

June 1, 2017

The Honorable Paul Ryan Speaker U.S. House of Representatives Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi Democratic Leader U.S. House of Representatives Washington, D.C. 20515 The Honorable Mitch McConnell Majority Leader U.S. Senate Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer Democratic Leader U.S. Senate Washington, D.C. 20510

CC: Members of Congress

Dear Speaker Ryan, Leader McConnell, Leader Pelosi, and Leader Schumer:

When the Senate and House of Representatives voted to create Brand USA in 2010, we in the hotel industry – and broader travel and tourism community – believed it would become a valuable new tool in attracting foreign visitors to the United States. Yet, we could never have imagined how effective Brand USA would be. By creating and implementing a state-of-the-art marketing platform, Brand USA has become a force in the global travel marketplace, driving millions of new tourists to the United States.

Therefore, we were disappointed and alarmed to see that the President's budget proposed an elimination of Brand USA, and we ask Congress to reject this plan.

Travel and tourism is a critical driver of the U.S. economy, generating \$2.3 trillion in economic output and responsible for one in nine American jobs. Brand USA, a public-private partnership, has been a catalyst responsible for driving more than 4.3 million incremental international visitors to the U.S. over the past 4 years and supporting tens of thousands of American jobs - jobs that can only be filled here in the United States.

Brand USA's activities have also resulted in nearly \$30 billion in total economic impact, and contributed nearly \$4 billion in federal, state and local taxes. Federal funding is provided not through taxpayer dollars but through fees on tourist visas, and the results show that the program pays for itself many times over.

Brand USA has had long-lasting and overwhelming bipartisan support in Congress, and we hope that this support will continue. We need Brand USA's strong marketing message to remind visitors that the U.S. is open for business in order to compete with the rest of the world and continue growing our economy and creating much needed jobs.



We look forward to actively engaging with you to keep Brand USA intact and performing its vital function for the U.S. economy.

Sincerely,

American Hotel & Lodging Association Accor Hotels (Toronto) Alabama Restaurant & Hospitality Alliance Alaska Hotel & Lodging Association Arizona Lodging & Tourism Association Arkansas Hospitality Association B.F. Saul Company Hospitality Group (MD) Benchmark Hospitality International (TX) Best Western Hotels & Resorts (AZ) California Hotel & Lodging Association Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group (MN) Chesapeake Lodging Trust (MD) Colorado Hotel & Lodging Association Concord Hospitality Enterprises (NC) **Connecticut Lodging Association** Dalwadi Hospitality Management, LLC (TX) **Delaware Hotel & Lodging Association** Delaware North (NY) First Hospitality Group, Inc. (IL) Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association Georgia Hotel & Lodging Association HEI Hotels & Resorts (CT) Highgate Hotels (NY) Hilton (VA) Host Hotels & Resorts (MD) Hotel Association of New York City Hotel Association of Washington DC Illinois Hotel & Lodging Association Indiana Restaurant & Lodging Association InterContinental Hotels Group (GA) Las Vegas Sands Corporation (NV) LaSalle Hotel Properties (MD) Lodgeworks (KS) Loews Hotels (NY) Louisiana Hotel & Lodging Association Maine Innkeepers Association Marcus Hotels & Resorts (WI)



Marriott International (MD) Maryland Hotel & Lodging Association Massachusetts Lodging Association Michigan Lodging and Tourism Association Minnesota Lodging Association Montana Lodging & Hospitality Association Nebraska Hotel & Lodging Association New Hampshire Lodging & Restaurant Association New Jersey Hotel & Lodging Association New York State Hospitality & Tourism Association North Carolina Restaurant & Lodging Association Northcott Hospitality and AmericInn (MN) **Ohio Hotel & Lodging Association Oklahoma Hotel & Lodging Association Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association** Outrigger Enterprises Group (HI) Pebblebrook Hotel Trust (MD) Pennsylvania Restaurant & Lodging Association PSAV (IL) Real Hospitality Group (MD) **Rhode Island Hospitality Association** RLJ Lodging Trust (MD) Sabre Hospitality Solutions (TX) Sage Hospitality (CO) Saunders Hotel Group (MA) Sebasco Harbor Resort (ME) Smith Travel Research (TN) South Carolina Restaurant & Lodging Association **Tennessee Hospitality & Tourism Association Texas Hotel & Lodging Association** The Chartres Lodging Group, LLC (CA) The Hotel Group (WA) **TPI Hospitality (TN)** TradeWinds Island Resorts (FL) **Utah Hotel & Lodging Association** Vermont Chamber of Commerce Virginia Restaurant, Lodging, & Travel Association Washington Lodging Association Waterford Hotel Group, Inc. (CT) Watermark Capital Partners (IL) West Virginia Hospitality & Travel Association Wilson Hotel Management, LLC (TN)



Wisconsin Hotel & Lodging Association Wyndham Worldwide (NJ) Wyoming Lodging & Restaurant Association