



UNITED STATES TRAVEL AND TOURISM ADVISORY BOARD

December 12, 2013

The Honorable Penny Pritzker
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Pritzker:

On behalf of the United States Travel & Tourism Advisory Board (Board), we are writing to offer recommendations to advocate for and to advance federal efforts in travel facilitation. As a follow up to our previous letter focused on the economic importance of boosting travel and tourism, we strongly believe the U.S. must implement the appropriate reforms to ensure we can adequately handle the increased international traffic that is vital to our economic well-being.

As Brand USA's promotion efforts and the Department of State's visa processing improvements continue to drive additional international visitors to the United States, we must ensure the appropriate travel facilitation measures are in place in order to accommodate the increased volume of passengers. In 2012, the United States welcomed 67 million international visitors, many of whom likely experienced delays during entry into the U.S. With international visitation only expected to increase over the next several years as we try to meet the goal set forth in the National Travel and Tourism strategy of 100 million visitors by 2021, it is clear that improvements are needed in our already strained facilitation efforts led by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and the Transportation Security Administration (TSA).

This letter provides recommendations to improve both international and domestic travel facilitation. In recent years, the development and implementation of risk-based screening programs, like Global Entry and TSA Pre✓, have provided expedited screening measures for trusted individuals. These programs are critical to our travel facilitation efforts, but need to be expanded, and supplemented with other appropriate measures, to adequately screen and process all travelers to and within the United States. The Board recommends that both trusted traveler programs be expanded to include uniformed military personnel with appropriate credentials. In addition, we encourage DHS to increase its communications to travelers, both domestic and

international, concerning the privacy protections built into risk-based screening programs and redress mechanisms for those who wish to have their traveler profile reviewed.

With visitors already encountering significant wait times at entry and domestic screening locations at some of our busiest airports, we recommend the following measures in order to ensure the entry process does not counteract the positive initiatives to increase international visitation.

Provide CBP with adequate resources to process all travelers in a timely manner.

CBP has a broad mission, spanning both travel and trade security and facilitation. While the agency's responsibilities have continued to expand, CBP's budget has remained relatively flat despite the glaring need for additional resources. CBP has implemented reforms and risk-based screening models to increase efficiency, however, their Workload Staffing Model recently identified a shortage of approximately 3,500 CBP officers system wide. The lack of resources has forced CBP into difficult staffing decisions across air, land, and sea port of entry that often times result in significant wait times for international visitors entering through high traffic facilities. If implemented, the following recommendations would ensure CBP not only has adequate resources, but would also increase the agency's accountability and efficiency through the development of performance metrics.

- Congress should provide CBP with adequate funding to hire and train the number of officers identified in its Workload Staffing Model.
- CBP should establish wait time goals of processing eighty percent of air and sea passenger through primary processing within 30 minutes.

The Administration and Congress have recognized CBP's need for additional resources, with new officers included in several pieces of pending legislation including the Senate's comprehensive immigration bill (S.744) and FY13 appropriations bills for the Department of Homeland Security. We urge the Administration to work with the Congress to enact legislation that would allow CBP to hire more officers and then to quickly recruit and train new officers. In the meantime, it is critical to minimize any budget cuts on CBP that would negatively impact staffing resources or overtime funding for officers.

Continue expansion of the Global Entry program.

Since implementation in 2008, the Global Entry program has provided expedited screening for trusted individuals following completion of a background check and in-person interview. The program's success has allowed CBP to focus additional attention on higher risk or unknown travelers – enhancing both security and screening efficiency. The board believes Global Entry expansion to both U.S. citizens and additional international populations should be a top priority in order to reduce demands on CBP staffing at ports of entry. We believe effective expansion can be achieved through the following recommendations:

- CBP should continue to open additional enrollment locations and limit interview wait times for conditionally approved individuals. Increasing the accessibility of the in-person requirement, along with improving and streamlining the online portion of the application process, will help boost U.S. citizen enrollment in the program.
- CBP should partner more closely with the private sector for Global Entry education and marketing campaigns.
- CBP and the Department of State should coordinate passport and Global Entry enrollment for U.S. citizens, as well as visa processing and Global Entry enrollment for certain eligible foreign populations.
- CBP should be encouraged to aggressively negotiate reciprocal agreements with additional countries. These agreements not only provide security and cost savings benefits to the U.S., but also provide our citizens with enhanced travel experiences abroad. While CBP has been proactive in these discussions, support from other government agencies could assist in accelerating negotiations.
- CBP should be provided authority to accept reimbursement for the cost of Global Entry mobile enrollment.

Encourage expedited rollout of Automated Passport Control.

Automated Passport Control (APC), the new program that allows U.S. citizens to proceed to a kiosk before seeing a CBP officer upon arrival to the U.S., has drastically reduced wait times at its two initial U.S. locations – Chicago O’Hare and JFK. As two of the busiest international airports, APC has increased traveler throughput, decreased demands on CBP officers, and significantly reduced passenger wait times. Due to the program’s creation and operation by CBP and the private sector’s responsibility for the development and implementation of the technology, APC is a great example of a successful public private partnership.

- In the near-term, CBP should continue to work with airports and airlines on the continued expansion of the program to new locations in order to increase CBP staffing efficiency and increase traveler throughput.
- As the program continues to expand, CBP should allow targeted groups of international travelers to utilize the program upon entry.
- The Administration should convene business and public sector interests to compile best practices and innovative public private partnership options that could assist in funding APC kiosks. Among the items that should be considered to enable broader roll out of APC would be dialog with DHS to permit private sector advertising in the CBP checkpoint area, potentially leading to private sector sponsorship of kiosks as a marketing initiative.

The Board views APCs as a valuable tool in reducing wait times, as initial APC locations have demonstrated. APCs, however, should not be viewed as a substitute for adequate CBP officer

staffing at these locations. The Board urges CBP not to reduce the number of officers on duty at locations where APCs are installed – and continues to recommend providing CBP with additional officers, particularly as the volume of travelers increases in the coming years.

Continue expansion of TSA's Pre✓ program.

TSA's Pre✓ program is critical to domestic travel facilitation efforts. Since being rolled out as a pilot program in October of 2011, TSA has aggressively worked to expand Pre✓ eligibility and other expedited screening programs to provide risk-based screening programs in order to enhance security and reduce checkpoint wait times. The board is pleased by TSA's aggressive efforts to grow the program and their recent announcement to expand to an additional 60 airports (bringing the total to 100) in the coming months. Even with the new locations, combined with additional airline participation, we believe the recommendations outlined below would significantly boost Pre✓ enrollment by eligible populations.

- TSA should enhance marketing of the program through the development of a consistent campaign with private sector partners to reduce traveler confusion and enhance the program's overall appeal.
- The upcoming TSA enrollment mechanism, with initial rollout planned for Indianapolis and Dulles, provides TSA an opportunity to increase Pre✓ marketing and improve consistency of the program, both from an enrollment and operational perspective. However, the website announcing roll out timeframes needs to be updated to reflect accurate estimates of when the various cities' programs will become available.

The Board recommends continued focus on the travel facilitation initiatives outlined above. These measures will ensure we fully realize the economic benefits of increased international visitation, while improving the perception of the U.S. abroad and cementing our reputation as a top travel destination.

We are thankful for this opportunity to submit our recommendations.

Respectfully submitted,



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Chair



Sam Gilliland
Vice-Chair



Robert Lynch
Advocacy Subcommittee Chair



Maureen Bausch
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