

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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U.S. TRAVEL AND TOURISM ADVISORY BOARD

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MEETING

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FRIDAY

FEBRUARY 26, 2021

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The Board met via Video
Teleconference, at 3:00 p.m. EST, Kurt Ekert,
Chair, presiding.

PRESENT

KURT EKERT, Carlson Wagonlit Travel, Chair
BRAD DEAN, Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of
Commerce, Vice Chair

RUSSELL HEDGE, Hostelling International USA
STEPHANIE JONES, Cultural Heritage Economic
Alliance

DUFFIELD MILKIE, Cedar Fair L.P.

WILL MOREY, Morey=s Piers

MARY MOTSENBOCKER, International Tourism
Marketing, Inc.

CATHERINE PRATHER, National Tour Association

TRICIA PRIMROSE, Marriott International

BRIAN QUINN, Domio

OLGA RAMUDO, Express Travel

STEPHEN REVETRIA, Giants Enterprises

DANIEL RICHARDS, Global Rescue LLC

MONICA SMITH, Southeast Tourism Society

ROB TORRES, Google, Inc.

ALSO PRESENT

**ISABEL HILL, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Travel and Tourism, I&A**

**JENNIFER AGUINAGA, Designated Federal Officer,
NTTO, I&A**

**CHRISTOPHER THOMPSON, President and CEO, Brand
USA**

**TORI BARNES, Executive Vice President, Public
Affairs and Policy, U.S. Travel
Association**

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1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 3:02 p.m.

3 MS. AGUINAGA: Okay. Welcome everyone
4 to this meeting of the United States Travel and
5 Tourism Advisory Board. As the designated
6 federal officer I declare this meeting officially
7 opened. Just a few notes before we begin as this
8 is our first virtual meeting.

9 You, let's see, you should be
10 receiving a message that this meeting is being
11 recorded so you have the opportunity to
12 disconnect now if that is not okay with you.

13 If you have the ability, please
14 disconnect from your VPNs to ensure the most
15 bandwidth. I know there are always technical
16 issues but we can try to limit them as much as
17 possible.

18 Please keep yourself on mute when
19 you're not speaking. That's probably the most
20 important thing.

21 We will not be utilizing the chat
22 function so please raise your hand if you have a

1 question. Use the raise your hand little, little
2 icon.

3 Reminder that for those joining who
4 are not members of the board, your only
5 opportunity to speak will be during the public
6 comment portion of the agenda.

7 If you do have any technical
8 difficulties that you're not able to solve while
9 we're on the call, please contact my colleague
10 Christina Gay. You can reach her at
11 Christina.Gay@trade.gov.

12 And just a reminder for those of you
13 who joined through Teams, if for some reason you
14 get kicked off of the virtual meeting there is
15 just a call-in option that you can use. And
16 that's 253-372-2016 and you can use the
17 conference ID 676371042. And this, this
18 information is all in the meeting invite so, so
19 please look at that if you're having any issues.

20 Before turning it to the chair, I will
21 take the roll call of members for the record.
22 You should (audio interference) as I take the

1 roll.

2 Again, if everyone could mute if
3 they're not speaking, please do that now. Okay,
4 roll call.

5 Kurt Ekert?

6 MR. EKERT: Here.

7 MS. AGUINAGA: Brad Dean?

8 MR. DEAN: I'm here.

9 MS. AGUINAGA: Liz Fitzsimmons?

10 (No audible response.)

11 MS. AGUINAGA: David Gilbert?

12 (No audible response.)

13 MS. AGUINAGA: Russ Hedge?

14 MR. HEDGE: Here.

15 MS. AGUINAGA: Thanks, Russ. Debbie

16 Johnson?

17 (No audible response.)

18 MS. AGUINAGA: Stephanie Jones?

19 MS. JONES: Present.

20 MS. AGUINAGA: Thank you, Stephanie.

21 Rolf Lundberg?

22 (No audible response.)

1 MS. AGUINAGA: Duff Milkie?

2 MR. MILKIE: Here.

3 MS. AGUINAGA: Thanks, Duff. Will
4 Morey?

5 MR. MOREY: Here.

6 MS. AGUINAGA: Thank you. Mary
7 Motsenbocker?

8 MS. MOTSENBOCKER: I'm here.

9 MS. AGUINAGA: Thanks, Mary. Vinay
10 Patel?

11 (No audible response.)

12 MS. AGUINAGA: Catherine Prather?

13 MS. PRATHER: Here.

14 MS. AGUINAGA: Thanks, Catherine.

15 Tricia Primrose?

16 MS. PRIMROSE: Here.

17 MS. AGUINAGA: Thanks, Tricia. Brian
18 Quinn?

19 (No audible response.)

20 MS. AGUINAGA: I thought I saw Brian
21 join. Olga Ramudo?

22 MS. RAMUDO: Here.

1 MS. AGUINAGA: Thanks, Olga. Stephen
2 Revetria?

3 MR. REVETRIA: Present.

4 MS. AGUINAGA: Thanks, Stephen.
5 Daniel Richards?

6 MR. RICHARDS: I'm here, Jennifer.

7 MS. AGUINAGA: Thanks, Dan. Adam
8 Sacks?

9 (No audible response.)

10 MS. AGUINAGA: Monica Smith?

11 MS. SMITH: I'm here.

12 MS. AGUINAGA: Thanks, Monica. Rob
13 Torres?

14 MR. TORRES: Here.

15 MS. AGUINAGA: Thanks. Ron Vlastic?

16 (No audible response.)

17 MS. AGUINAGA: And Greg Webb?

18 (No audible response.)

19 MS. AGUINAGA: Okay, thank you all.

20 Well, it looks like we have a quorum so I now
21 turn it over to you, Mr. Chair.

22 MR. EKERT: All right. Well,

1 Jennifer, thank you and first of all for the
2 first virtual WebEx I think you've already
3 outdone yourself. This seems very well-
4 organized, so thank you.

5 And good afternoon everybody. I know
6 that since the last time we got together as a
7 team over the phone, which was a very fun way to
8 do this, there have been four sprints going on
9 with the four subcommittees. And the work that's
10 been done, the level of thought has been
11 outstanding and we're going to be able to vet
12 that and discuss that today here on the call.

13 We wouldn't have gotten here without
14 the great work the National Travel and Tourism
15 Office and Isabel Hill, who's now the -- I'm
16 going to get the title right I think, Acting
17 Deputy Assistant Secretary for Travel and Tourism
18 and Director of the NTTO. That title basically
19 which is so broad speaks to how broad and
20 impactful Isabel's role is within the government.

21 So I'm going to turn the phone over to
22 Isabel to provide some context for today's

1 conversation.

2 MS. HILL: Thank you Kurt for that
3 very kind introduction and good afternoon
4 everyone. And let me add my welcome to this
5 meeting of U.S. Travel and Tourism Advisory
6 Board.

7 I want to thank you for joining this
8 meeting to deliberate the recommendations that
9 will be delivered to the Secretary of Commerce on
10 actions that can be taken to help the recovery of
11 the travel and tourism sector.

12 We all know the enormity of the task
13 before us and clearly the public and private
14 sectors need to work together to address an
15 economic crisis that was created by the COVID-19
16 health crisis.

17 As you know, the Biden administration
18 and federal agencies are undertaking a number of
19 efforts to address these challenges and I wanted
20 to touch on a few of them that would be of
21 interest to you that have transpired since we met
22 in January.

1 The administration, in concert with
2 states and the private sector, is working on
3 three relevant fronts to respond to the COVID-19
4 pandemic and to get the U.S. economy, including
5 the travel and tourism industry, on the road to
6 recovery.

7 First is to address the underlying
8 issue of the transmission and severity of the
9 pandemic and to get it under control. As of
10 yesterday, 89 million doses of vaccine have been
11 distributed to more than 20 million people and
12 more than 20 million people have received two
13 doses making 6 percent of the U.S. population
14 fully vaccinated.

15 And yesterday Johnson & Johnson and
16 the Food and Drug Administration announced that
17 the company's new single-shot vaccine provides
18 strong protection against severe disease and
19 death. The FDA could soon authorize distribution
20 of that vaccine with as many as 100,000,000 doses
21 available by the end of June.

22 But already the United States had

1 purchased sufficient vaccines to vaccinate the
2 entire U.S. population, and even at previous
3 rates half of the country could be vaccinated by
4 summer and more than 75 percent by October.

5 The intensity of this effort is
6 extraordinary and the progress is moving at a
7 rapid rate. And this is great news for those of
8 us who live in the United States and for the
9 travel and tourism industry.

10 Data shows that people want to visit
11 destinations where they feel that they and their
12 families will be safe and so this is an important
13 step to set the stage for the recovery of both
14 domestic and international travel.

15 Second is the effort to support
16 businesses and their employees and those who find
17 themselves out of work because of the pandemic.
18 Congress is at work on the administration's
19 American Rescue Plan which includes stimulus
20 measures with the goal sustaining families and
21 firms until the vaccines are widely distributed.

22 Additionally, the White House is

1 working on ensuring equitable relief to hard hit
2 small businesses, even as there has been progress
3 on the current round of PPP compared to a year
4 ago.

5 For instance, the share of funding
6 going to small businesses with fewer than 10
7 employees is up by nearly 60 percent. The share
8 of funding going to small businesses in rural
9 areas is up nearly 30 percent.

10 The share of funding distributed
11 through community development financial
12 institutions and minority depository institutions
13 is more than up 40 percent.

14 So this is a wonderful step towards
15 equity and with the number of small businesses
16 supporting the traveling and tourism experiences
17 for travelers to the United States is wonderful
18 news.

19 Third, efforts are under way to
20 develop protocols to open safe domestic and
21 international travel while reducing the
22 opportunity for transmission of COVID-19 and its

1 variants.

2 And as you know, on January 21st,
3 President Biden signed an executive order on
4 promoting COVID safety night -- excuse me --
5 promoting COVID-19 safety in domestic and
6 international travel. The order, as you know,
7 requires masks to be worn in compliance with CDC
8 guidelines in airports and on commercial
9 aircraft, trains, public maritime vessels and all
10 forms of public transportation. And it requires
11 that travelers seeking to enter the United States
12 from a foreign country to produce proof of recent
13 COVID-19 test prior to entry.

14 And while the CDC is not currently
15 recommending testing for domestic flights, it
16 continues to monitor the pandemic and watch the
17 spread of new variants.

18 And meanwhile, under the executive
19 order, agencies continue to work on the
20 development of safe travel protocols. Agencies
21 are also working on these issues with
22 international organizations including the World

1 Health Organization, which the United States has
2 rejoined, the International Civil Aviation
3 Organization, the Organization for Economic
4 Development and Cooperation and the G-20, among
5 others.

6 In the area of contactless travel,
7 Customs and Border Protection and the
8 Transportation Security Administration are
9 continuing to make progress on efforts to
10 streamline travel and reduce physical contact
11 throughout the process.

12 For instance facial comparison
13 technology for entry is now deployed at 32
14 airports and includes nine pre-clearance
15 locations and biometric exit is deployed at 28
16 airports.

17 And also CBP has just announced the
18 launch of its new app, CBP-1, which will offer
19 travelers and stakeholders a range of services to
20 streamline their entry and exit from the United
21 States.

22 And pointing specifically to the

1 increasing availability of the vaccine, the
2 Transportation Safety Authority has announced
3 that they will fill nearly 6,000 security office
4 positions by this summer, a 12 percent uptick in
5 that workforce.

6 And on one further note in response to
7 the Travel and Tourism Advisory Board
8 recommendations we have created the new COVID-19
9 Travel Industry Monitor. The monitor can be
10 found on the NTTO website and after this meeting
11 we will include a link it, along with a copy of
12 the final recommendations.

13 I know we all look forward to the day
14 when travel returns, when we can all be together
15 and where and when a significant number and level
16 of international travelers can now again be
17 welcomed to the United States.

18 And we know that when it was -- is
19 safe to travel that there will be demand.
20 Families want to be reunited and the interest in
21 outdoor and off the beaten path and cultural
22 heritage experiences is high.

1 People want their canceled events to
2 be rescheduled. Many long to visit theme parks,
3 and the interest in urban experiences is also
4 expected to rebound in time.

5 And people are looking for
6 destinations where safety protocols are developed
7 and in place, and thankfully, the United States
8 meets all of these tests.

9 But we know we have a lot to do if
10 we're to capitalize on this potential and in the
11 process build back better. Your recommendations
12 are, will be an important input to the -- as the
13 administration establishes their policy
14 priorities for economic recovery.

15 And we greatly appreciate the work of
16 this board and look forward to hearing the
17 discussion today. Thank you, Kurt.

18 MR. EKERT: Isabel, thank you, and
19 it's clear that you and your team are up to a
20 heck of a lot. And we hope we can augment that
21 and help support what you said.

22 What we're going to do here is go

1 through each of the four subcommittee
2 recommendations. I'm going to ask that each of
3 the four subcommittee chairs speak for three to
4 five minutes, no more than five minutes or else
5 there will be severe punishment administered by
6 Jennifer.

7 And we'll kick off, and we will have
8 an opportunity to ask questions and vet these
9 thereafter, but I'm going to ask Brad to take the
10 lead on this.

11 MR. DEAN: Super, thank you. Good
12 afternoon and thank you Mr. Chairman. I want to
13 begin first off just expressing my appreciation
14 on behalf of all of the TTAB members, to you Mr.
15 Chairman for your leadership.

16 I've had the privilege of serving on
17 the Travel and Tourism Advisory Board for several
18 years. Personally, I cannot recall any TTAB
19 getting out of the gate so quickly with such a
20 broad array of very meaningful, potentially very
21 consequential recommendations.

22 So thank you to leading us to this

1 point not even halfway through the president's
2 first 100 days and, and awaiting a new secretary
3 already jumping into work on behalf of the
4 industry. So we appreciate your leadership in
5 that regard.

6 I want to also acknowledge the great
7 work, the time and the passion invested by the
8 Facilitating Travel Subcommittee, David Gilbert
9 Dan Richards, Duff Milkie, Olga Ramudo and
10 Stephen Revetria, all of whom played a critical
11 role in formulating the recommendations that
12 we're bringing to our colleagues today.

13 And of course, thank you to Jennifer
14 and Isabel for the exceptional support.

15 Our task as a subcommittee was to
16 develop succinct, actionable recommendations for
17 the secretary designed to facilitate safe and
18 secure travel to and within the country.

19 In the course of our discussions we
20 heard from our friends at the Center for Disease
21 Control and Prevention, the Customs and Border
22 Protection. We also engaged with Airlines for

1 America, the U.S. Travel Association and Brand
2 USA.

3 We had some far-ranging discussions
4 that centered on the immediate challenges at
5 hand, the here and now so to speak, but we were
6 also very, very mindful of the need to address
7 the long-term consequences and challenges of this
8 pandemic and ultimately were guided by the need
9 to ensure that America is better prepared for the
10 next pandemic-type situation.

11 And I'm confident that I speak on
12 behalf of everybody when I saw that we all agree
13 it would be an absolute shame if we don't learn
14 from the experiences of the past 12 months and
15 come out of this wiser, stronger and better
16 prepared for the future.

17 So with this in mind we bring to our
18 TTAB colleagues three specific recommendations
19 today, each of which, I believe, align very well
20 with the other three subcommittees' work. And I
21 think these also align with some of the previous
22 work done by the prior Travel and Tourism

1 Advisory Board.

2 So I'll briefly review each of the
3 recommendations. The first, which I think has
4 already been shared with all the members of TTAB,
5 is to accelerate the resumption of travel and
6 tourism through establishing policies and
7 protocols that prioritize safety while mitigating
8 the risk to economic vitality.

9 In the last TTAB it was noted that the
10 CDC faces a massive challenge in responding to
11 and manage the COVID-19 pandemic while lacking
12 the scope of data capture and analysis necessary
13 to identify the spread of the disease and
14 implement effective contact tracing.

15 And of course, this is further
16 complicated by contending with the impact of
17 international inbound arrivals coming into our
18 country that do not adhere to the same standard
19 reporting measures and public health protocols.

20 During our most recent meeting with
21 the CDC it's apparent that this situation
22 persists and it's clear to the members of our

1 subcommittee that the approach being followed
2 lacks adequate performance-based standards where
3 even today, as we speak, we see infection rates
4 following, yet travel guidance and restrictions
5 are not closely following this trend.

6 Even more concerning for us is the
7 approach currently used which appears to lack
8 adequate predictive metrics as we're tending to
9 respond and react to what's happened in the past.
10 You know, we've all heard a lot about flattening
11 the curve, but we believe it's important for the
12 United States to get ahead of the curve, and
13 frankly, this is one milestone where our nation
14 should lead the world.

15 Without this, policymakers may feel
16 compelled to continue deploying measures such
17 travel bans and quarantines and lockdowns that
18 are arguably inefficient and effective.

19 But we believe this situation begs for
20 attention and one of the many concerns identified
21 by our subcommittee is that while we recognize
22 the CDC has been very challenged to manage an

1 extremely difficult situation, to borrow from the
2 old analogy, the CDC has had to build a plane and
3 fly it at the same time.

4 But after we looked into this we were
5 sort of left wondering if they're going to be
6 able to land this plane as efficiently as we all
7 hope when consider the de-escalation of protocols
8 and standards used during this crisis and future
9 similar crises that could very well take place.

10 So this, of course, is a major
11 consideration for all of us. Our recommendation
12 centers around the premise that if we are to
13 accelerate the resumption of travel safely and
14 effectively, the federal government should
15 consider using a model for reopening travel
16 that's consistent with the decline in infection
17 and death rates.

18 A model reliant upon reliable data and
19 responsive to data research and analysis, which
20 ultimately will fuel the kind of recovery our
21 industry needs and our nation deserves.

22 This model could likely include

1 improved data collection, expanded use of new or
2 emerging technology and also performance-based
3 standards to guide policymaking.

4 And one key component of this process
5 will likely need to be careful evaluation and
6 contemplative consideration of measures such as
7 travel bans, quarantines, lockdowns, as well as
8 the merits of testing at various stages of the
9 travel process, recognizing that technologies in
10 place today are quickly emerging that could
11 eliminate the need for some testing.

12 Our second recommendation is to
13 harmonize a system of established policies and
14 protocols with respect to land, sea and air
15 travel in collaboration with the private sector
16 that will mitigate the health risks of infection,
17 infectious diseases, while ensuring economic
18 stability.

19 As we considered how best to
20 facilitate travel to and within our nation, one
21 key element is the flow through our nation's
22 borders. And the deeper we went into this, the

1 more we noticed what I can only describe as a
2 structural disconnect amongst the federal
3 agencies in managing inbound international
4 arrivals into the United States.

5 The CDC bears responsibility for
6 establishing standards related to health and
7 safety, but, you know, they acknowledge that they
8 don't have the data needed to effectively
9 implement contact tracing which, of course, is
10 essential to slowing and stopping the spread of
11 infectious diseases.

12 Customs and Border Protection bears
13 responsibility for admissibility related to
14 national security but does not collect data
15 related to health and safety. Much of that
16 recent data collection is actually happening by
17 the private sector, or the airlines, as it
18 relates to health safety standards set forth by
19 the federal government.

20 And yet arrivals for land ports are
21 subject to different standards than arrivals to
22 airports.

1 So all of this, as you might imagine,
2 prompted a lot of discussion. And ultimately we
3 found ourselves trying to answer one key question
4 and that is is there a better way to manage
5 health admissibility at the border, especially in
6 light of the technological advances, whether that
7 the equipment that samples your breath to detect
8 infectious diseases or digital travel passes it
9 can be used to store and share test results and
10 vaccination records?

11 Ultimately, our subcommittee
12 recommends we seek a seamless border entry
13 process through all ports of entry which ensures
14 optimal efficiency and adequate data collection
15 while addressing the inconsistencies of
16 international inbound arrivals to both air and
17 land ports of entry.

18 This is a major, major initiative, one
19 that can only be accomplished at the highest
20 levels of government. It could be helped by
21 incorporating private sector partners who are
22 part of the travel process, but in the end, this

1 would require the kind of attention from the
2 public sector that a major national security
3 issue receives.

4 Perhaps some high level taskforce
5 designed to address roles, responsibility and
6 needs within the federal government and
7 ultimately seek to strengthen the institutional
8 capacity to integrate public health
9 considerations into the development of national
10 travel and tourism policy.

11 Obviously, this extends way beyond the
12 normal scope of responsibility of the Department
13 of Commerce, but recognizing that economic
14 vitality is essential to national security, we
15 submit to our colleagues today that if we don't
16 make this recommendation who will?

17 And if the Secretary of Commerce
18 doesn't lead this effort, who would?

19 And then finally, our third
20 recommendation, which is smaller in scope but
21 certainly no less important in the potential
22 impact that it could have, is to reduce the

1 number of physical touch points throughout the
2 travel continuum by accelerating the use of
3 available technology.

4 Much of the technology necessary to
5 achieve a contactless travel process is currently
6 available and could be put to greater use today.

7 We certainly don't want to overlook
8 that there has been a lot of progress made in
9 this area typically by agencies like Homeland
10 Security, CBP and the U.S. Department of
11 Transportation. So by accelerating and expanding
12 the use of available technology the federal
13 government could increase the efficiency of flow
14 through ports of entry and also limit the spread
15 of infectious diseases.

16 Just imagine leaving for a future trip
17 and from the moment you enter the airport until
18 the moment you board the airplane the only things
19 you touch are things that you brought with you
20 from your home.

21 That level of contactless travel would
22 yield great efficiencies and would also

1 contribute to the health and safety of all
2 travelers.

3 So on behalf of my colleagues on the
4 Facilitating Travel Subcommittee, I'm pleased to
5 submit these recommendations to the full Travel
6 and Tourism Advisory Board. Mr. Chairman, that
7 concludes my review and I'll turn the discussion
8 back over you.

9 MR. EKERT: Brad, you and the
10 Facilitation Committee did a unbelievable job,
11 and you also pulled double duty as the vice chair
12 and I know did a lot of work there as well.
13 Thank you.

14 Jennifer will administer, administer
15 your punishment later, but a really good set of
16 thoughts there.

17 Russ Hedge is going to lead us through
18 a conversation of governance next.

19 MR. HEDGE: Thanks, Kurt. We're
20 bringing forward two recommendations as a
21 Governance Subcommittee, one related to elevating
22 the travel and tourism function within the

1 Commerce Department and the second related to
2 strategy planning for our industry's growth and,
3 and recovery.

4 I want to give a shot up to the five
5 subcommittee members Will Morey, Maurice Pears,
6 Vinay Patel, Fairbrook Hotels, Dan Richards,
7 Global Rescue, Adam Sacks, Tourism Economics,
8 Monica Smith, Southeast Tourism Society.

9 Our subcommittee met three times,
10 numerous emails and these recommendations are
11 the, are the result.

12 So let me read recommendation number
13 one, elevate travel and tourism within the U.S.
14 Commerce Department by creating a U.S. travel and
15 tourism agency headed by an assistant secretary
16 vested with authority, including granting
17 authority, to advance both domestic and
18 international segments of the U.S. travel
19 industry.

20 We appreciate the work that's been
21 done on behalf of the travel and tourism industry
22 by the National Travel and Tourism Office as part

1 of the International Trade Administration.

2 I think we're all painfully aware that
3 it, COVID, has exposed needs and challenges
4 across the industry that's going to require some
5 new approaches to problem-solving.

6 And our belief is that can better be
7 delivered by an elevated U.S. travel and tourism
8 agency with a charge to advance both domestic and
9 international segments of the U.S. travel
10 industry.

11 Currently, NTTA's charge is focused on
12 building inbound international travel, and as
13 part of the International Trade Administration
14 that focus is understood and it's appreciated,
15 but international travel makes up a relatively
16 small share of U.S. travel spending.

17 By comparison, 85 percent of U.S.
18 travel spending is domestic, and we feel like we
19 need an agency focused on both. COVID didn't
20 stop at national borders, and we don't feel that
21 policymaking for travel and tourism can stop
22 there either.

1 Our second recommendation is, and let
2 me read this one as well, "lead a comprehensive
3 strategy development process that firstly
4 supports recover of the travel and tourism
5 industry and then focuses on the industry's
6 resiliency and growth."

7 The 2012 national travel and tourism
8 strategy we feel is a, is a federal strategy that
9 delivered. That strategy has become the
10 framework that many of us useful we talk about
11 travel and tourism, including TTAB. And the 2012
12 goals have largely been accomplished.

13 That 2012 strategy had a ten-year
14 horizon, meaning that it expires in 2022. We do
15 feel it should be updated, but our recommendation
16 is that there be some refinements in the strategy
17 development process.

18 We recommend that before the ten-year
19 strategy planning begins that a recovery strategy
20 first be developed and implemented.

21 This would be a short-term strategy
22 focused on rebuilding our industry and then after

1 the recovery strategy is sufficiently implemented
2 then the new ten-year strategy would be developed
3 and that would include a international visitation
4 and spending goal.

5 So with that, Kurt, I'll turn it back
6 to you.

7 MR. EKERT: Russ, thank you and
8 terrific work by you and, and your committee as
9 well.

10 We're next to hear from Mary
11 Motsenbocker who is going to talk through World
12 Class Customer Experience, obviously very
13 impactful and important.

14 MS. MOTSENBOCKER: There we go. Thank
15 you, Mr. Chairman. Our subcommittee was Creating
16 a World Class Customer Experience and we also had
17 some excellent meetings with our first
18 recommendation, the SBA U.S. travel, which where
19 a great expert gave us some good expertise in our
20 recommendation.

21 Our second recommendation we met with
22 federal agencies such as Forest Service, National

1 Parks, AIANATA, which gave us some excellent
2 direction also.

3 Our subcommittee members were
4 Stephanie Jones of the Cultural and Heritage
5 Economic Alliance, Rolf Lundberg, Choice Hotels,
6 Catherine Prather of the National Tour
7 Association, Ron Vlasic of Hostmark Hospitality
8 Group, Debbie Johnson of Arizona Office of
9 Tourism and a special shout out to Natalie Volin
10 Lehr, who was our backup and was very helpful in
11 creating these recommendations and helping us
12 tweak them.

13 Our first recommendation is to ensure
14 liquidity for the travel and tourism sector
15 through expanding qualification for existing
16 programs and providing new grant, loan and tax
17 benefits for small and medium-sized businesses in
18 the industry.

19 What we found, of course, and as we
20 all know, travel and tourism businesses of all
21 sizes have needed support throughout this
22 pandemic. Many of them did not qualify for the

1 CARES program.

2 Some of the problems were narrow
3 business size constraints; the PPP wasn't
4 accessible to those who didn't qualify as per
5 small business SBA guidelines.

6 The Economic Loan Injury Disaster
7 program just was limited to businesses with 500
8 or fewer employees. There were very narrowly-
9 defined parameters for targeted loan programs and
10 this in turn made many businesses ineligible for
11 these programs.

12 The funds in some cases were hard to
13 access because a significant portion of this
14 funding was unspent and there's no resource to
15 turn to for clarification or qualification
16 assistance, which left some businesses out in the
17 cold.

18 There are currently existing programs
19 that could be changed and expanded to provide
20 much-needed support such as expanding the
21 Shuttered Venue Operators Program, we are asking
22 this to include tour operator (audio

1 interference) --

2 MR. EKERT: Mary, just -- whoever is
3 not speaking please mute. It's hard to hear her.

4 MS. MOTSENBOCKER: Okay, Sure. And
5 second is existing program would be to expand
6 employee retention credit program. New programs
7 that would be much needed and would be very
8 beneficial would be an industry-specific PPP
9 program.

10 Now, a program that would provide low
11 interest loans in grants for the needs other than
12 payroll, such as mortgage, rent, tax and
13 utilities. Tax credits for businesses that
14 purchase meeting and event organizing services.
15 There are unused funds from the CARES Act and
16 those funds could be used to fund these programs.

17 Many businesses need additional and
18 effective guidance and technical assistance in
19 applying for these programs, and there seems to
20 be a lack of resources to train (audio
21 interference) these programs and getting
22 questions answered.

1 The impact of providing these grants
2 and loans and tax benefits to small and -- small
3 and medium businesses, of course, as we all know,
4 would be great.

5 This would also help one of the most
6 distressed industries throughout this period,
7 which is our travel and tourism industry and help
8 us recover.

9 This could be accomplished by
10 expanding the definitional requirements of
11 existing programs, as well as expanding new
12 industry-specific programs.

13 Legislation would be required to
14 establish and expand these programs and tax
15 credits.

16 Our second recommendation is to create
17 recovery opportunities for small, underserved
18 minority and rural businesses in the travel and
19 tourism industry by funding a grant program for
20 capacity building and technical assistance that
21 would be managed by the U.S. Department of
22 Commerce.

1 This would assist small minority,
2 rural and underserved travel and tourism business
3 with tourism readiness, capacity building and
4 business enhancement trainings.

5 These businesses have been hit
6 especially hard during the pandemic, and they
7 fall further behind as the nation starts to
8 recover. A study that was provided by the
9 Federal Reserve of New York shows that more than
10 40 percent of black-owned businesses have ceased
11 operations just in this past year.

12 Minority-owned and rural businesses
13 have -- were already facing challenges, like this
14 lack of access to capital, broadband
15 connectivity, issues like that are putting
16 everybody even further behind.

17 Industry research also shows us that
18 consumers want multicultural and rural travel
19 experiences and most of these areas that can
20 provide those experiences lack the resources to
21 attract these tourists.

22 So this recommendation is requesting

1 funding through a grant program that would be
2 administered and overseen by the Department of
3 Commerce. This would help destinations broaden
4 their cultural heritage program product and as
5 well as their capacity for visitors.

6 Programs such as this are currently
7 under way in minority markets, but the challenge
8 is in getting the funding and keeping the funding
9 and getting resources necessary to keep the
10 programs running.

11 This would give the funding for
12 technical assistance, education and training that
13 would assist these underserved businesses.

14 It would provide means for capacity
15 building that has not been previously available,
16 and it would also provide new itineraries for
17 tour operators and opportunities for travelers to
18 experience the diversity of products in the
19 United States.

20 Allocating the spending would help
21 these businesses create new employment
22 opportunities, as well as broaden their cultural

1 heritage tourism product offering. Legislation
2 is necessary to establish these funding programs.

3 And with that, Mr. Chairman, we would
4 like to put forth these two recommendations to be
5 considered and passed on to the Secretary of
6 Commerce.

7 MR. EKERT: Mary, thank you and thank
8 you to your full committee, really excellent
9 work. And I think this will have a profound
10 impact on the industry.

11 The last presenter is going to be
12 Tricia Primrose who led the group looking at
13 Marketing and Communications.

14 MS. PRIMROSE: Thank you so much,
15 Kurt, and thank you Dean, members of the TTAB and
16 the Travel and Tourism Office.

17 I will move quickly. I'm a New Yorker
18 so I'm going to speak quickly to make up some
19 time for us.

20 I want to start by thanking the
21 members of the subcommittee, Liz Fitzsimmons,
22 who's the Managing Director of the Maryland

1 Office of Tourism and film, Stephanie Jones, CEO
2 of Cultural And Heritage Economic Alliance and
3 the founder of the National Blacks in Florida
4 Tourism Collaborative, Brian Quinn, Chief
5 Development Officer at Domio, Rob Torres,
6 Managing Director of Travel at Google and Jordan
7 -- excuse me -- and Greg Webb, CEO Travelport.

8 Also just a quick thank you to Julie
9 Heizer, Deputy Director of NTTD, who worked very
10 closely with this subcommittee and was a great
11 support and obviously to Isabel Hill who's -- for
12 her guidance and support throughout.

13 And lastly, Melissa Froehlich Flood on
14 my team, just an unbelievable resource to us as
15 we put together these three recommendations.

16 So here you go, a high level summary,
17 let's start with our first recommendation. It
18 addresses the need to secure adequate funding for
19 Brand USA and state and local destination
20 marketing organizations or DMOs to ensure
21 viability and enable international marketing and
22 promotional efforts that will play a key role in

1 the recovery of U.S. competitiveness and grow the
2 travel economy.

3 As we all know, funding streams for
4 Brand USA and DMOs have been significantly
5 impacted by the pandemic, so this recommendation
6 has three components.

7 We believe that an emergency short-
8 term legislative proposal to infuse Brand USA
9 with a \$250 million appropriation outside of the
10 existing matching funds process would ensure that
11 Brand USA has the resources necessary to partner
12 with government and the industry to hasten the
13 recovery of the lucrative international travel
14 market.

15 They'll be a key partner in pulling
16 through important travel-related updates and
17 policy changes as travel resumes and normalizes.

18 In addition, temporary suspension of
19 the new 50-50 cash to in-kind ratio could be
20 considered by Congress to allow Brand USA greater
21 matching requirement flexibility.

22 Lastly, we believe there is an

1 opportunity for the DMOs to be included in a
2 future recovery bill with the allowance of travel
3 promotion through EAA and step grants. These
4 measures, particularly if taken together, will
5 help the United States remain globally
6 competitive and ensure the viability of important
7 communications and marketing partners.

8 Our second recommendation is to
9 develop and implement a coordinated interagency
10 education campaign, creating a single verified
11 government source for all pandemic-related travel
12 requirements and provide travelers with the
13 resources they need to meet them.

14 A single source or a portal acts as a
15 one-stop shop across the full travel continuum.
16 It's necessary to bring together the different
17 resources and information being put out there by
18 different agencies.

19 This portal should contain verified
20 information to educate travelers of requirements
21 and provide trusted resources. It should also
22 highlight the steps being taken to protect public

1 health and safety throughout the entire traveler
2 journey.

3 This would mitigate confusion in the
4 marketplace and create a much needed confidence
5 in business and leisure travel. We believe that
6 this work should be done collaboratively with the
7 private sector and destinations to educate
8 travelers worldwide.

9 Our final recommendation is for the
10 administration to develop amendment -- ah, I'm
11 going too fast guys -- to develop and implement a
12 travel promotion communications plan leveraging
13 high profile private and public sector leaders
14 for its implementation with a lead by example
15 component which which focuses on getting the
16 federal workforce traveling when it's safe to do
17 so.

18 We know the pandemic will continue to
19 impact travel behaviors which will have lasting
20 implications for the travel sector jobs and
21 economic recovery. When the time is right, the
22 federal government could utilize their resources

1 and communications methods to promote travel
2 three ways: highlighting any new domestic travel
3 initiatives developed by Congress or by federal
4 agencies; leveraging high profile leaders as
5 messengers with additional amplifiers like
6 private sector in DMOs by leveraging assets from
7 across the government, including the Department
8 of Interior and National Park Service; and by
9 implementing proactive communications that
10 showcase our country's rich natural resources and
11 diverse cultural heritage to demonstrate
12 America's travel economy is open for business and
13 to increase engagement of minority and rural
14 businesses and attractions.

15 As a first step in the plan of
16 execution, the government could lead by example
17 in encouraging federal employees to travel again
18 when it's determined by health experts that it's
19 safe to do so. And wouldn't you know a call
20 would come in? And demonstrate a commitment to
21 travel industry recovery and reinforce confidence
22 in travel.

1 It has been a privilege to work with
2 this subcommittee on these recommendations, as
3 well as to work with the broader TTAB on the
4 recommendations contained in the letter.

5 As an industry we're grateful for the
6 opportunity to provide input on the ways in which
7 the Department of Commerce and Congress can have
8 an immediate impact on recovery of the travel and
9 tourism sector. Thank you.

10 I don't know if I'm going to get in
11 trouble, Kurt. I tried to keep it fast.

12 MR. EKERT: You were, you were
13 appropriately concise, Tricia, thank you.

14 MS. PRIMROSE: Thanks.

15 MR. EKERT: I can think nothing better
16 to honor Arne Sorenson than to have a Marriott
17 executive lead this subcommittee and provide the
18 great work that you and your team have done. So
19 thank you, Tricia.

20 MS. PRIMROSE: Thank you very much,
21 appreciate it.

22 MR. EKERT: I thought that Chris

1 Thompson will, we hope, be appreciative of, of
2 the first recommendation from your subcommittee.

3 We have, so in total we have, we've
4 narrowed this down to 10 recommendations. There
5 was a lot of other stuff on the board, you all
6 know that. So this represents what we believe is
7 a very impactful package to take to the new
8 secretary upon her appointment.

9 And it doesn't mean that this is what
10 we're going to do wholly for the next two years.
11 Again, this represents at a point in time what we
12 can do to dramatically impact the recovery of the
13 industry, especially for the United States.

14 With that, we're now going to open it
15 up for members of the TTAB, those are board
16 members, to ask any questions, provide any
17 comment or any guidance to the board and to the
18 NTTD staff. So the floor is yours.

19 If you have a question or a comment,
20 please hit the raise your hand key, I think. I
21 don't know what it's called, and Jennifer will
22 probably need to help me in administering this,

1 but the floor is open.

2 MS. AGUINAGA: And if there's any
3 members on the phone we can't utilize a raise
4 your hand function, please feel free to just jump
5 in if you're a board member.

6 It looks like Olga has raised her
7 hand, Mr. Chair.

8 MR. EKERT: Olga Ramudo.

9 MS. RAMUDO: I was trying to figure
10 out how to raise my hand. I guess, I guess I did
11 it, yeah. This will be better.

12 I mean, first, I think I should say
13 and be modest about it, congratulations to all of
14 us. These are incredible recommendations.

15 These are, you know, a heck of a
16 letter, so I mean, congratulations to us. I can
17 tell you that from a personal stance, standpoint,
18 the restrictions on travel have put a dent on all
19 of our businesses.

20 I can tell you that small businesses
21 in particularly are suffering tremendously. ASTA
22 is forecasting that 85 percent of small traveling

1 agencies will close by year-end unless help is on
2 the way.

3 So I think many of these
4 recommendations definitely will help, you know,
5 our industry and get us going. The number one,
6 which is I'm happy about to see is let's get
7 travel started and that's what we need and then
8 all the others will follow through.

9 So thank you.

10 MR. EKERT: Well-said, Olga, thank you
11 so much for your contributions as well.

12 MS. AGUINAGA: I'm not seeing any
13 other raised hands.

14 MR. EKERT: We'll take that, we'll
15 take that as tentative affirmation of the
16 critical points by the subcommittee so far. Any
17 -- before we move off of this section any other
18 commentary or questions from any members of the
19 TTAB Board?

20 All right, great. Well, I like an
21 efficient meeting. We now have an opportunity to
22 open the floor for public comment and that is for

1 anybody else who is attending the meeting as a
2 member of the public who would like to ask a
3 question or make any comments. You are now
4 invited to do so.

5 I would ask that you keep your commentary to
6 no more than two minutes and that's a hard and
7 fast rule. And again, use the raise your hand
8 function or if you can't do that then do that a
9 visibly or narratively.

10 MS. AGUINAGA: And Mr. Chair, before
11 we move on to whoever may raise their hand from
12 the public, it looks like Will Morey has raised
13 his hand.

14 MR. EKERT: Oh, okay. Will?

15 MR. MOREY: Yeah, thanks very much.
16 Sorry I was slow trying to find the raise your
17 hand button. I was congratulating and doing all
18 kinds of things.

19 But I'm just wondering from this point
20 forward, Kurt, you had mentioned sort of
21 engagement over the next couple of years. So
22 just it's sort of maybe a snippet of an overview.

1 Assuming these recommendations move
2 forward, how will we stay in touch with them?
3 How will -- will we be called upon to explore
4 them further, to expand on them, to participate
5 in implementation in some way? Just curious.

6 MR. EKERT: It's a great question. I
7 know that Isabel is going to speak about this
8 toward the end of the meeting today, so I don't
9 want to steal her thunder on that.

10 What I will say is that's part of the
11 job of the Board. I think once we get these
12 things posted, once we get them active and
13 moving, then it's our job in concert with
14 Commerce and the NTTD office to determine what
15 our agenda is going to be from this point
16 forward.

17 So I look at this as we're sitting in
18 the emergency room right now, we're triaging in
19 the patient. Once we get the patient out of
20 surgery I think in partnership with the
21 government we then need to determine how we want
22 to spend our time over the next two years.

1 So I don't, I don't think that as a
2 preordained set of actions. That's for the Board
3 to determine.

4 MR. MOREY: All right, thank you.

5 MR. EKERT: Any --

6 MS. AGUINAGA: And now --

7 MR. EKERT: -- any other comments from
8 board members?

9 MS. AGUINAGA: Yeah, it looks like we
10 have Brian Quinn.

11 MR. EKERT: Yes, go ahead. Brian, did
12 you have something you wanted to share?

13 All right, let's, let's -- can you
14 mute, Brian? No, somebody's mowing the lawn or
15 edging their garden or something.

16 MR. QUINN: I'm not mowing the lawn.
17 Am I coming through now?

18 MR. EKERT: Yes, you are.

19 MR. QUINN: All right. I just wanted
20 to reiterate great work by everybody, appreciate
21 the scale and scope of it and Tricia's leadership
22 on our group as well.

1 Just three quick points as you lock in
2 the letter, one of the other groups was talking
3 about, you know, who got the assistance and who
4 didn't in the previous stimulus, stimulus
5 packages and recovery acts.

6 One gap in the development side that
7 sometimes gets missed is if you had a project in
8 development or under construction or about to
9 start construction, a lot of the tests in the
10 Recovery Act and in the CARES Act want you to
11 already have employees and want you to already
12 have revenue, right, some of the tests that are
13 in there.

14 And if you have a project that's about
15 to start construction or that's under
16 construction, that was a reason why a lot of
17 those projects fell out of the ability to be
18 compliant with the loans.

19 It's a nuance but if you think about
20 bringing travel back and hiring people and the
21 bigger impacts on the, on the economy, those
22 projects that are in the pipeline for my hotel

1 company partners here they fell through some of
2 those cracks that were talked through.

3 So I don't know the ability to tweak
4 that. I know at different times the banks have
5 tried to help and industry has tried to help, but
6 just a nuance there for you to be aware of.

7 So --

8 MR. EKERT: I think that's -- so --
9 and there's a ton of those things. For example,
10 my company doesn't qualify for anything because
11 we're too large.

12 MR. QUINN: Right.

13 MR. EKERT: But the impact to
14 employees very similar. My sense is that that
15 gets into the legislation piece of this and we
16 would work through, through with the NTTD staff
17 to try to impact the narrative that's in the
18 legislation.

19 MR. QUINN: Yeah.

20 MR. EKERT: But I would defer to
21 Isabel and team on the best way to get that done,
22 but very good feedback.

1 MR. QUINN: Yeah, I just wanted to
2 call that out. I get a lot of that feedback.

3 Second real quick on the international
4 inbound, about 50 percent of it, if I have the
5 numbers right, come from Mexico and Canada and we
6 talked through that in our group, but just as the
7 rules do form up, assuming we all go, you know,
8 in the positive direction that we're all hopeful
9 that we get to, maybe the opportunity to use
10 those two countries as test cases as we form up
11 the, the the rules around international travel s.

12 So much of it comes from those two
13 countries. They are geographically close,
14 democracies, you know, all positive reasons why
15 we could test some things out on them.

16 And 50 percent or just under 50
17 percent comes from those two countries so if we
18 could get those to right it would go a long way
19 to, to bring it back.

20 And then last point, and this is sort
21 of new news, but we probably all have been
22 experiencing the interesting adventure of gassing

1 up your car the last two weeks. Oil prices mean,
2 you know, usually green shoots for the, for the
3 economy but when you think about how people are
4 going to start to stick their necks out and
5 travel it will probably be by car more than by
6 air.

7 And the cost of traveling by car has
8 gone up pretty dramatically in the last three
9 weeks. So I know that changes all the time but I
10 just wanted to raise that as a, as a new issue,
11 like we needed that.

12 MR. EKERT: Hear, hear, and we will
13 not subject that to Texas heating pricing
14 practices. But thank you for the feedback.

15 Any other, again any other feedback
16 from the Board before moving to public comment?

17 MS. AGUINAGA: I'm not showing any,
18 Mr. Chair.

19 MR. EKERT: All right, great. Thank
20 you, Jennifer. So we'll now open it up for
21 public comment for anybody that would like to ask
22 a question or offer --

1 Jennifer, I don't see any --

2 MS. AGUINAGA: I don't. I thought
3 Chris Thompson had asked to do a remark. I don't
4 know if Chris was still interested in that?
5 Perhaps they're having some technical issues.

6 MR. THOMPSON; No, Mr. Chair?

7 MS. AGUINAGA: And this is, this is --
8 oh, Chris, are you --

9 MR. THOMPSON: Yeah, I found it. So
10 Mr. Chair --

11 MS. AGUINAGA: Okay.

12 MR. THOMPSON: -- and the committee,
13 thank you very much. I have no comment. I
14 appreciate the support. Thank you, sir.

15 MR. EKERT: That's the best acceptance
16 speech I've seen so far.

17 MS. AGUINAGA: If you're not speaking,
18 folks, please mute your phones. It's hard to
19 hear otherwise. Whoever it is that's vacuuming
20 maybe hold off just a few minutes on completing
21 that.

22 Sounds like -- are there any other

1 public comments from anybody in the meeting?

2 MS. BARNES: Hi, this is Tori Barnes
3 from U.S. Travel. I'm sorry. I kind of got
4 unmuted when Chris was trying to speak. Can you
5 hear me now?

6 MR. EKERT: Yes.

7 MS. BARNES: Okay, great. I just
8 wanted to say thank you, a huge thank you to all
9 of the folks on the TTAB for all this important
10 work and we at U.S. Travel are committed to
11 working with you to move forward all of these
12 proposals in coordination with NTT.

13 And just, again, grateful for all the
14 time and hard work that's been spent on these
15 issues and looking forward to working with you as
16 you move forward.

17 MR. EKERT: Thank you, thank you.

18 MS. AGUINAGA: And I'm showing no
19 additional comments.

20 MR. EKERT: Great. Well, we now, we
21 now move to the most fun part of the meeting
22 where we're going to vote yay or nay on adopting

1 the recommendations. I think everybody has a
2 full copy of the recommendation letter that we
3 would propose to send to the new Commerce
4 Secretary.

5 I will ask everybody to unmute and
6 you're either just going to say aye or nay. So
7 all in favor?

8 GROUP: Aye.

9 MR. EKERT: Any opposed? All right,
10 the resolution and the letter passes. Thank you
11 very much everybody for the terrific, terrific
12 work, really just amazing.

13 You know, we sat here a month ago or
14 so saying, hey, we want to fast track and take
15 advantage of the opportunity for a new
16 administration, a new incoming secretary and try
17 to catalyze the badly needed help for this
18 industry.

19 And I think that we've taken a very
20 important first step to get that done. So again,
21 thank you. And the subcommittee chairs,
22 especially Brad as the vice chair as well doing

1 double duty.

2 Brad, I'm a little bit jealous that
3 you're still a ginger while my ginger has
4 abandoned me in recent years but thank you. Just
5 terrific work by everybody.

6 I'm going to ask Isabel now to just
7 talk about what comes next from a process
8 standpoint with the letter and with our
9 recommendations.

10 MS. HILL: Absolutely Kurt, happy to
11 do that, and, and congratulations. This has been
12 an extraordinary effort and now that you have
13 approved the recommendations we will be
14 forwarding them to the secretary.

15 We expect the secretary to be
16 confirmed and onboard imminently, so I'm
17 delighted that these recommendations will be here
18 to greet her when she arrives.

19 The way the process moves forward is
20 that the secretary will then take these
21 recommendations onboard to inform her priorities
22 as she seeks to look at the economic recovery,

1 the initiatives that may need to be taken for the
2 economic recovery of the United States.

3 And so these will be very, very
4 important inputs into, into her considerations
5 and her action agenda.

6 The Board will continue to meet over
7 the, over with with her, we trust, and then over
8 the course of the next two years we will continue
9 the conversation.

10 And obviously it is an iterative
11 process. As, as the situation improves then the
12 new, you know, new subjects arise perhaps deeper
13 dives into some of the subjects you've touched
14 on, perhaps new issues will arrive. So it is a
15 dynamic and ongoing conversation.

16 So I really, you know, want to thank
17 you for your, your work. I remember listening to
18 the governor when she was in her confirmation
19 hearings and she was asked about travel and
20 tourism. And she said, well, the department is
21 going to have to be as bold and creative as we
22 can be, and I think the recommendations that you

1 have given will really help that.

2 They really meet that test, so I think
3 that is, that is a wonderful thing.

4 I think that one of the things that,
5 that you all can take great pride in is the --
6 not only the speed with which you've done this
7 but the quality of the recommendations. And I
8 think that they would be considered very, very
9 seriously by the incoming secretary.

10 Obviously, I can't get in front of her
11 decisions but I'm quite sure that she will be
12 very focused on the recovery of the sector, which
13 as we know is one of the hardest hit in, in the
14 entire economy.

15 So these will be really, really
16 important for her. So thank you for that.

17 I'd like to thank you, Mr. Chair and
18 Brad, vice chair, for your leadership, Natalie
19 for helping work with us to bring this home.

20 And I would also like to thank the
21 U.T. Travel Association, Brand USA, Airlines for
22 America, AIANATA, the Small Business

1 Administration, the Economic Development
2 Administration, the Centers for Disease Control
3 and Prevention and our colleagues at the
4 Department of Homeland Security, the Department
5 of the Treasury and Transportation, Interior and
6 Agriculture, all of whom worked with you to
7 provide information necessary for you to put
8 these recommendations forward.

9 I really appreciate your engagement
10 with them and conversely their engagement with
11 you. That is what makes the Travel and Tourism
12 Advisory Board a really special and impactful
13 organization.

14 So on behalf of Jennifer Aguinaga,
15 Julie Heizer and Cur Cottle, who were also
16 helping to staff these committees and the rest of
17 the team at the National Travel and Tourism
18 Office, it's been a pleasure supporting you.

19 And we really look forward to our
20 continued engagement as we work towards our
21 common goal to get this business of recovery up
22 and running as quickly as we can.

1 Thank you Mr. Chair, over to you.

2 MR. EKERT: Good. Well, Ms. Deputy
3 Assistant Secretary, thank you so much and I
4 think this is a great illustration of the
5 partnership between the government and the
6 private sector.

7 And I think again, as I said, it's a
8 very important first step that we've taken as a
9 group, and really appreciate (audio
10 interference).

11 With that, we're going to close the
12 meeting and I'm going to give it back to Jennifer
13 to do that. Thank you.

14 MS. AGUINAGA: Thank you, Mr. Chair,
15 and thank you all for your participation in
16 today's meeting. This meeting is officially
17 closed and I look forward to seeing you all again
18 soon.

19 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
20 went off the record at 3:58 p.m.)
21
22

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In the matter of: Travel and Tourism Advisory Board

Before: US DOC ITA

Date: 02-26-21

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