are already a draw for international leisure and business travelers. Yet, there are an endless number of adjacent lesser known attractions, public lands, national parks, historic sites, cultural arts and cultural activities, cities, villages, towns and communities offering cultural experiences that are appealing to travelers seeking more intimate and often authentic experiences. The Department of Interior website offers an abundance of well thought out excursions for the tourist – domestic or international. These varied "uniquely American" destinations and experiences can stimulate expanded U.S. travel, resulting in more domestic jobs and increased commerce for local residents and businesses such as restaurants, specialty retail stores, and small lodging facilities as well as the parks, historic sites and public lands.

Short-Term:

1. ***Support regional and rural marketing and development efforts through increasing cooperative grants.*** An MDCP award establishes a partnership between ITA and non-profit industry groups such as destination marketing organizations and trade associations. Increase investment in the Department of Commerce Market Development Cooperator Program (MDCP) to support tourism promotion and projects that enhance the global competitiveness of U.S. industries by establishing a travel and tourism sector pilot program, identifying two million dollars to be awarded as grants to initiatives that reach into secondary markets. These initiatives should be ones that bring multiple small businesses together to create jobs and increase exports while receiving training, gaining knowledge and supporting one another.

Long-Term:

1. ***Develop travel and tourism through technology.*** Support investments to increase the availability of broadband, particularly into rural communities and remote areas including public lands to attract more visitors, provide better interpretation and facilitate movement. This effort, along with the Share America program and its use of the internet and social media marketing, would support the element of the Executive Order that calls for a cohesive web site that includes the visitor experiences in our secondary markets by increasing use of that web site. Further, all of these efforts generally address the issue of marketing for the Department of Interior and the many assets it, along with other agencies, represent.

GOAL: Embrace an Energy Policy that Supports Stability and Availability of Transportation Energy Needs that Power Travelers to Destinations

Access to stable and affordable energy supplies is critical to the health of the travel and tourism industry and to the millions of people it serves. From airlines, cruise lines, rental car companies, and other transportation-related service providers, to hotels, attractions, parks, and restaurants, the stable supply of energy at a predictable price is essentially the definition of energy security. Unfortunately, high and volatile oil prices experienced in recent years have meant that substantial portions of our industry—and the country as a whole—do not have energy security today.

For its part, the travel and tourism industry is taking important steps toward increasing energy security through, among other things, leading-edge investments in the commercialization of advanced biofuels and other forms of renewable energy, as well as the deployment of plug-in electric vehicles. These actions alone, however, will not achieve comprehensive improvements in energy security. Major policy support from the federal government is a critical necessity. In the near term, public policy should emphasize maximum practical efficiency in the existing transportation system. At the same time, maximizing the safe and environmentally-responsible production of domestic oil resources can mitigate the exposure of the U.S. trade balance to rising oil prices. Over the long term, public policy should appropriately incentivize commercialization of alternative transportation technologies and minimize barriers to entry for alternative liquid fuels.

Short-Term:

1. ***Reform the federal transportation infrastructure funding process, using oil consumption metrics to prioritize projects.*** More than 70 percent of U.S. oil consumption occurs in the transportation sector. Despite decades of investment in alternative fuels, the sector as a whole still depends on oil for 94 percent of its delivered energy. Moreover, because of an aging and inadequate infrastructure, billions of gallons of fuel are wasted due to congestion and delays each year. Transportation policy should advance energy security goals along with economic growth. Investment in infrastructure and policies to reduce congestion are clearly needed. A national oil savings performance metric would establish an important policy link between energy use and the transportation system. Large projects, especially new capacity projects, should be required to assess oil consumption impacts. By including the costs of oil consumption—and by extension, oil dependence and its negative consequences—into cost-benefit analyses, evaluations of potential projects will more accurately embody the overall impact of oil use. At the end of March 2012, the current extension of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) will expire. As policymakers consider the next steps for a new transportation funding bill or further extensions, it is critical to ensure that future federally-supported transportation infrastructure projects prioritize oil savings and energy security.
2. ***Support Increased Domestic Production of Oil.*** Finally, an additional short-term tool available to the United States is increased domestic oil production. The U.S. oil industry experienced promising gains in production from 2009 through 2011, and many mainstream forecasts expect the upward trend to endure for at least a decade. These gains have come about as a result of increased onshore production from shale oil basins in North Dakota and Texas, in addition to strong production from the federal Gulf of Mexico (particularly before the Deepwater Horizon incident).

   Despite these gains, the U.S. still imports approximately half of its net oil needs, and rising oil prices have meant the cost of those imports is increasing to record levels. Today, oil typically accounts for more than half of our entire national trade deficit, weakening our economy and putting our nation's well-being in the hands of unstable nations that are hostile to American interests.

The United States can and should produce more oil domestically over the long term, particularly by leveraging federal lands currently unavailable to the industry. Moving forward with development of domestic resources in promising but sensitive regions will require a partnership between the public and private sector as well as a thoughtful and more nuanced approach by regulator and industry alike. In those areas where development moves forward, production technology and processes should adhere to world-class safety and environmental standards. Maintaining a minimal footprint should be a priority for oil and gas producers in frontier areas, and regulations should require operators to leverage technology that improves environmental performance.

The first step toward increased offshore oil production and enhanced U.S. energy security must be reform of the U.S. regulatory approach for offshore energy production. Before new offshore areas can be opened, it will be critical that local populations – and equally importantly, national lawmakers – have increased confidence in industry safety. The current rules-based approach to regulating oil and gas production may no longer be suitable given the complex nature of the offshore industry. The current system encourages operators to comply with the letter of the law and no more, placing the onus on the regulator to dictate best available technology.

Long-Term:

1. ***Implement a comprehensive program designed to rapidly commercialize vehicles that derive power from the electric grid.*** Over the long-term, the United States must transition away from oil in the transportation sector. Alternative drive train technologies, such as plug-in electric vehicles and hydrogen fuel cells, offer a fundamental break from the volatility of oil that will be particularly effective for light-duty vehicles. Non-petroleum-based liquid fuels, such as advanced biofuels that do not compete with food supplies; will provide alternatives to oil with reduced emissions for aviation and trucking. While improvements in the efficiency of internal combustion engine vehicles will be critical for reducing the petroleum intensity of the U.S. economy in the near term, the United States should transition to a system that breaks away from petroleum over the medium and long term. In particular, plug-in electric vehicles (PEVs) that derive motive power from grid-generated electricity have received considerable attention and policy support in recent years. Electricity is generated from a diverse portfolio of largely domestic fuels and, unlike petroleum prices, electricity prices are highly stable. Finally, much of the necessary infrastructure required to electrify transport is already in place, including ample power generation capacity. In his 2011 State of the Union address, President Obama set a goal of getting 1 million plug-in vehicles on U.S. roads by 2015. To overcome the barriers PEVs face to widespread adoption, policymakers should initiate an ambitious competitive program managed by the Department of Energy to support mass deployment of PEVs in targeted communities. Communities should be selected based on an application process that emphasizes robust public-private partnerships and progressive regulatory approaches to dealing with PEVs. The goal of the deployment community approach should be to drive dense concentrations of PEVs into the communities best prepared to support them. This approach will (1) demonstrate the proof of concept for consumers, (2) facilitate learning by doing, and (3) maximize investment payoff.
2. ***Facilitate the commercialization of the next generation of non-petroleum, biomass-derived liquid fuels that are environmentally beneficial and do not compete with food***

supplies. Advanced biofuels could play a key role in offsetting oil consumption in the shipping and aviation industries in the future. Oil consumption by medium- and heavy-duty freight trucks and the aviation industry together account for one-fifth of U.S. oil demand—approximately 4 million barrels per day. In both cases, advanced biofuels could provide a readily available substitute for diesel fuel. The aviation industry and would-be alternative jet-fuel suppliers are on the cusp of creating a viable alternative jet-fuel industry. The federal government, particularly the military, has played a helpful role in moving forward. In April 2011, for example, the Departments of Energy and Agriculture signed a $500 million memorandum of understanding with the Navy to "support the construction or retrofit of multiple domestic commercial or pre-commercial scale drop-in biofuels plants and refineries." Multiple U.S. airlines are also working with the Defense Logistics Agency on a similar effort, the Strategic Alliance for Alternative Aviation Fuels. In spite of important steps like these and others, there are clearly obstacles to widespread commercialization of these fuels. Government support is needed in the near term to provide financial bridging and other tools necessary to reach a tipping point.

3. ***Reform the existing institutions and processes governing federal R&D spending.*** From a $6.9 billion (real 2005 dollars) peak in 1978, Department of Energy spending on energy technology research, development, and deployment (RD&D) fell to $2.7 billion in 2008. Meanwhile, investments in energy RD&D by U.S. companies fell by 50 percent between 1991 and 2003. Stimulus spending significantly increased 2009 spending levels, but fell back in 2010 and only slightly increased over the next two years. The total budget request for DOE's Office of Science for 2013 is approximately $5 billion which is still far behind 2009 levels. Temporary, deployment-focused increases from the Recovery Act must be extended and accompanied by significant structural and programmatic reforms using a goal-oriented approach within relevant federal agencies, national laboratories, universities, and the private sector. Spending on RD&D today will provide critical support for commercializing alternatives to petroleum in the future. The current federal energy R&D process is inefficient and lacks a degree of central coordination. Greater accountability and a moratorium on Congressional earmarking of niche projects would go a long way toward improving overall outcomes. Additional streamlining could be achieved in the executive branch by eliminating the overlap among the myriad of federal agencies that carry out energy-related R&D. Energy research programs at the Departments of Agriculture, Interior, Transportation, Health and Human Services and the EPA could be consolidated within the DOE. Alternatively, R&D budget development could be coordinated under the stewardship of a National Energy Council installed at the White House. Under this approach, individual agencies would continue to perform energy R&D, but categories and scopes would be coordinated to eliminate redundancy and achieve synergies.
4. ***Establish new institutions to provide funding for early-stage R&D and for later-stage deployment and commercialization.*** Congress should establish an Energy Security Trust Fund to fund early-stage energy-related R&D at levels significantly higher than current levels of funding. Further, the trust fund should be funded directly by statute without requiring appropriated funds. Bypassing appropriations will not only help insulate the funds from the earmarking process, it will also ensure a reliable stream of funds that can be used to fulfill multi-year commitments to R&D programs. The trust fund should supplement, and not replace, those R&D funds that are currently distributed through the program offices in order to avoid a political dispute over the effectiveness of those

departments. The federal government should establish an Energy Technology Authority (ETA) of the United States as a market-driven source of private financing and public-private partnering for the most promising energy technology innovations. One successful model for such an institution would be a quasi-governmental investment organization similar to the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) and U.S. Export-Import Bank (EXIM). The ETA would possess the full backing of the United States government, but would be managed and organized like a private corporation. After an initial capitalization, the corporation would be self-sustaining, generating revenue through projects, interest, and fees.

GOAL: Boost Visitation to National Parks and Federal Lands with a Particular Focus on Underserved or Underutilized Destinations.

National Parks and the recreational use of federal lands are invaluable assets to the travel industry. They attract millions of international visitors, sustain small and rural travel communities, and facilitate an environmentally conscious society. However, funding for National Parks and the recreational use of federal land has diminished in recent years – leading to underutilization, inadequate maintenance, and insufficient marketing. The National Park Service recently released findings of a comprehensive survey examining traveler habits and attitudes towards visiting National Parks. The survey discovered that almost half of all American adults (47 percent) have visited a National Park in the last two years. However, the survey also found that the main deterrent to park visitation is poor marketing and lack of traveler information about park services. These findings are reinforced by the fact that campgrounds in National Parks have lower overall occupancy rates and more frequent periods of low occupancy than privately held campgrounds outside of National Parks. A main reason for this discrepancy in occupancy rates is that, while reservations for National Park campgrounds can be made via the internet or telephone, they are not promoted or marketed like privately operated campgrounds.

Short-Term:

1. ***Build Federal, State, Local and Private Sector Partnerships***. Use the "Share America" platform to develop and implement short term cooperative programs with STOs, regional and local DMOs, gateway communities and other tourism and recreation businesses, such as RV and private campground industries, to market and promote use and enjoyment of the Federal lands.
2. ***Maintain current federal funding for the National Scenic Byways (NSB) Program*** under the U.S. Department of Transportation, as it provides valuable tourism marketing dollars for DMOs in many of America's rural areas. There are 150 such byways in 46 states.
3. ***Enhance America the Beautiful Pass and Rec.Gov.*** Use the "Share America" platform to enhance implementation of the America the Beautiful Pass to increase visitation, working with STOs, regional and local DMOs, gateways and private businesses to insure its current structure (timing, cost, etc.) meets the needs of consumers, to sell passes and connect visitors with online information about availability and accessibility of the lands. Additionally, this effort should insure www.recreation.gov includes the most current and comprehensive data on recreation sites managed by Federal agencies and make the information portable to all public and private sector sites (as allowable by law) as a database.

Long-Term:

1. ***Clarify Agency Marketing Authority.*** Clarification is needed at the highest administrative levels, to establish that Federal land agencies are encouraged within current budget authority to engage in marketing and promotion of the Federal lands. Current agency restrictions on the use of appropriated dollars for advertising should be reviewed.
2. ***Market Federal Lands with Innovative Revenue Streams.*** Ask the Secretary to engage the Commerce Department to review, support and authorize efforts for Federal lands agencies to use alternative, non-appropriated revenue sources for funding marketing and promotion, such as some combination of a percentage of concession franchise fees not retained locally, entrance fees (only from the 20% of fee revenue that is not retained by individual parks) and a new surcharge on sales of the America the Beautiful Pass.
3. ***Provide More Opportunities for Filming at the National Parks.*** Ask the Secretary to engage the Commerce Department to review and, if appropriate, support efforts to reform current restrictive NPS policies regarding filming in the national parks to facilitate responsible, environmentally sensitive commercial filming to proceed economically and efficiently, especially in underutilized federal lands.
4. ***Ease Federal Regulations of Private Investment and the Operation of Recreational Facilities on Federal Lands.*** Ask the Secretary to engage the Commerce Department to review and, if appropriate, support efforts to revise current authorities for businesses to invest in meeting appropriate visitor needs on federal lands. At present, businesses are often subject to inconsistent agency-to-agency criteria and restrictive conditions, including limits on lengths of contract terms and imposition of language and definitions very different from typical industry terms and practices, including pricing, agreements with the tourism industry on groups and more. A new strategy for investment in lodging, campgrounds, food services and other visitor facilities with maximum consistency across all federal lands should be developed.

Conduct Research, Monitor and Evaluate Results

GOAL: Develop Robust Measurements of International Visitation to the U.S.
As the largest service export of the United States, it is critical that both the public and private sectors understand the makeup of international visitors. Marketing strategies, investment plans, and competitiveness tracking require more information than is currently available. In particular, a timely and comprehensive dataset on our visitors' origin, profile, activities, states and cities visited, length of stay, and spending patterns will be integral to our success.

Short-Term:

1. ***Maintain funding for the Survey of International Air Travelers (SIAT).*** The fiscal year 2013 budget omits funding for the SIAT. It is critical to preserve funding for this function as it forms the basis of marketing activities for many entities in the public and private sector.
2. ***Utilize secondary data, including travel industry data, government data, credit card data and aviation data as inputs to a model for estimating required metrics.***

3. ***Encourage government to collaborate with the travel and tourism industry to coordinate data collection.***

Long-Term:

1. ***Develop survey mechanisms in conjunction with ESTA and/or DiscoverAmerica.com for additional detail.***
2. ***Expand the SIAT to increase the value of information collected.*** The Commerce Department should coordinate with Brand USA and the private sector to expand the number of questions on the survey and expand the distribution of the survey to create a more accurate picture of the travel habits of international visitors.

GOAL: Develop a single source for high frequency and competitive metrics
In order to maximize the benefits of available research, a single resource should be developed for tourism industry stakeholders to access the latest available information across key visitor markets.

Short-Term:

1. ***Coordinate with private sector to gather third party data and research on global travel patterns, economic trends, and US visitor metrics for delivery on a single platform in a common language of measurement.***

Long-Term:

1. ***Monetize this resource through paid access to certain levels of information.***

Construct a Synchronized Approach to Travel and Tourism

GOAL: Invigorate the Tourism Policy Council
The Tourism Policy Council (TPC) has been identified as the central body within the Federal government system of councils and committees that convenes all policy-making departments with regard to travel and tourism issues in the United States and internationally. As secretariat, the Office of Travel and Tourism Industries plays a pivotal role on this council and is in a position to bring cogent private sector issues before this group.

Short-Term:

1. ***Give the Tourism Policy Council (TPC) full acknowledgment, authority and cooperation to act in the capacity for which it is designed.*** This critical juncture when the first Tourism Strategy is being created by the Administration is an ideal time for the TPC to come into its fullest expression. The TPC brings Cabinet officials together on tourism issues at the highest levels and is connected to tourism in ways that provide a substantial reach into the industry. Thus, it is perfectly poised to act broadly and deeply to better the tourism industry, its economic impact and the success of the U.S. Strategy on Travel and Tourism.

Long-Term:

1. ***The TPC could authorize a review of the mission and the activities of the various departments and organizations engaged in the Tourism Strategy, with an eye toward***

identifying opportunities to avoid duplication of effort and opportunities to win through collaboration. Such a review might most efficiently be conducted by the Office of Travel and Tourism Industries (OTTI), with a near-term objective of compiling a current list of travel industry stakeholders in both the public and private sectors and an inventory of the initiatives each is undertaking, as well as how they relate to the departments of the federal government.

2. ***Longer term, we recommend that TPC convene a summit of executives from those organizations identified as most strategic, private sector stakeholders and appropriate government representatives with a goal of greater support of common goals, efficiencies and success.***

GOAL: Improve the Capabilities of the Federal Government to Protect Travel Industry Jobs and Speed Economic Recovery Following a Major Disaster.

History shows that when natural or manmade disasters strike, the travel industry often experiences significant economic losses. Moreover, according to groundbreaking research by Oxford Economics, the damages experienced by the travel industry are often predictable, long-lasting and far beyond the areas of immediate physical impact. It is also true that travelers can serve as the leading edge of economic recovery. Attracting travelers to an area that has experienced a crisis is one of the most effective means of rapidly spreading new dollars throughout an economy. In fact, maintaining visitation to a given area can prevent the full force of economic damage that a disaster is capable of inflicting.

Short-Term:

1. ***Support the passage of the RESTORE Act to tourism recovery in the Gulf Coast states.*** Congress should immediately pass and the President should quickly sign the RESTORE Act, which will facilitate tourism recovery in the Gulf Coast states. The bill directs a majority of federal fines paid by responsible parties of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill to be used for environmental cleanup, restoration, and tourism development projects in Gulf Coast states.
2. ***Adopt the UNWTO Crisis Communications Toolkit as the Official U.S. crisis communications and management program.***
3. ***Create a permanent crisis management team within the Tourism Policy Council that includes the private sector.*** With the exception of TTAB, the present structure of governmental committees and councils, as they relate to the travel and tourism industry and the dissemination of information influencing travelers, omits participation by private sector stakeholders. Therefore, we recommend a permanent crisis management team be developed that includes an official private sector advisory capacity. The formation of this team would enable the United States to universally and more immediately respond to and develop communications strategies for crisis situations.
4. ***Determine acceptable measurement methodology program to gauge ill-effects on travel and tourism industry.***

Long-Term:

1. ***Create a standing "Open for Business Grant Program" that provides funds to destination marketing organizations (DMOs) in disaster-impacted regions.*** The grants should be used to design and execute information-based marketing campaigns aimed at

increasing traveler levels, which will generate economic activity and quicken the pace of recovery.

In closing, we are honored to be a part of this tremendous opportunity to change the lives of so many. Workers that will advance or enter the travel and tourism industry. Companies that will grow and improve and prosper. Americans that will see parts of their country they only dreamed about. International travelers that will grow in love respect of the United States. We thank the Secretary and the President for supplying our industry with this opportunity.

We believe that the Travel and Tourism Advisory Board (TTAB) is conceptually designed to be of great assistance to the Secretary and the Department of Commerce, and through Commerce the other federal agencies, by bringing intellectual, creative and financial resources to the table in solving problems, creating partnerships and moving the strategy forward. We further believe that this current TTAB board, both due to work done by the previous board and the diversity and depth of the industry that the Secretary has brought together as appointees, is poised particularly well to do that work expeditiously and effectively. With the recommendations presented here in this document, we offer our pledge to bring those resources forward as a board in a strong commitment to and support of the forthcoming strategy.

Respectfully,

TODD DAVIDSON

Todd Davidson
Chair

Sam Gilliland
Vice-Chair