June 5, 2017

The Honorable Greg Walden  
Chairman, House Energy and Commerce Committee  
2185 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC  20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone  
Ranking Member, House Energy and Commerce Committee  
237 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC  20515

The Honorable Diane Black  
Chairwoman, House Budget Committee  
1131 Longworth House Office Building, Room H-314  
Washington, DC  20515

The Honorable John Yarmuth  
Ranking Member, House Budget Committee  
131 Cannon House Office Building, Room H-314  
Washington, DC  20515

The Honorable Rodney P. Frelinghuysen  
Chairman, House Appropriations Committee  
H-305, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, DC  20515

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey  
Ranking Member, House Appropriations Committee  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC  20515

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

On behalf of the 15 million Americans whose jobs depend on a vibrant travel sector, we are writing in opposition to a provision in the President’s fiscal year 2018 budget proposal to eliminate funding for Brand USA.

Brand USA was created by statute in 2010 to help address the post-9/11 decade of declining U.S. share in the booming global travel market, costing the U.S. economy nearly a half-million travel-related jobs. The United States was one of the few developed countries in the world without a national destination marketing organization. The Travel Promotion Act, reauthorized through 2020 with large bipartisan congressional majorities, sought to restore our leading position in the highly competitive worldwide travel marketplace.

By attracting international visitors, Brand USA enhances economic growth in all 50 states and territories, spurs job creation and advances public diplomacy – all at no expense to American taxpayers. Its activities are supported by private sector contributions and matched by a $10 fee paid by international visitors from Visa Waiver Program nations.

Business and leisure travelers from abroad are critical to local economies across our nation. To help attract these visitors, Brand USA has forged working relationships with hundreds of communities – large and small, urban and rural – and leveraged their varied promotional efforts into a coherent, cost-effective and productive national marketing campaign.

According to Oxford Economics, over the last four years Brand USA has attracted 4.3 million incremental visitors; $13.6 billion in related spending; and $29.5 billion in total economic impact.
including nearly $3.9 billion in federal, state and local taxes. This has supported 50,900 incremental jobs annually and overall yielded an astonishing 27-to-1 return on investment.

In addition to marketing the U.S. as a destination, Brand USA is charged with communicating our evolving visa and entry policies, by addressing confusion about our security protocols that can discourage potential visitors from choosing U.S. destinations. Brand USA helps ensure they get accurate explanations of our changing rules – and ultimately return home to spread the word about America’s attractions and hospitality, generating goodwill for years to come.

In short, Brand USA is an extraordinarily successful public-private partnership – the type of joint initiative advocated by the Trump administration. Its work has been particularly beneficial for small destinations with limited marketing resources that can leverage Brand USA’s coordinated outreach to market their brands in the global marketplace.

As Congress deliberates on next year’s federal budget, we urge you to examine closely the uniformly positive impact of Brand USA’s work that adds so much value to America’s economy without cost to America’s taxpayers. With so much at stake, never has the crucial work of Brand USA been more important in our communities.

Sincerely,

**Cities & States**

Alabama Tourism Department  
Albany County Tourism Board  
American Samoa Visitors Bureau  
Arizona Office of Tourism  
Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism  
Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Atlantic City Convention & Visitors Authority  
Beaumont Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Beverly Hills Conference & Visitors Bureau  
CalTravel  
Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce/Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Casper Area Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Central Oregon Visitors Association  
Charleston Area Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Charlotte Regional Visitor Authority  
Choose Chicago  
Cincinnati USA Regional Tourism Network  
Citrus Co. Visitor and Conventions Bureau  
Colorado Springs Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Colorado Tourism Office  
Destination DC  
Destination Gettysburg  
Destination Irvine  
Discover Lancaster  
Durham Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Dutchess County Tourism  
Experience Columbia SC  
Experience Columbus  
Experience Kissimmee  
Fort Worth Convention & Visitors Bureau  
FRISCO Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Georgia Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus  
Glacier County Regional Tourism Commission  
Great Lakes Bay Regional Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau
Greater Des Moines Convention & Visitors Bureau
Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention & Visitors Bureau
Greater Ontario California Convention & Visitors Bureau
Greater Palm Springs Convention & Visitors Bureau
Greater Portsmouth (NH) Chamber of Commerce
Greater Raleigh Convention & Visitors Bureau
Gulf Shores & Orange Beach Tourism
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Los Angeles Tourism and Convention Board
Louisiana Travel Promotion Association
Louisiana's Cajun Bayou Tourism
Louisville Convention & Visitors Bureau
Louisiana Association of Convention & Visitor Bureaus
Louisiana Office of Tourism
Mammoth Lakes Tourism
Memphis Convention & Visitors Bureau
Minneapolis Northwest Tourism
Monroe-West Monroe Convention & Visitors Bureau
Montgomery County Convention & Visitors Bureau
Montgomery County Hospitality Association
Mt Hood Territory
Naples, Marco Island, Everglades Convention & Visitors Bureau
Nashville Convention & Visitors Corp.
Nebraska Tourism Commission
Nevada Commission on Tourism
New Orleans Convention & Visitors Bureau
New Smyrna Beach Area Visitors Bureau
North Dakota Department of Commerce
NYC & Company, Inc.
Oklahoma City Convention & Visitors Bureau
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Orange County Visitors Association
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Park City Chamber/Convention & Visitors Bureau
Pasadena Convention & Visitors Bureau
Philadelphia Convention & Visitors Bureau
Plymouth County Convention & Visitors Bureau
Providence Warwick Convention & Visitors Bureau
Rancho Cordova Travel & Tourism
Richmond Region Tourism
San Diego Tourism Authority
San Francisco Travel
San Mateo County Convention and Visitors Bureau
Santa Monica Convention & Visitors Bureau
Sheridan Travel & Tourism
Shreveport-Bossier Convention & Tourist Bureau
Sioux Falls Convention & Visitors Bureau
Snohomish County Tourism Bureau
Sonoma County Tourism
South Carolina Parks, Recreation & Tourism
South Dakota Department of Tourism
Southeast Tourism Society
St. Tammany Parish Tourist and Convention Commission
Tennessee Department of Tourist Development
Texas Travel Industry Association
The Greater MIAMI Convention & Visitors Bureau
The Oklahoma City Convention and Visitors Bureau
The Peachtree City Convention and Visitors Bureau
Travel Michigan, MI Economic Development Corp.
Travel Oregon
Travel Portland
Tuolumne County Visitors Bureau
Visit Anaheim
Visit Anchorage
Visit Baltimore
Visit Buffalo Niagara
Visit Charlotte
VISIT DENVER
Visit Duluth
Visit Fairfax
Visit Frederick
Visit Huntington Beach
Visit Jacksonville
Visit Lafayette-West Lafayette
Visit Laguna Beach
Visit Mesa
Visit Myrtle Beach
Visit NC
Visit Oakland
Visit Oceanside Conference & Visitors Bureau
Visit Panama City Beach
Visit Pensacola
VISIT PHILADELPHIA
Visit Phoenix
Visit Rapid City
Visit Redondo Beach
Visit Santa Barbara
Visit Santa Cruz County
Visit Sarasota
Visit Seattle
Visit SLO CAL
Visit St. Pete/Clearwater
Visit Tampa Bay
Visit Temecula Valley
Visit Tri-Valley
Visit Tucson
Visit Vallejo
Visit Vancouver USA
Visit WeHo
Visit Wichita
VisitDallas
VisitLEX
VisitPITTSBURGH
Wild, Wonderful West Virginia
Wyoming Office of Tourism

Business Leaders

A Chateau on the Bayou Bed & Breakfast
ADARA
Adventure Photo Tours, Inc.
Alaska Latin Tours, LLC
Alaska Railroad
ALON Marketing Group
Amadeo Travel Solutions
AMC Institute
American Alliance of Museums
American Executive International Corporation
American Gaming Association
American Hotel & Lodging Association
American Resort Development Association (ARDA)
American Society of Association Executives
American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA)
Aquarium of the Bay
American Tours International (ATT)
Backwards Distilling Company
Bayou Belle Plantation Home
Best Western Clocktower Inn Billings
Best Western Plus/Dragon Gate Inn/Royal Pagoda Motel
Best Western Pony Soldier Inn & Suites
B-FOR International
Bike and Roll DC
Bike and Roll NYC
Broadway Inbound
Broadway Life: Student Group Travel
Business Travel Coalition
Caesars Entertainment
Café Beignet
California Association of Boutique & Breakfast Inns
California Hotel & Lodging Association
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California Ski Industry Association
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Global Hospitality Marketing Link
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Grand Teton Lodge Company
Gray Line New Orleans
Greater Orlando Aviation Authority
HAT Tourism Marketing
HelmsBriscoe
Hilton Los Angeles Airport
Hilton Worldwide
Hornblower Cruises & Events
Hospitality Management Services
Host Hotels & Resorts
Hostelling International USA
Hotel Beacon NYC
Hotel Council of San Francisco
Hotel Whitcomb
Houston First Corp.
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National Tour Association
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New World Travel
Northstar Travel Group, LLC
Palm Springs Aerial Tramway
Papillon Group
Paradise Cove Luau
Paramount Hospitality Management
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Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA)
Ramkota Hotel and Conference Center
Randy A. Garfield & Advisors LLC.
Real Racine
Rezdy
Ripley's Believe It or Not! Times Square
Roaring Camp Railroad
Rock Springs Holiday Inn, Express and Quality Inn
Rocky Mountain Holiday Tours, LLC.
Rocky Mountain International
Sabre
San Francisco Electric Tour Company
San Francisco Travel Media Relations
SeaWorld Parks and Entertainment
Sirata Beach Resort
Smart Destinations, Inc.
Society for Incentive Travel Excellence (SITE)
South Coast Plaza
STR, Inc.
SYTA and SYTA Youth Foundation
Temple University-School of Sport, Tourism and Hospitality Management
The Best Hotels & Ranches in the West
The Hiltons of Union Square
The Midtown Hotel
The Shops Buckhead Atlanta/River Oaks District Houston
The Travel Technology Association
Tour America, LLC.
Tourism Economics
Transdev On Demand, Inc.
TRAVALCO
Travel Lane County
Travel Tech
Trek America Travel Ltd
Twin America LLC d/b/a Gray Line/CitySightseeing New York
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
U.S. Travel Association
U.S. Travel Association Experience Network
UnCruise Adventures
Unique New England
United States Tour Operators Association
Urban AdvenTours
USA Luxury Shopping Consortium/Anderson Retail Tourism Marketing
Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort
Wellington Hotel
Wendoming Food Service d/b/a Wendy's
Where New Orleans
Xanterra Parks & Resorts
Yankee Leisure Group
Young Strategies, Inc.
Zimple Rentals, Inc.
June 5, 2017

The Honorable John Thune
Chairman, Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee
511 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC  20510

The Honorable Bill Nelson
Ranking Member, Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee
716 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC  20510

The Honorable Mike Enzi
Chairman, Senate Budget Committee
379A- Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC  20510

The Honorable Bernard Sanders
Ranking Member, Senate Budget Committee
332 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC  20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman, Senate Appropriations Committee
113 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC  20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman, Senate Appropriations Committee
437 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC  20510

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- Choose Chicago
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- Destination DC
- Destination Gettysburg
- Destination Irvine
- Discover Lancaster
- Durham Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Dutchess County Tourism
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