

THE PRESIDENT'S EXPORT COUNCIL  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20230

President of the United States of America  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As part of the National Export Initiative aimed at doubling exports over the next five years, we believe that the service sector, and in particular the travel and tourism industry, will play a vital role. In 2009, the United States had over \$120 billion in travel and tourism exports, and a positive trade surplus of \$21 billion. The travel and tourism industry is one of America's largest employers generating 8.2 million jobs in this sector last year. While the United States still has a trade surplus in tourism, in the post -9/11 years our national tourism performance has suffered dramatically, as we have lost 68 million visitors, resulting in \$500 billion in lost spending, over 400,000 lost jobs and \$32 billion in lost tax revenues<sup>1</sup>. Your leadership is needed to reverse this trend. With continued improvement in coordination among various government and private sector entities, we can be successful in increasing the number of people traveling to the United States each year.

The U.S. government can play a more vigorous role in accelerating economic growth in this important sector. The U.S. Travel Association estimates that by doubling arrivals from the 36 Visa Waiver countries alone, over \$200 billion in spending would be generated in support of the U.S. economy while building cultural, education, family and business connections. A robust travel and tourism sector will spur growth throughout the country for small, medium and large businesses. With one out of every nine jobs in the United States tied to travel and tourism, the economic impact would be significant.

Important steps have already been taken to ensure that our embassies understand the importance of supporting U.S. business in world markets. Extending this effort to the travel and tourism sector of our economy is an important step the President's Export Council recommends the Administration embrace. In particular, we recommend that U.S. Embassies and consulates in Visa Waiver countries, and non-Visa Waiver Program countries (such as Brazil, India and China) that are major sources of inbound travel to the United States, undertake a comprehensive review of their current procedures and policies for encouraging travel and tourism to the United States. The goal of this review should be to institute concrete measures our embassies and consulates will undertake to expand, simplify and expedite the visa and travel process. The world must come to know that the United States welcomes foreign visitors while remaining vigilant in protecting our security.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Oxford Economics

Additionally, continued progress opening international aviation markets can further enable travel and tourism. Our nearly 100 "Open Skies" agreements have vastly expanded international flights to and from the United States, increased travel and U.S. exports, enhanced productivity, and spurred high-quality job opportunities and economic growth. However, some of the world's fastest-growing aviation markets, especially in Asia, South America and the Near East still remain highly restricted--additional "Open Skies" agreements will further bolster a key component of exports.

Thank you, Mr. President, for your leadership in promoting international travel and tourism. The PEC stands ready to assist you in any way to reinvigorate our travel and tourism industry.<sup>2</sup>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John McFerry". The signature is written in dark ink and is centered below the word "Sincerely,".

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<sup>2</sup> Please note that this letter has been prepared by the private-sector appointed members of the PEC.