

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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WEDNESDAY

MARCH 31, 2021

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The Board met via Video
Teleconference, at 4:00 P.m. EDT, Kurt Ekert,
Chair, presiding.

PRESENT

KURT EKERT, President and Chief Executive
Officer, CWT, MN, Chair

BRAD DEAN, Chief Executive Officer, Discove
Puerto Rico, PR, Vice Chair

LIZ FITZSIMMONS, Managing Director, Maryland
Office of Tourism and Film, MD

DAVID GILBERT, President and Chief Executive
Officer, Destination Cleveland and Greater
Cleveland Sports Commission, OH

RUSSELL HEDGE, President and Chief Executive
Officer, Hosteling International USA, MD

DEBBIE JOHNSON, Director, Arizona Office of
Tourism, AZ

STEPHANIE JONES, President and Chief Executive
Officer, Cultural Heritage Economic Alliance,
Washington, DC

ROLF LUNDBERG, Vice President & Assistant General
Counsel and Head of External Affairs and Global
Public Policy, Choice Hotels International, MD

DUFFIELD MILKIE, Executive Vice President,
General Counsel, Secretary, Cedar Fair L.P.,
Sandusky, OH

WILL MOREY, Chief Executive Officer, Morey's
Piers, NJ

MARY MOTSENBOCKER, President and Chief Executive
Officer, International Tourism Marketing, Inc.,
CO

VINAY PATEL, President and Chief Executive
Officer, Fairbrook Hotels, VA

CATHERINE PRATHER, President, National Tour
Association, KY

TRICIA PRIMROSE, Executive Vice President of
Global Communications and Public Affairs,
Marriott International, MD

BRIAN QUINN, Chief Development Officer, Domio, NY

OLGA RAMUDO, President and Chief Executive
Officer, Express Travel, FL

STEPHEN REVETRIA, President, Giants Enterprises,
CA

DANIEL RICHARDS, Founder and Chief Executive
Officer, Global Rescue LLC, MA

ADAM SACKS, President, Tourism Economics, PA

MONICA SMITH, President and Chief Executive,
Southeast Tourism Society, GA

ROB TORRES, Managing Director, Travel, Google,
Inc., WA

RON VLASIC, Chief Operating Officer, Hostmark
Hospitality Group, IL

GREG WEBB, Chief Executive Officer, Travelport,
GA

ALSO PRESENT

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

GINA RAIMONDO, Secretary of Commerce

DIANE FARRELL, Acting Under Secretary for
International Trade

ANNE DRISCOLL, Acting Assistant Secretary for
Industry & Analysis

ISABEL HILL, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Travel and Tourism

CRAIG BUERSTATTE, Deputy Assistant Secretary for
Regional Affairs, Economic Development

Administration

JENNIFER AGUINAGA, Deputy Director for Policy and
Planning, National Travel and Tourism Office,
and Travel and Tourism Advisory Board Designated
Federal Officer

PUBLIC ATTENDEES

CHRIS THOMPSON, President and CEO, Brand USA

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

CAROLINE BETETA, Visit California

ERIK HANSEN, U.S. Travel Association

DON WELSH, Destinations International

CONTENTS

Opening.5
Opening Remarks and Overview of March 4 Board	
Recommendations, Kurt Ekert, Board	
Chair.6
Remarks by Secretary Raimondo and Discussion	
on March 4 Recommendations, Secretary	
Raimondo and Board8
Economic Development Administration Economic	
Adjustment Assistance Overview and	
Discussion of Funding, Secretary	
Raimondo and Board	13
Public Comments, Kurt Ekert, Board Chair	47
Next Steps and Closing Remarks, Kurt Ekert,	
Board Chair; Jennifer Aguinaga,	
Designated Federal Officer	56
Adjourn.	60

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

4:03 p.m.

MS. AGUINAGA: Okay, well, good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to this meeting of the United States Travel and Tourism Advisory Board. As the Designated Federal Officer, I am pleased to officially open the meeting.

A few notes before we begin, please keep yourself on mute when you are not speaking. For those of you wishing to speak, please use the raise your hand feature, if possible. If you are on the phone, please make yourself known by stating your name and the chair will recognize you to take the floor. If you are not a member of the Board, please turn your video off so we can more easily see the Board Members.

We will not be utilizing the chat function during this meeting just for ease of process.

A reminder for those who are joining who are not members of the Board, your opportunity to speak will be during the public comment portion

1 of the agenda.

2 If you have any difficulties while we
3 are on the call, please contact my colleague,
4 Christina Gay, that's christina.gay@trade.gov.

5 With that, again, please remember to
6 mute and I will turn it over to our Board Chair
7 Kurt Ekert.

8 CHAIR EKERT: Jennifer, thank you, and
9 a very warm welcome to everyone today and thank
10 you for joining this meeting of the U.S. Travel
11 and Tourism Advisory Board.

12 So Madam Secretary, we are honored to
13 have you here and we look forward to working with
14 you on addressing the immense challenges that we
15 face within the travel industry.

16 The pandemic has been dislocated for
17 us. The impact on GDP, employment, and all of our
18 communities has been profound, unparalleled, and
19 this industry is one that remains in crisis. We
20 all congratulate you on your appointment and we're
21 excited to partner with you in the months and the
22 years ahead.

1 The Board put in an incredible amount
2 of work in anticipation of your appointment in
3 order to make sure that we could develop
4 recommendations that would be ready for you as
5 soon as you set foot in office. As you know, we
6 addressed the wide range of issues, including how
7 to facilitate safe and secure travel, the
8 importance of financial support for travel-related
9 businesses in the country, and a necessity for an
10 updated national travel and tourism strategy.

11 We also noted the role that digital
12 health passes can and need to play in the recovery
13 of our industry. There's a critical need both for
14 leisure and for business travelers to provide
15 confirmed vaccination records and test results.
16 Today, this is very haphazard, both within the
17 United States and internationally. This is going
18 to require progress on the coordination and the
19 interoperability between these different passes
20 and it will require additional engagement from the
21 U.S. Government and we can really use a lot of
22 help as an industry to move that forward.

1 I can tell you anecdotally in the
2 business travel industry where my company focuses,
3 spending on business travel management remains
4 down 80 to 85 percent globally literally over a
5 year into the pandemic. This is not going to
6 substantively change until this issue, meaning
7 interoperability of digital health passes, gets
8 addressed. Those are just an example of some of
9 the myriad issues that face us as a team and will
10 face you as we look to how we can impact the
11 travel industry's recovery and we look forward to
12 your feedback and your leadership and having a
13 dialogue with you here today.

14 So Madam Secretary, thank you so much
15 again for joining us and the floor is yours.

16 SECRETARY RAIMONDO: Thank you. Good
17 afternoon, everybody. Can you hear me?

18 CHAIR EKERT: Yes.

19 SECRETARY RAIMONDO: Good, great.
20 Well, thank you. It's a pleasure to be with you
21 and I'm joined by a few of my colleagues, Isabel,
22 who everybody knows and loves. And I also have a

1 few other folks on the call here, so I look
2 forward to having a discussion with you.

3 First of all, I understand how crushed
4 your industry is and I would like to work closely
5 with you to play my part in helping to revitalize
6 your industry. Until about a month ago, I was the
7 Governor of Rhode Island which is the Ocean State,
8 which depends heavily on travel and tourism and
9 hospitality jobs: hotels, restaurants, bed and
10 breakfasts, the whole gamut, and leisure travel
11 and business travel. It was brutal to have our
12 convention center close for the whole year. The
13 airport, I saw firsthand how difficult it was.

14 And many businesses won't come back,
15 you know, small boutique hotels, certain
16 restaurants just couldn't withstand it and closed
17 permanently. So I definitely have a real sense of
18 the challenge.

19 Also, I have always valued travel and
20 tourism jobs and your place in the economy and
21 tried to be a leader in that area in my time as
22 Governor. And I like your recommendations and

1 your suggestion that we have to think about how to
2 meet the crisis, but also rebuild to the long run
3 in both leisure and business travel.

4 And I think we're going to have to get
5 creative with business travel because, candidly,
6 I'll let you know a lot of companies are saving a
7 lot of money by spending less on T&E and they may
8 look to continue that because this virtual
9 environment has been reasonably successful. So we
10 will have to really kind of get creative to make
11 sure your industry continues to thrive even as
12 work changes.

13 A few reactions to your
14 recommendations, I'm a strong supporter of more
15 money for Brand USA and would look forward to
16 working with your industry to lobby Congress for
17 that. I think that there is bipartisan support
18 for that kind of a proposal and I think we should
19 work hard on it.

20 So I think we should get together and
21 come up with a specific package that we can align
22 around and I definitely will do my part to lobby

1 Capitol Hill in a bipartisan way to see if we can
2 make that happen and get that done. I think it's
3 more important now than ever, really, I do. And
4 I know your businesses --

5 MS. PORFILIO: Madam Secretary, I think
6 you went on mute.

7 SECRETARY RAIMONDO: That was strange.
8 Can you hear me now?

9 MS. PORFILIO: We can. We lost you
10 after Brand USA.

11 SECRETARY RAIMONDO: I wonder why that
12 happened, I didn't touch anything. Okay, thank
13 you, keep me posted.

14 All I was saying is, you know, there's
15 no visa revenue and there's no extra cash in the
16 seat cushions of your businesses so we have to go
17 to Congress and we should really get together on
18 that, make a plan, come up with a number, come up
19 with a strategy, come up with an approach to make
20 sure that that happens.

21 I also like your suggestion that we
22 refresh our travel and tourism strategy. As I

1 said earlier, I think that's necessary -- it's
2 necessary. It's necessary for the short run and
3 the long run because business is changing and so
4 we need a strategy to get inside of COVID and then
5 build as we go forward.

6 I have been working in the Government
7 in the few weeks that I've been here, and prior to
8 that Isabel and the team have been doing a
9 terrific job, to represent your views to the White
10 House and in the interagency process, particularly
11 around, as you say, some kind of a vaccination
12 credentialing system.

13 And I have known Jeff Zients for a very
14 long time. We worked on many things together when
15 I was Governor, and I have talked to him and his
16 team and the CDC, and Isabel and her team have
17 been doing the same with their counterparts, you
18 know, just really driving home how important this
19 is and how any amount of opening of travel will
20 make a difference, Until most recently I was
21 advocating to allow college students, university
22 students, to come back because any amount of

1 travel makes a difference.

2 Having said that, the administration is
3 clear that the Federal Government will not be the
4 entity that establishes and maintains some kind of
5 credentialing system and I think that's
6 appropriate, but I hear you when you say that the
7 Federal Government needs to play in lending
8 credibility to whatever the private sector comes
9 up with and I'm absolutely prepared to do that.
10 And we are definitely pounding away on this within
11 the administration, rest assured of that.

12 And you should continue to arm me and
13 us with your ideas and your data so that we can be
14 better advocates.

15 So those are my initial thoughts. I
16 have a few things I want to talk about as it
17 relates to the \$3 billion that came to EDA, \$750
18 million of which are for travel and tourism. But
19 before we launch into that, I would just invite
20 whoever, while you have me, a captive audience and
21 the team, what do you think we need to know? You
22 know, what do we need to know in order to get the

1 travel and tourism industry back on its feet?

2 CHAIR EKERT: At this point, I'd ask
3 for Board Members who'd like to ask a question,
4 offer a suggestion, to raise your hand on the
5 raise your hand feature on the technology. If
6 you're on the phone, you literally just have to
7 speak up, there's no way else to identify you.
8 And I'll ask Jennifer to help me spot people who
9 would like to ask the Secretary a question or
10 offer some counsel.

11 So we have -- it looks like Stephanie
12 Jones. Stephanie, you're first in the queue, I
13 believe.

14 MEMBER JONES: Thank you, Kurt. Hello,
15 Secretary, and congratulations on your
16 appointment.

17 SECRETARY RAIMONDO: Thanks.

18 MEMBER JONES: You're welcome. I am
19 Stephanie Jones and I am the founder and CEO of
20 the Cultural Heritage Economic Alliance and I also
21 represent the National Blacks in Travel and
22 Tourism Collaborative.

1 I'd like to ask you a question
2 regarding one of the recommendations. As you are
3 aware and as we all are aware over the past year,
4 COVID, among other social and racial injustices
5 that have unfortunately bared their ugly head in
6 our country, have been on the national front. And
7 most recently as we're watching the George Floyd
8 trial right now and I think over the past year,
9 not only in travel and tourism, but across the
10 nation, corporations and industries are
11 recognizing the importance of building broader
12 diversity, equity, and inclusion, but even more so
13 importantly in travel and tourism.

14 And so I'd love to hear your
15 perspective because one of the recommendations did
16 refer to leveling the playing field for those
17 smaller Black and Brown businesses, as well as
18 rural businesses that are typically not a part of
19 their local tourism ecosystems, but providing
20 funding for capacity building and training so that
21 our industry as we build back better we're
22 building back better a more diverse, equitable,

1 and inclusive industry.

2 So I would love to hear your thoughts
3 about that particular recommendation. Thank you.

4 SECRETARY RAIMONDO: I think that's a
5 very strong recommendation and one that I embrace.
6 I think you are correct in what you say which is
7 to say that COVID has absolutely highlighted the
8 inequities that have long existed, but now there
9 has been a spotlight shone on them.

10 Also, it is true that the smallest
11 businesses and minority-owned, women-owned, have
12 been hit the hardest in your industry and in every
13 industry frankly, harder, harder, you know, with
14 ones that don't have banking relationships or
15 didn't really benefit much from PPP loans, don't
16 know how to access some of the funds, were thinly
17 capitalized to begin with. So I think you're
18 right.

19 I would say since you guys put in your
20 recommendation, the big change since when you put
21 in your recommendation and when we're talking
22 today is the American Rescue Plan passed and

1 there's an awful lot of money there, not loans,
2 grants, funneled through the SBA for small
3 businesses with priority on minority-owned
4 businesses. And I've already been talking with
5 Isabella Guzman who was just confirmed I think a
6 week ago and so that is something we should first
7 of all make sure the community knows about the
8 money, how to get it, where is it, are they
9 eligible. You know, some of this is an awareness
10 campaign.

11 And then beyond that, look, I think
12 you're right and I think ideas, other ideas you
13 have or that we develop over time, I'm wide open
14 to it.

15 MEMBER JONES: Thank you, Secretary.

16 CHAIR EKERT: Thank you. Mary
17 Motsenbocker, I think you are next in the queue.

18 MEMBER MOTSENBOCKER: Madam Secretary,
19 I'd like to thank you so much for your interest
20 and dedication to travel and tourism. And what I
21 would like to talk about today is give you an
22 example of a destination that's just been

1 devastated by COVID and some examples that would
2 be a possibility of this economic development
3 money that's been dedicated to travel and tourism
4 and how it can help them.

5 I'm going to use the island of Kaua'i
6 in Hawaii as an example, one that's close to my
7 heart, but totally devastated. Kuai is a small
8 destination that got huge challenges from travel
9 and tourism, but they have been totally devastated
10 by COVID. Overall, at one point in 2019, they had
11 over 10 million visitors to the islands, \$17
12 billion in visitor spending. The island of Kuai
13 in 2019 had 1.4 million visitors and in 2020, they
14 had 330,000. So their visitation is down 75
15 percent and you can imagine what that's done to
16 tourism jobs on the island. Airline seat capacity
17 is down. They have no drive market, of course,
18 since they're so isolated. And their unemployment
19 went from 2.6 percent to 20 percent.

20 So their challenges prior to COVID were
21 over tourism and anti-visitor sentiment by the
22 locals, so they had challenges to begin with.

1 Unfortunately, with COVID those are still there.
2 So the importance now is rebuilding tourism with
3 a focus on sustainability for the future.

4 SECRETARY RAIMONDO: Mary, you just
5 went on mute.

6 CHAIR EKERT: We can't hear you, Mary.
7 Mary, you're not coming through. I think your
8 question may be about as we build back, how do we
9 do so with a sustainable agenda? I think that may
10 be where you were going.

11 MEMBER MOTSENBOCKER: Can you hear me?

12 CHAIR EKERT: Yes.

13 MEMBER MOTSENBOCKER: Okay. So with --

14 CHAIR EKERT: Let me just ask whoever
15 is not speaking, if you're able to mute your line
16 that would be helpful.

17 MEMBER MOTSENBOCKER: Their needs right
18 now in building and building back correctly are to
19 spread the visitors to less visited communities
20 throughout the region. They need cultural
21 interpretation, signage, interpretive centers.
22 They need to increase access to information

1 through informational signage at cultural sites,
2 hiking trails. They need funding for trail
3 development, trail networks, cultural trails by
4 cars to get them into some of these under-served
5 and under-visited communities throughout the
6 islands. And they need support for an effective
7 planning process to reach these goals.

8 So overall, their need is great. I can
9 continue on and on. I mean it's right now the job
10 loss, the devastation is completely devastating.
11 And so any help that could be given, not only to
12 this particular destination, but destinations
13 throughout the country that are in the same
14 situation would be greatly appreciated. And
15 again, we thank you for your time and your focus
16 on our industry.

17 SECRETARY RAIMONDO: Thank you, Mary.
18 By the way, I spent my honeymoon there, so I know
19 how beautiful it is.

20 MEMBER MOTSENBOCKER: It's a very
21 special place and it's definitely incredible.
22 Thank you.

1 SECRETARY RAIMONDO: And I know the
2 Governor of Hawaii pretty well and I've heard from
3 him how tough it's been. And Senator Schatz is a
4 huge advocate. Anyway, it's sad to hear you say
5 all this and I can tell how difficult it is.

6 So I think what you're saying is
7 investments in infrastructure, what I would call
8 infrastructure, trails, parks, access, et cetera,
9 would help and that is exactly what the EDA money
10 is for, so the good news is relief will be very
11 soon on the way.

12 I think though that's not enough,
13 right? Or maybe it is, you know, but I think some
14 of the other ideas about getting people willing to
15 get back on a plane again, maybe a little bit of
16 money for a promotion will also help and then any
17 other creative ideas that anyone on this call has
18 I think will be necessary. But anyway, the money
19 in EDA is for the kind of infrastructure you're
20 talking about, so hopefully, that will be a help.

21 MEMBER MOTSENBOCKER: Thank you.

22 CHAIR EKERT: Thank you, Madam

1 Secretary.

2 I'm going to ask Daniel Richards to
3 provide comments next. Anybody who is offering
4 comments or questions, please keep it to about two
5 minutes. Thank you.

6 MEMBER RICHARDS: Thank you, Kurt, and
7 good afternoon, Madam Secretary, and thank you so
8 much for taking the time with us to listen to our
9 concerns and comments.

10 My name is Dan Richards. I'm the CEO
11 and founder of a company called Global Rescue.
12 We're in the travel risk and crisis management
13 space and I want to address the vulnerability of
14 our transportation system and to inquire as to
15 what the Federal Government is prepared to do.

16 You know, we know that the points of
17 vulnerability and the tip of the sphere in the
18 COVID fight has been our transportation hubs, so
19 our airports, our bus terminals, places where
20 people congregate when they travel.

21 So I'd love to know what your
22 perspective is on the Federal Government

1 leveraging existing technology and technology that
2 is on the cusp of being developed to be able to
3 detect and provide continuous warning for future
4 human-vectored, breath-borne pathogens. And I
5 know your background is a venture capitalist
6 investing in technology and looking at
7 technologies that could be leveraged in this way
8 might be very advantageous and I think that this
9 is something that would help prevent the next kind
10 of pandemic from occurring.

11 So thank you very much for hearing my
12 question.

13 SECRETARY RAIMONDO: It's an awesome
14 comment. And thank you, Dan, for it. Is that
15 your name, Dan?

16 MEMBER RICHARDS: Yes, ma'am.

17 SECRETARY RAIMONDO: Did I get that
18 right? I'm going to take your comment and idea to
19 my colleagues at HHS and see their reaction to it.
20 Did you have a specific -- I mean, I think it's
21 smart.

22 And as you say, I made a living

1 investing in innovative companies of this kind and
2 they should be on top of this. But is there
3 anything specific you think I could do?

4 MEMBER RICHARDS: Well, I know that the
5 technology exists today to analyze exhaled breath.
6 You could do it relatively rapidly and whether or
7 not it is at a commercial phase where we would be
8 able to deploy it en masse at airports and other
9 points of entry and transit terminal within the
10 U.S. If the Federal Government were to
11 essentially mandate these sorts of requirements or
12 develop RFPs that would allow the private sector
13 to compete for this kind of business, I can
14 certainly see in the not so distant future an
15 environment where when you go to the airport, you
16 not only raise your hand when you get in the tube
17 to have your body scanned, but very rapidly it
18 would be able to also analyze your breath and to
19 be able to determine if there is an outbreak
20 occurring somewhere, whether or not you're an
21 infected individual and rapidly be able to
22 segregate and remediate you to make sure that you

1 don't pass it along to your fellow passengers.

2 And that technology exists today. It's
3 kind of like the Six Million Dollar Man, if you
4 remember growing up watching that show, but you
5 know, we have the technology. We just have to
6 have the will to use it and it would be wonderful
7 if we did demonstrate that will and we were able
8 to make that happen.

9 SECRETARY RAIMONDO: Yes, Thank you.
10 You know what we should do? We should -- I am
11 like totally brand new to this. This is my first
12 TTAB meeting. But can we have like a technology
13 subcommittee or I'm going to give you guys some
14 homework at the end of this phone call, but you
15 should -- we should do this.

16 We should get some tech people on this
17 call, your colleagues in industry, and put
18 together some like proper recommendations that I
19 could then push -- try to advocate for with my
20 colleagues at the FAA and the Department of
21 Transportation and HHS because I think it's a
22 smart idea. But it's a category. It's like how

1 do we use technology, not just one idea, like your
2 idea of breath monitoring, but we should come up
3 with like technology-enabled ways to make travel
4 safer.

5 MEMBER RICHARDS: That would be
6 wonderful and I'd certainly be happy to give you
7 my time, so thank you very much.

8 SECRETARY RAIMONDO: Yes, we'll figure
9 out how to do that.

10 MEMBER RICHARDS: Yes.

11 CHAIR EKERT: And we like being
12 assigned work. That's good.

13 I think we have one more question.
14 That's Will Morey from Morey's Piers in New
15 Jersey. Will.

16 MEMBER MOREY: There we go. Sorry
17 about that.

18 Secretary, thank you very much for your
19 time today. I'm really encouraged by your broad
20 outlook and your experience as Governor and really
21 touching small businesses throughout the state as
22 well.

1 I am President and CEO of Morey's
2 Piers. It's a second generation seaside amusement
3 facility on the Jersey shore.

4 SECRETARY RAIMONDO: You're a legend.
5 It's legendary, Morey's Piers.

6 MEMBER MOREY: That's nice to hear. So
7 we're trying to contribute to that legend just a
8 bit as a second generation.

9 So this is a bit granular, but I think
10 it -- I think it deserves to be raised and that is
11 you had mentioned we were looking at sort of
12 short-term actions that can be accomplished to
13 assist in this recovery. We're on the cusp on
14 making recovery, I think, from COVID.
15 Vaccinations are going, I think, fairly well at
16 this point in time. So we're encouraged, the
17 Jersey shore generally is encouraged by what we
18 see in that.

19 Today is the day that the Summer Work
20 Travel Visa Ban expires and there are about
21 100,000 international students that support
22 tourism throughout the United States. And one of

1 the issues that we've identified and have built a
2 strong coalition including Governor Murphy and
3 Senators Menendez and Booker and others and I
4 understand that Governor Sununu is organizing
5 governors throughout the country as well to
6 support the processing of these international
7 students at embassies throughout the world so that
8 they can make this season.

9 I think once again there's about
10 100,000 students that support the travel and
11 tourism, about 5,000 in New Jersey alone. And
12 without those students, the fact of the matter is
13 businesses will be severely hampered. They will
14 do what we had to do last year which is limit
15 facilities, limit hours. And it has an adverse
16 effect on capital reinvestment and job creation
17 generally. So I just wanted to raise that to
18 your level.

19 As I mentioned, the ban does expire
20 today, but the issue really has been making
21 certain that we have the processing power, so to
22 speak in the embassies that have these students be

1 able to fulfill their hopes and dreams as it were
2 to come to America for this cultural exchange
3 program.

4 SECRETARY RAIMONDO: Do you think that
5 the processing power doesn't exist in the
6 embassies?

7 MEMBER MOREY: It does not at this
8 point in time from what we can see. It is not
9 uniform. There are certain embassies that appear
10 to be engaged. Other embassies who have indicated
11 that they are not able to engage or won't be
12 engaging, so it's -- what is clear at this point
13 is that we're behind and it's probably a 30 day or
14 so window by which we really -- by which the
15 country really needs to be able to advance these
16 in order to make the summer season.

17 So I think this is one of those little
18 things or big situations when it comes to --

19 SECRETARY RAIMONDO: Yes.

20 MEMBER MOREY: It's not something that
21 necessarily will be on a lot of folks' radar, but
22 you know, it's the ice cream shops. It's the

1 amusement facilities.

2 SECRETARY RAIMONDO: No, I'm very
3 familiar with it. Yes. In Rhode Island, on Block
4 Island, for example, or Narragansett or Newport,
5 all the labor is international kids, students.

6 What exactly is it called, the visa?

7 MEMBER MOREY: It's the summer work
8 travel or J-1 visa program. It's been newly named
9 Bridge USA, I believe. I'm not -- I think I have
10 that correct. But it's been known for years as
11 the summer work travel program, program with the
12 State Department for cultural exchange. But it
13 serves a very important supplemental workforce
14 role as well for tourism.

15 SECRETARY RAIMONDO: And your ask is to
16 increase the administrative ability at the
17 embassies to do more throughput of the processing?

18 MEMBER MOREY: I think direction, in
19 fact, that this program should receive a level of
20 priority given the timing, given the critical
21 timing. So I think uniformity in terms of the
22 processing of the visas and essentially the

1 horsepower to be able to turn them around. Once
2 again, it's a 30- to 45-day window and now we're
3 looking at 22. And it would really be a shame for
4 businesses who have -- when COVID struck last
5 year, the model of Morey's Piers was it's all
6 about getting to the summer of '21. It was not
7 about the summer of 2020 anymore. It was about
8 how do we get to May of 2021?

9 So here we are successfully coming to
10 May of 2021 and through the support of the Federal
11 Government, through the PPP program, and other
12 programs and I'm sorry to just focus on us, but
13 we're representative of many others, we stand to
14 at this point without out the support of the
15 supplemental work force, to be shuttering
16 facilities and reducing hours, et cetera, et
17 cetera, so we'll sort of carry our struggle, so to
18 speak, into '21 and now we're looking for the May
19 of 2022, unnecessary if this work force is
20 processed.

21 SECRETARY RAIMONDO: So good news for
22 you, is I have a call with Tony Blinken at five.

1 I'll bring it up, but we'll work it through the
2 proper channels.

3 MEMBER MOREY: Thank you, Secretary.
4 I'm really appreciative of being on this group and
5 I'm really excited about your engagement. I
6 appreciate your time today.

7 CHAIR EKERT: We have one more question
8 before we move to the next topic and that is Duff
9 Milkie. Duff, the floor is yours.

10 MS. AGUINAGA: And Mr. Chair, sorry,
11 sorry to interrupt, but before we go to that we
12 also do have a few phone questions time allowing.

13 CHAIR EKERT: Okay.

14 MEMBER MILKIE: Thanks, and hello,
15 Madam Secretary.

16 I just wanted to echo what Will was
17 saying so that as he said he represents a lot of
18 businesses, I'm general counsel for Cedar Fair.
19 We operate in eight states and the J-1 program is
20 vitally important to us as well and we would share
21 the concerns that Will had raised.

22 And it is vitally important and it

1 really does have an impact on our ability to open
2 up the parks and serve the guests and kind of get
3 the commerce wheel turning. And so I just wanted
4 to add a little bit to what Will said and say that
5 is a common issue and it's one that really has an
6 impact on our parks. We're in eight states,
7 across the U.S., so it will have an impact on all
8 those economies. So I just wanted to add that and
9 I appreciate Will bringing that up. It is a real
10 issue and I appreciate your focus on that and so
11 with that, I'll yield back the time. Thank you.

12 SECRETARY RAIMONDO: I will work on it,
13 but you guys really don't think you could find
14 domestic help even in this labor market?

15 MEMBER MOREY: I think one of the
16 issues that comes up there is with the colleges
17 being off-cycle because of COVID and they're
18 having virtual classes, et cetera, the normal
19 distribution channels that you go to to get people
20 and recruit them into your workforce are
21 disrupted, and the fact that we were closed last
22 year or disrupted last year, has kind of got us

1 off pattern. And so you lose that contact and
2 then the uncertainty are the parks going open?
3 What are the regulations around it for summer jobs
4 has kids taking other summer jobs that maybe have
5 a little bit more certainty in terms that their
6 employability for this year. So there's all kinds
7 of that disruption in the normal course of
8 activities of recruitment to work in these
9 seasonal businesses and so that makes that
10 situation that much more difficult.

11 And in a typical year, we rely heavily,
12 as you mentioned, you know, in some of the
13 businesses that you've seen, we rely heavily on J-
14 1 workers, international workers in the shoulder
15 season, spring and fall, when kids return to
16 school.

17 SECRETARY RAIMONDO: Yes.

18 CHAIR EKERT: We have two questions on
19 the phone line and I'm going to ask each of them
20 to keep their comments or questions to 30 seconds,
21 just make the point and the question, so the
22 Secretary can respond.

1 MS. AGUINAGA: And first we have Olga
2 Ramudo.

3 CHAIR EKERT: Hey, Olga.

4 MEMBER RAMUDO: Thank you.

5 CHAIR EKERT: Olga, we cannot hear you.

6 MEMBER RAMUDO: Can you hear me now?

7 SECRETARY RAIMONDO: Yes.

8 CHAIR EKERT: All right, we can't hear
9 you.

10 Jen, who else is on the line?

11 MS. AGUINAGA: Brian Quinn.

12 CHAIR EKERT: All right, Brian.

13 MEMBER RAMUDO: Can you hear me?

14 CHAIR EKERT: Olga, you're fading in
15 and out so let's defer the question until the
16 future.

17 Brian, what's your question?

18 Okay, at this point, we're going to
19 move on and we can handle questions within the
20 Board later, after the Secretary goes because I
21 know your time is very tight, Madam Secretary.

22 You mentioned earlier the funding for

1 the Economic Development Administration and really
2 interested to understand what that is and the
3 application for travel and the opportunity in
4 front of us.

5 SECRETARY RAIMONDO: Excellent. Okay.
6 Thank you. So as part of the rescue package,
7 Congress appropriated \$3 billion to the Economic
8 Development Agency within Commerce -- are you guys
9 there? Can you hear me?

10 CHAIR EKERT: Yes, we can.

11 SECRETARY RAIMONDO: Okay. And
12 prescribed that a minimum of \$750 million of the
13 \$3 billion must be allocated to communities that
14 have suffered economic losses on account of the
15 decline in travel and tourism and outdoor
16 recreation. So that's what we have. It's a floor
17 of \$750 million. We could choose to go higher if
18 we felt it was a good idea. But even if we went
19 higher, it's really -- it's exciting. It's a lot
20 of money. We could a lot of good with three
21 quarters of a billion dollars. But in the context
22 of a trillion dollar industry, you know, it's not

1 that much money which means we have to be
2 creative, smart, targeted, and leverage the money.

3 What do I mean leverage the money? Get
4 other -- you know, maybe we get states to match
5 what we put out there because states have just
6 received an awful lot of money from the rescue
7 package, maybe the private sector, you know. We
8 really need to be creative so we can maximize the
9 impact of the \$750 million.

10 Now let me give you some of the
11 guidelines of what we can and cannot use the money
12 for statutorily, what's required. The money --
13 again, the money is supposed to go to communities.
14 The money cannot be used for for-profit companies,
15 like we can't subsidize losses of the company or
16 grant any of the money to any for-profit entity.

17 The money can go to state government,
18 local government, non-profits, institutes of
19 higher education. It could go to like state run
20 tourism promotion agencies. So those are the
21 kinds of non-profits and state entities it could
22 go to.

1 It can be dispersed as a block grant so
2 we could just through competitive process put the
3 money out to states, maybe with some preference
4 for states that rely more heavily on travel and
5 tourism as a piece of their economy.

6 Related to the discussion we had about
7 Kaua'i, the funds can be used for infrastructure
8 projects or non-infrastructure projects. So
9 infrastructure could be anything from patching up
10 trails on the leisure side. But also think on the
11 business side, you know, how do we have to change
12 convention centers, for example, so people feel
13 comfortable going back into them.

14 A comment was made earlier about
15 technology. You know, that's infrastructure. Any
16 kind of infrastructure that we could invest in to
17 make business travel or leisure travel safer,
18 people more comfortable. Those investments are
19 allowed.

20 And non-infrastructure, promotion,
21 marketing, loan programs for small and medium-size
22 businesses, technical assistance for capacity

1 building for cities and states and non-profits,
2 technical assistance to redo plans in light of the
3 new world in which we're living.

4 So I have two priorities. One is to
5 get this money out the door as fast as possible as
6 people are struggling now and also, to do it in a
7 way that's highly targeted and most impactful.

8 So my assignment for you -- my mission
9 for you should you choose to accept it, is to come
10 back to me in a few weeks' time with your best
11 ideas and recommendations. I would ask you to
12 give us recommendations for both leisure projects,
13 leisure travel, and also business travel, because
14 they're different, obviously. I don't have to tell
15 you that.

16 You know, I think that hopefully,
17 leisure travel has an okay summer, but business
18 travel, we really want it to come back after Labor
19 Day with some gusto, if not before. And so I'm
20 highly interested to hear your ideas for how we
21 make that happen, whatever kinds of investments we
22 need to make in order to incentivize that, I'm

1 wide open to it.

2 So your homework is due April 23rd
3 because we need to move. So I'm asking you if you
4 could to convene yourselves, work together,
5 solicit ideas from industry, put things on paper,
6 and come back to us with specific recommendations
7 by April 23rd, leisure and the business, about how
8 we spend this money.

9 And again, it's a minimum of 750 and I
10 probably have a little bit of ability to go a bit
11 above that if you have great ideas.

12 CHAIR EKERT: That is terrific. I
13 think we definitely love the focus on
14 infrastructure and really helping out the industry
15 long term, but given the crisis nature of the
16 industry from a job and a GDP standpoint, I think
17 there's a bias probably on the Board toward demand
18 stimulative spending, things that are really going
19 to impact the industry over the next 6 to 12
20 months.

21 We will organize and I'll talk about
22 that in a few minutes about how we're going to

1 organize against your request, but in the meantime
2 we have the opportunity for folks in the meeting,
3 again, TTAB members to offer their points of view
4 or ask any further questions about the EDA funding
5 and how that works.

6 If you have a question please hit the
7 raise your hand feature. If you are on the phone,
8 you can ask via phone, too, and hopefully that
9 will work better, old technology.

10 MS. AGUINAGA: Mr. Chair, it looks like
11 we have Brad Dean.

12 CHAIR EKERT: Brad is our Vice Chair,
13 Madam Chairman.

14 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Thank you, Mr.
15 Chairman, and greetings, saludos from Puerto Rico,
16 Madam Secretary, delighted to be with you and
17 could not agree more with what you just said.
18 This is a historic opportunity and really, really
19 glad to hear you tackling it with such eagerness.

20 We would encourage you to think of that
21 \$750 as a floor, not a ceiling, and a really low
22 floor. Frankly, you could put the whole \$3

1 billion there and there would still be unmet
2 needs, but I think your point -- you have a
3 network of destination marketers all throughout
4 the nation who work and are closely aligned with
5 their state tourism agencies and those
6 organizations serve the private sector.

7 In my case in Puerto Rico, I have 5100
8 businesses that I'm actively marketing. So by
9 putting those dollars into those organizations,
10 you will get the private sector engaged and all of
11 us work with Brand USA.

12 So you've got this trifecta of
13 promoters. Think of them as the cars at the
14 beginning of a NASCAR race or the Indy 500.
15 They're in the car, they're ready to go, their
16 foot is on the gas pedal. We just need some fuel
17 in the tank and I think we're ready to go.

18 We will come back to you with some very
19 creative and innovative ideas with both the
20 leisure and the business segment. The one thing
21 we would encourage our friends at the EDA do, they
22 are phenomenally talented people, but they do tend

1 to lean more towards the supply side. We really
2 need to be eager and active in attacking this
3 opportunity on the demand side. And if we do
4 that, this won't just be transitional to get us
5 from where we were to where we need to go, it will
6 be transformational for industry. It's a one-time
7 opportunity and this will be the most amazing
8 comeback story in the history of our industry.

9 Thank you for your leadership and
10 looking forward to working with you on this.

11 SECRETARY RAIMONDO: Thank you. What
12 do you mean precisely by supply side?

13 VICE CHAIR DEAN: My experience from
14 having worked with the EDA, not to be critical,
15 but I've worked with them in two states and now a
16 territory, is they're very, very good on the
17 infrastructure side in helping mastermind the
18 supply side.

19 If I came to them today with a plan to
20 retrofit my convention center with a state-of-the-
21 art ventilation system, they would be all over it.
22 When I start talking about marketing and sales and

1 promotions, I think they get a little weak.

2 And in fairness, 10 or 15 years ago,
3 our industry didn't do a great job of measuring
4 this. Now every destination marketing organization
5 in the nation not only knows how to measure its
6 impact, they can measure the extended impact on
7 other industries. And as you know from your
8 experience with Rhode Island, travel and tourism
9 is a first stake for economic development.

10 So not to be critical of EDA, I just
11 think EDA needs to approach this maybe with a
12 slightly different focus. I can assure you not
13 only are you going to get a great return on
14 investment, you're going to get a quick return on
15 investment.

16 SECRETARY RAIMONDO: Yes, okay. Well,
17 the money is allowed to be used for promotion, as
18 I said. I mean that's permissible according to
19 the statute. So I hear you.

20 CHAIR EKERT: Thank you. Jennifer, do
21 you know -- are there additional questions on the
22 line? I'm not sure if people --

1 SECRETARY RAIMONDO: I'd like to give
2 Isabel to have a second to pipe in.

3 Anything that I've missed or you'd like
4 to add, Isabel?

5 MS. HILL: No, Madam Secretary. I
6 think you've covered it very well and I think that
7 when Brad was talking about the supply side I
8 think that that is what we're referring to at the
9 infrastructure side. And I think EDA historically
10 has done an excellent job on that and I think that
11 the kind of opportunities that will be coming back
12 to you from the Travel and Tourism Advisory Board
13 will have both.

14 And I think also from my conversations,
15 one of the things I think is very interesting to
16 explore is looking at the opportunities that this
17 money can do to help support some of the previous
18 recommendations that came to you before. For
19 example, on the cultural heritage side, some of
20 the things that May was talking about.

21 One of the questions that I would have
22 for the group is essentially with respect to how

1 quickly you have found in the process of applying
2 for money.

3 Brad, you were talking about that you'd
4 get a return on investment and get it in. I'm
5 wondering whether or not you have, anybody on the
6 call has any experience with working with EDA and
7 talking about innovative ways for a speed to
8 market with this money.

9 As the Secretary said, I think she's
10 interested in getting that out in people's hands
11 as quickly as possible.

12 VICE CHAIR DEAN: I'll offer just an
13 example, not specific to EDA, but in Puerto Rico,
14 it's going to take the Federal Government about 90
15 days to get its money back in federal taxes on the
16 money we're investing and promotion through the
17 CDBG Program. That's the good news. The bad news
18 is it took us over two and a half years to get our
19 hands on the money. And I don't think we're the
20 exception. I think you'll find the industry can
21 turn results around very, very quickly, especially
22 in their environment where there is pent-up

1 demand, but as you pointed out, we've got to be
2 creative on the business side.

3 The great thing is all those
4 destination marketers and state tourism agencies
5 typically cover leisure and business, so they'll
6 be ready to deliver quick returns.

7 CHAIR EKERT: We have about one more
8 question or comment and that's Liz Fitzsimmons.
9 And Liz, if you can keep it relatively brief, that
10 would be great. Liz, can you hear me? Liz,
11 we're not able to hear you if you're speaking.

12 All right, well Liz, I'm sure it was a
13 great comment.

14 Madam Secretary, what we want to do now
15 is just open the floor for public comment which we
16 typically do during this. There were three
17 preregistered asks for public comments and there
18 may be other people who want to talk as well.

19 I'd ask that for anybody offering
20 public comment, if you can use the raise your hand
21 feature and keep your commentary or your questions
22 to two minutes or less.

1 First is going to be Caroline Beteta
2 from Visit California, Caroline, the floor is
3 yours if you are there.

4 MS. BETETA: Thank you, Kurt. And
5 thank you, Madam Secretary, really appreciate
6 today's conversations and I'll be brief because
7 Brad, my colleague, Brad, did such a great job
8 articulating our issues with the EDA.

9 You know, in the West, they've been
10 terrific. They've been a great voice, very
11 patient, a lot of dialogue, but they want to be
12 compliant with their vision of the rules, so
13 they're very focused on infrastructure and have
14 been very resistant to travel promotion, i.e.,
15 advertising or paid advertising which has made it
16 difficult for success.

17 As you may know, there was only about
18 \$15 to \$20 million that were distributed during
19 the last round. So your vision and insights
20 around travel promotion being allowed is going to
21 be so helpful in terms of the clarity that some of
22 these regional administrators need to be able to

1 work with us.

2 We also in California, you know, we
3 drew up the 9/11 playbook. Very similar in terms
4 of, except for those few areas of impact, we were
5 dealing with a consumer sentiment or consumer
6 confidence issue. And we see the same here today
7 that if we can get our voice out and that help
8 from EDA money, we can create jobs very quickly.
9 We have a history of creating jobs faster coming
10 out of even the last recession. Of course, our
11 administrators in the West want to see resiliency
12 as a number one notion of how we would maintain
13 and actually expand that and you know, one of the
14 great things about the travel industry is it's
15 very labor intensive. These jobs can't be
16 outsourced.

17 And just to your point, Madam
18 Secretary, on the meetings front, meetings are
19 booked five years in advance, so it gives
20 consistency for these communities knowing this
21 massive amount of income is coming into the
22 community. But again, like you aid, we've got to

1 engender confidence. We've got to put out that
2 open for business messaging. There's not clarity
3 around that, but our industry is poised and ready
4 to go.

5 I'll just leave it with I'll take
6 Brad's metaphor of the NASCAR car one step further
7 and say the industry has paid for the design and
8 building of that car. In California, 99 percent
9 of tourism promotion comes from 21,000 investors.
10 They just need a one-time fuel to start that
11 engine for the recovery for America. Until those
12 jobs come back, we're just not fully recovered.
13 You know that. You've been a huge leader in
14 passion about tourism. I've heard a lot of great
15 things about you, Madame Secretary.

16 CHAIR EKERT: Caroline, thank you. I'm
17 going to ask people going forward to keep their
18 comments to a minute because we're running out of
19 time here.

20 Next is -- go ahead, Madame Secretary.
21 I'm sorry.

22 SECRETARY RAIMONDO: I was going to say

1 I heard you and I appreciate it. Thank you.

2 MS. BETETA: Appreciate your
3 leadership.

4 MR. WELSH: Kurt, thank you. And Madam
5 Secretary, it's an absolute honor and a pleasure
6 to meet you. I'm in Washington, D.C. and I have
7 the good fortune to -- I head up an organization
8 called Destinations International.

9 Madam Secretary, we have 625 CVD/DMO
10 organizations in 15 countries. However, we have
11 486 that are U.S. And yesterday, I'll keep my
12 overview brief, Isabel convened a meeting with us
13 yesterday which was very productive. Caroline
14 Beteta was on the call, as well as Chris Thompson.
15 We had about 90 minutes with Isabel to begin
16 talking about with the major gateways
17 destinations, what we need to do to recover.

18 I can tell you all the things that you
19 already know that when the pandemic kicked in,
20 most of the organizations are (c)(6) nonprofits.
21 They rely heavily, as you know, on hotel taxes or
22 visitor taxes. They were decimated. I'm extremely

1 proud of our industry, how we've responded. I
2 don't think the value proposition in many
3 destinations has been greater in terms of
4 understanding what it does to the local community,
5 and we continue to demonstrate the important work
6 there.

7 If I have, I guess, some silver linings
8 that have come out of the pandemic, there have
9 been few, but I think right now getting back to
10 Brad's comments and many that have already spoken,
11 the good news is some of the segments are coming
12 back and we were highly encouraged when President
13 Biden put out the May target for vaccines and
14 getting back to travel and we really feel
15 confident right now. The two segments that are
16 really coming back strong are domestic leisure and
17 also we're beginning to see meetings and events
18 take place.

19 The unfortunate thing on meetings and
20 events, they differ in many cases city to city,
21 state to state, but the good news is they're
22 coming back, and many destinations, they actually

1 have a demand issue, not being able to provide the
2 facilities and the dates that planners want. '22
3 and '23 are looking very strong, so in our
4 conversations with Isabel yesterday, the whole
5 premise gets around. We feel very strongly that
6 the U.S. CVD destination organizations can help
7 kick start the economy with additional funding
8 from a marketing standpoint which will put people
9 back to work, reopen facilities that have been
10 closed, so therefore infrastructure needs, I
11 think, are minimal with many of the discussions
12 we've had. And then we can get real creative on
13 what we need to do to get meetings and conventions
14 back. Because as you know, from your days as
15 Governor, you know they are predictable. We have
16 dates. We have all the information necessary on
17 the economic impact.

18 So there is --

19 CHAIR EKERT: Thank you.

20 MR. WELSH: Thank you, Kurt, appreciate
21 it.

22 CHAIR EKERT: Madam Secretary, we have

1 time for one more public comment and that's going
2 to be from Erik Hansen of the U.S. Travel
3 Association. Erik.

4 MR. HANSEN: Madam Secretary, thank you
5 so much for being here. Thank you for meeting
6 with our CEOs last week.

7 I'll be brief. On the international
8 front, we're so pleased to hear your support for
9 Brand USA. Thank you for that. We look forward
10 to working with you. Brand USA will be most
11 effective when the borders are open. So not only
12 do we need the promotion side, but we need a plan,
13 a roadmap for reopening international travel and
14 a definitive timeline to help do it. We're
15 supporting public health and safety data as the
16 framework for doing that, but that's what has to
17 be put in place.

18 We've heard concerns to keep the
19 borders closed. We need to know what it's going
20 to take to reopen them. So your help and working
21 with your colleagues and CDC, DHS and others is
22 going to be absolutely essential, so thank you.

1 On meetings and events, similar
2 framework is needed where CDC can say here's what
3 it takes to meet in person safely and again, I
4 think the Tourism Policy Council and the GTAB can
5 help come up with that framework. CDC can sign
6 off and people can have confidence going back to
7 business travel.

8 And the last thing is going to be about
9 incentives for demand. You've heard this all over
10 again today, but the infrastructure is there, but
11 the infrastructure is empty, and bringing back
12 demand through promotion is going to be a key
13 part. EDA can play a role in that. And then last
14 thing, tax incentives have been used after ever
15 disaster to help impacted industries. There is
16 bipartisan legislation in Congress to provide tax
17 incentives to restore meetings and events, but
18 also to make sure that the leisure travel demand
19 is equitable.

20 We know that a lot of leisure travel is
21 going to come back, but low to middle income
22 households, our data shows that they are not as

1 likely to travel and we can provide tax incentives
2 to those families to reconnect with each other
3 which will also help to bring back jobs. So
4 support for that tax incentive package could be
5 really, really important in making sure we shorten
6 the timeline for recovery because in the travel
7 industry demand is related to employment. When
8 demand comes back, employment comes back. That's
9 how we can shorten the timeline.

10 So thank you so much. Already in your
11 short tenure, you've been an incredible leader and
12 we can't wait to work with you.

13 CHAIR EKERT: Erik, thank you.

14 Madam Secretary, before we move to next
15 steps, any other comments or insights you want to
16 share?

17 SECRETARY RAIMONDO: Yes, I want to
18 respond to that, please. So thank you. That was
19 very, very helpful. When you come back to me on
20 the 23rd with some good suggestions for how to
21 spend the \$750 million, you know, if you have a --
22 obviously, I need a holistic plan, right? Like

1 how much in Brand USA? And how do we propose
2 approaching that?

3 I'm intrigued by the tax incentive
4 idea. It makes total sense to me. I don't know
5 if we can get that done, but send me some details
6 around it. I think it's very smart. Maybe it's
7 time limited. Tax incentives for a year or
8 something, just to -- as you said, get the average
9 American willing to spend and go again.

10 So no, I would just simply say thank
11 you all for your time. It's a good discussion and
12 we'll keep pressing. I'm an advocate in the
13 inter-agency process to open the borders, like you
14 just said, appropriately. So I'll keep doing that
15 and then you come back to us in a few weeks with
16 some more specifics.

17 CHAIR EKERT: That's great, Madam
18 Secretary. And just as a note to follow up on
19 your request of the Board and for everybody, this
20 is specific to the EDA, the supplemental funding
21 opportunity, we're going to form two
22 subcommittees. The first will be led by our Vice

1 Chair Brad Dean. And that's going to be a
2 subcommittee focused on business travel, again,
3 looking at both infrastructure and non-
4 infrastructure opportunities.

5 The second subcommittee will be focused
6 on leisure travel and this will be led by Liz
7 Fitzsimmons. I think given the Secretary's focus
8 within each of these we should consider also
9 technology opportunities that may lend themselves
10 to EDA.

11 And so for each of you, please let
12 Jennifer Aguinaga on the NTTTO staff know which
13 subcommittee you'd like to help out on, as soon as
14 possible. Of course, as we go through all of
15 this, Isabel and the entire NTTTO team will be
16 instrumental in guiding us and helping us along so
17 that we can deliver meaningful and very tangible
18 recommendations to the Secretary very rapidly.

19 And Madam Secretary, I want to really
20 thank you for your time today. It's clear that
21 you have a tremendous awareness of the industry.
22 You are responsive, you're very action oriented,

1 and I think we are tickled pink and really excited
2 for the opportunity to work with you and to help
3 you really restore the industry as we go forward.
4 So thank you again, it's a real privilege to be
5 working with you.

6 SECRETARY RAIMONDO: Thank you for your
7 time, for your leadership. I look forward to
8 working with you more.

9 CHAIR EKERT: Thank you. I'm going to
10 ask that after we close the call that the TTAB
11 members stay on just so Jennifer can make sure she
12 has a record of who's here. And with that, I'm
13 going to turn the phone over to Jennifer to close
14 the meeting. But thank you, everyone, for your
15 participation.

16 MS. AGUINAGA: Thank you, Mr. Chair,
17 and thank you all for participating in today's
18 meeting. As Kurt mentioned, if you could just
19 stay on the line after the meeting is officially
20 closed. I'll just record your attendance for the
21 record. And with that, this meeting of the Travel
22 and Tourism Advisory Board is officially closed.

1 Have a wonderful evening, everyone.

2 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
3 went off the record at 5:01 p.m.)
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<p>A</p> <p>ability 30:16 33:1 40:10 able 19:15 23:2 24:8,18 24:19,21 25:7 29:1,11 29:15 31:1 47:11 48:22 53:1 above-entitled 60:2 absolute 51:5 absolutely 13:9 16:7 54:22 accept 39:9 access 16:16 19:22 21:8 accomplished 27:12 account 36:14 Acting 3:2,3,5 action 58:22 actions 27:12 active 43:2 actively 42:8 activities 34:8 ADAM 2:13 add 33:4,8 45:4 additional 7:20 44:21 53:7 address 22:13 addressed 7:6 8:8 addressing 6:14 Adjourn 4:22 Adjustment 4:12 administration 3:9 4:11 13:2,11 36:1 administrative 30:16 administrators 48:22 49:11 advance 29:15 49:19 advantageous 23:8 adverse 28:15 advertising 48:15,15 Advisory 1:4 3:12 5:5 6:11 45:12 59:22 advocate 21:4 25:19 57:12 advocates 13:14 advocating 12:21 Affairs 1:21 2:7 3:8,18 afternoon 5:4 8:17 22:7 agencies 37:20 42:5 47:4 Agency 36:8 agenda 6:1 19:9 ago 9:6 17:6 44:2 agree 41:17 Aguinaga 3:10 4:19 5:3 32:10 35:1,11 41:10 58:12 59:16 ahead 6:22 50:20 aid 49:22</p>	<p>Airline 18:16 airport 9:13 24:15 airports 22:19 24:8 align 10:21 aligned 42:4 Alliance 1:20 14:20 allocated 36:13 allow 12:21 24:12 allowed 38:19 44:17 48:20 allowing 32:12 amazing 43:7 America 1:1 29:2 50:11 American 16:22 57:9 amount 7:1 12:19,22 49:21 amusement 27:2 30:1 Analysis 3:4 analyze 24:5,18 anecdotally 8:1 ANNE 3:3 anti-visitor 18:21 anticipation 7:2 anybody 22:3 46:5 47:19 anymore 31:7 anyway 21:4,18 appear 29:9 application 36:3 applying 46:1 appointment 6:20 7:2 14:16 appreciate 32:6 33:9,10 48:5 51:1,2 53:20 appreciated 20:14 appreciative 32:4 approach 11:19 44:11 approaching 57:2 appropriate 13:6 appropriated 36:7 appropriately 57:14 April 40:2,7 area 9:21 areas 49:4 Arizona 1:18 arm 13:12 art 43:21 articulating 48:8 asking 40:3 asks 47:17 assigned 26:12 assignment 39:8 assist 27:13 assistance 4:12 38:22 39:2 Assistant 1:21 3:3,5,7 Association 2:6 3:18 3:20 54:3</p>	<p>assure 44:12 assured 13:11 attacking 43:2 attendance 59:20 ATTENDEES 3:15 audience 13:20 average 57:8 aware 15:3,3 awareness 17:9 58:21 awesome 23:13 awful 17:1 37:6 AZ 1:19</p> <p>B</p> <p>back 9:14 12:22 14:1 15:21,22 19:8,18 21:15 33:11 38:13 39:10,18 40:6 42:18 45:11 46:15 50:12 52:9,12,14,16,22 53:9 53:14 55:6,11,21 56:3 56:8,8,19 57:15 background 23:5 bad 46:17 ban 27:20 28:19 banking 16:14 bared 15:5 BARNES 3:17 beautiful 20:19 bed 9:9 beginning 42:14 52:17 believe 14:13 30:9 benefit 16:15 best 39:10 Beteta 3:19 48:1,4 51:2 51:14 better 13:14 15:21,22 41:9 beyond 17:11 bias 40:17 Biden 52:13 big 16:20 29:18 billion 13:17 18:12 36:7 36:13,21 42:1 bipartisan 10:17 11:1 55:16 bit 21:15 27:8,9 33:4 34:5 40:10,10 Black 15:17 Blacks 14:21 Blinken 31:22 block 30:3 38:1 Board 1:4,10 3:12 4:3,4 4:9,14,16,19 5:6,15 5:16,21 6:6,11 7:1 14:3 35:20 40:17 45:12 57:19 59:22 body 24:17</p>	<p>booked 49:19 Booker 28:3 borders 54:11,19 57:13 boutique 9:15 Brad 1:14 41:11,12 45:7 46:3 48:7,7 58:1 Brad's 50:6 52:10 brand 3:16 10:15 11:10 25:11 42:11 54:9,10 57:1 breakfasts 9:10 breath 24:5,18 26:2 breath-borne 23:4 Brian 2:8 35:11,12,17 Bridge 30:9 brief 47:9 48:6 51:12 54:7 bring 32:1 56:3 bringing 33:9 55:11 broad 26:19 broader 15:11 Brown 15:17 brutal 9:11 BUERSTATTE 3:7 build 12:5 15:21 19:8 building 15:11,20,22 19:18,18 39:1 50:8 built 28:1 bus 22:19 business 7:14 8:2,3 9:11 10:3,5 12:3 24:13 38:11,17 39:13 39:17 40:7 42:20 47:2 47:5 50:2 55:7 58:2 businesses 7:9 9:14 11:4,16 15:17,18 16:11 17:3,4 26:21 28:13 31:4 32:18 34:9 34:13 38:22 42:8</p> <p>C</p> <p>c 51:20 CA 2:10 California 3:19 48:2 49:2 50:8 call 6:3 9:1 21:7,17 25:14,17 31:22 46:6 51:14 59:10 called 22:11 30:6 51:8 campaign 17:10 candidly 10:5 capacity 15:20 18:16 38:22 capital 28:16 capitalist 23:5 capitalized 16:17 Capitol 11:1 captive 13:20</p>
--	---	--	---

car 42:15 50:6,8
Caroline 3:19 48:1,2
 50:16 51:13
carry 31:17
cars 20:4 42:13
case 42:7
cases 52:20
cash 11:15
category 25:22
CATHERINE 2:6
CDBG 46:17
CDC 12:16 54:21 55:2,5
Cedar 2:1 32:18
ceiling 41:21
center 9:12 43:20
centers 19:21 38:12
CEO 3:16 14:19 22:10
 27:1
CEOs 54:6
certain 9:15 28:21 29:9
certainly 24:14 26:6
certainty 34:5
cetera 21:8 31:16,17
 33:18
chair 1:11,13,14 4:5,16
 4:19 5:13 6:6,8 8:18
 14:2 17:16 19:6,12,14
 21:22 26:11 32:7,10
 32:13 34:18 35:3,5,8
 35:12,14 36:10 40:12
 41:10,12,12,14 43:13
 44:20 46:12 47:7
 50:16 53:19,22 56:13
 57:17 58:1 59:9,16
Chairman 41:13,15
challenge 9:18
challenges 6:14 18:8
 18:20,22
change 8:6 16:20 38:11
changes 10:12
changing 12:3
channels 32:2 33:19
chat 5:17
Chief 1:13,14,16,17,19
 2:2,3,5,8,9,11,14,18
 2:20
Choice 1:22
choose 36:17 39:9
Chris 3:16 51:14
Christina 6:4
christina.gay@trade....
 6:4
cities 39:1
city 52:20,20
clarity 48:21 50:2
classes 33:18
clear 13:3 29:12 58:20
Cleveland 1:16,17

close 9:12 18:6 59:10
 59:13
closed 9:16 33:21
 53:10 54:19 59:20,22
closely 9:4 42:4
Closing 4:18
coalition 28:2
Collaborative 14:22
colleague 6:3 48:7
colleagues 8:21 23:19
 25:17,20 54:21
college 12:21
colleges 33:16
come 9:14 10:21 11:18
 11:18,19 12:22 26:2
 29:2 39:9,18 40:6
 42:18 50:12 52:8 55:5
 55:21 56:19 57:15
comeback 43:8
comes 13:8 29:18
 33:16 50:9 56:8,8
comfortable 38:13,18
coming 19:7 31:9 45:11
 49:9,21 52:11,16,22
comment 5:22 23:14,18
 38:14 47:8,13,15,20
 54:1
commentary 47:21
comments 4:16 22:3,4
 22:9 34:20 47:17
 50:18 52:10 56:15
commerce 1:2 3:1,2
 33:3 36:8
commercial 24:7
Commission 1:17
common 33:5
Communications 2:7
communities 6:18
 19:19 20:5 36:13
 37:13 49:20
community 17:7 49:22
 52:4
companies 10:6 24:1
 37:14
company 8:2 22:11
 37:15
compete 24:13
competitive 38:2
completely 20:10
compliant 48:12
concerns 22:9 32:21
 54:18
confidence 49:6 50:1
 55:6
confident 52:15
confirmed 7:15 17:5
congratulate 6:20
congratulations 14:15

congregate 22:20
Congress 10:16 11:17
 36:7 55:16
consider 58:8
consistency 49:20
consumer 49:5,5
contact 6:3 34:1
CONTENTS 4:1
context 36:21
continue 10:8 13:12
 20:9 52:5
continues 10:11
continuous 23:3
contribute 27:7
convene 40:4
convened 51:12
convention 9:12 38:12
 43:20
conventions 53:13
conversations 45:14
 48:6 53:4
coordination 7:18
corporations 15:10
correct 16:6 30:10
correctly 19:18
Council 55:4
counsel 1:21 2:1 14:10
 32:18
counterparts 12:17
countries 51:10
country 7:9 15:6 20:13
 28:5 29:15
course 18:17 34:7
 49:10 58:14
cover 47:5
covered 45:6
COVID 12:4 15:4 16:7
 18:1,10,20 19:1 22:18
 27:14 31:4 33:17
CRAIG 3:7
cream 29:22
create 49:8
creating 49:9
creation 28:16
creative 10:5,10 21:17
 37:2,8 42:19 47:2
 53:12
credentialing 12:12
 13:5
credibility 13:8
crisis 6:19 10:2 22:12
 40:15
critical 7:13 30:20
 43:14 44:10
crushed 9:3
cultural 1:20 14:20
 19:20 20:1,3 29:2
 30:12 45:19

cushions 11:16
cusp 23:2 27:13
CVD 53:6
CVD/DMO 51:9
CWT 1:13

D

D.C 51:6
Dan 22:10 23:14,15
Daniel 2:11 22:2
data 13:13 54:15 55:22
dates 53:2,16
DAVID 1:16
day 27:19 29:13 39:19
days 46:15 53:14
DC 1:20
dealing 49:5
Dean 1:14 41:11,14
 43:13 46:12 58:1
DEBBIE 1:18
decimated 51:22
decline 36:15
dedicated 18:3
dedication 17:20
defer 35:15
definitely 9:17 10:22
 13:10 20:21 40:13
definitive 54:14
delighted 41:16
deliver 47:6 58:17
demand 40:17 43:3
 47:1 53:1 55:9,12,18
 56:7,8
demonstrate 25:7 52:5
Department 1:2 3:1
 25:20 30:12
depends 9:8
deploy 24:8
Deputy 3:5,7,10
deserves 27:10
design 50:7
Designated 3:12 4:20
 5:6
destination 1:16 17:22
 18:8 20:12 42:3 44:4
 47:4 53:6
destinations 3:21 20:12
 51:8,17 52:3,22
details 57:5
detect 23:3
determine 24:19
devastated 18:1,7,9
devastating 20:10
devastation 20:10
develop 7:3 17:13
 24:12
developed 23:2
development 2:8 3:8

4:11 18:2 20:3 36:1,8
44:9
DHS 54:21
dialogue 8:13 48:11
DIANE 3:2
differ 52:20
difference 12:20 13:1
different 7:19 39:14
44:12
difficult 9:13 21:5 34:10
48:16
difficulties 6:2
digital 7:11 8:7
direction 30:18
Director 1:15,18 2:16
3:10
disaster 55:15
Discove 1:14
discussion 4:7,13 9:2
38:6 57:11
discussions 53:11
dislocated 6:16
dispersed 38:1
disrupted 33:21,22
disruption 34:7
distant 24:14
distributed 48:18
distribution 33:19
diverse 15:22
diversity 15:12
doing 12:8,17 54:16
57:14
dollar 25:3 36:22
dollars 36:21 42:9
domestic 33:14 52:16
Domio 2:8
DON 3:21
door 39:5
dreams 29:1
drew 49:3
DRISCOLL 3:3
drive 18:17
driving 12:18
due 40:2
Duff 32:8,9
DUFFIELD 2:1

E

eager 43:2
eagerness 41:19
earlier 12:1 35:22 38:14
ease 5:18
easily 5:16
echo 32:16
economic 1:20 3:8 4:11
4:11 14:20 18:2 36:1
36:7,14 44:9 53:17
Economics 2:13

economies 33:8
economy 9:20 38:5
53:7
ecosystems 15:19
EDA 13:17 21:9,19 41:4
42:21 43:14 44:10,11
45:9 46:6,13 48:8
49:8 55:13 57:20
58:10
EDT 1:11
education 37:19
effect 28:16
effective 20:6 54:11
eight 32:19 33:6
Ekert 1:11,13 4:4,16,18
6:7,8 8:18 14:2 17:16
19:6,12,14 21:22
26:11 32:7,13 34:18
35:3,5,8,12,14 36:10
40:12 41:12 44:20
47:7 50:16 53:19,22
56:13 57:17 59:9
eligible 17:9
embassies 28:7,22
29:6,9,10 30:17
embrace 16:5
employability 34:6
employment 6:17 56:7
56:8
empty 55:11
en 24:8
encourage 41:20 42:21
encouraged 26:19
27:16,17 52:12
engage 29:11
engaged 29:10 42:10
engagement 7:20 32:5
engaging 29:12
engender 50:1
engine 50:11
Enterprises 2:10
entire 58:15
entities 37:21
entity 13:4 37:16
entry 24:9
environment 10:9
24:15 46:22
equitable 15:22 55:19
equity 15:12
Erik 3:20 54:2,3 56:13
especially 46:21
essential 54:22
essentially 24:11 30:22
45:22
establishes 13:4
et 21:8 31:16,16 33:18
evening 60:1
events 52:17,20 55:1

55:17
everybody 8:17,22
57:19
exactly 21:9 30:6
example 8:8 17:22 18:6
30:4 38:12 45:19
46:13
examples 18:1
excellent 36:5 45:10
exception 46:20
exchange 29:2 30:12
excited 6:21 32:5 59:1
exciting 36:19
Executive 1:13,14,16
1:17,19 2:1,2,3,5,7,9
2:11,14,20 3:17
exhaled 24:5
exist 29:5
existed 16:8
existing 23:1
exists 24:5 25:2
expand 49:13
experience 26:20 43:13
44:8 46:6
expire 28:19
expires 27:20
explore 45:16
Express 2:9
extended 44:6
External 1:21
extra 11:15
extremely 51:22

F

FAA 25:20
face 6:15 8:9,10
facilitate 7:7
facilities 28:15 30:1
31:16 53:2,9
facility 27:3
fact 28:12 30:19 33:21
fading 35:14
Fair 2:1 32:18
Fairbrook 2:5
fairly 27:15
fairness 44:2
fall 34:15
familiar 30:3
families 56:2
FARRELL 3:2
fast 39:5
faster 49:9
feature 5:11 14:5 41:7
47:21
federal 3:13 4:20 5:6
13:3,7 22:15,22 24:10
31:10 46:14,15
feedback 8:12

feel 38:12 52:14 53:5
feet 14:1
fellow 25:1
felt 36:18
field 15:16
fight 22:18
figure 26:8
Film 1:15
financial 7:8
find 33:13 46:20
first 9:3 14:12 17:6
25:11 35:1 44:9 48:1
57:22
firsthand 9:13
Fitzsimmons 1:15 47:8
58:7
five 31:22 49:19
FL 2:9
floor 5:14 8:15 32:9
36:16 41:21,22 47:15
48:2
Floyd 15:7
focus 19:3 20:15 31:12
33:10 40:13 44:12
58:7
focused 48:13 58:2,5
focuses 8:2
folks 9:1 41:2
folks' 29:21
follow 57:18
foot 7:5 42:16
for-profit 37:14,16
force 31:15,19
form 57:21
fortune 51:7
forward 6:13 7:22 8:11
9:2 10:15 12:5 43:10
50:17 54:9 59:3,7
found 46:1
founder 2:11 14:19
22:11
framework 54:16 55:2,5
frankly 16:13 41:22
friends 42:21
front 15:6 36:4 49:18
54:8
fuel 42:16 50:10
fulfill 29:1
fully 50:12
function 5:18
funding 4:13 15:20 20:2
35:22 41:4 53:7 57:20
funds 16:16 38:7
funneled 17:2
further 41:4 50:6
future 19:3 23:3 24:14
35:16

G			
GA 2:15,21	Hansen 3:20 54:2,4	Hosteling 1:18	industry's 8:11
gamut 9:10	haphazard 7:16	Hostmark 2:18	Indy 42:14
gas 42:16	happen 11:2 25:8 39:21	hotel 51:21	inequities 16:8
gateways 51:16	happened 11:12	hotels 1:22 2:5 9:9,15	infected 24:21
Gay 6:4	happens 11:20	hours 28:15 31:16	information 19:22
GDP 6:17 40:16	happy 26:6	House 12:10	53:16
general 1:21 2:1 32:18	hard 10:19	households 55:22	informational 20:1
generally 27:17 28:17	harder 16:13,13	hubs 22:18	infrastructure 21:7,8
generation 27:2,8	hardest 16:12	huge 18:8 21:4 50:13	21:19 38:7,9,15,16
George 15:7	Hawaii 18:6 21:2	human-vectored 23:4	40:14 43:17 45:9
getting 21:14 31:6	head 1:21 15:5 51:7		48:13 53:10 55:10,11
46:10 52:9,14	health 7:12 8:7 54:15		58:3,4
Giants 2:10	hear 8:17 11:8 13:6	I	initial 13:15
GILBERT 1:16	15:14 16:2 19:6,11	i.e 48:14	injustices 15:4
GINA 3:2	21:4 27:6 35:5,6,8,13	ice 29:22	innovative 24:1 42:19
give 17:21 25:13 26:6	36:9 39:20 41:19	idea 23:18 25:22 26:1,2	46:7
37:10 39:12 45:1	44:19 47:10,11 54:8	36:18 57:4	inquire 22:14
given 20:11 30:20,20	heard 21:2 50:14 51:1	ideas 13:13 17:12,12	inside 12:4
40:15 58:7	54:18 55:9	21:14,17 39:11,20	insights 48:19 56:15
gives 49:19	hearing 23:11	40:5,11 42:19	institutes 37:18
glad 41:19	heart 18:7	identified 28:1	instrumental 58:16
Global 1:21 2:7,12	heavily 9:8 34:11,13	identify 14:7	intensive 49:15
22:11	38:4 51:21	IL 2:19	inter-agency 57:13
globally 8:4	HEDGE 1:17	imagine 18:15	interagency 12:10
goals 20:7	hello 14:14 32:14	immense 6:14	interest 17:19
Google 2:16	help 7:22 14:8 18:4	impact 6:17 8:10 33:1,6	interested 36:2 39:20
government 7:21 12:6	20:11 21:9,16,20 23:9	33:7 37:9 40:19 44:6	46:10
13:3,7 22:15,22 24:10	33:14 45:17 49:7 53:6	44:6 49:4 53:17	interesting 45:15
31:11 37:17,18 46:14	54:14,20 55:5,15 56:3	impacted 55:15	international 1:18,22
Governor 9:7,22 12:15	58:13 59:2	impactful 39:7	2:4,8 3:3,21 27:21
21:2 26:20 28:2,4	helpful 19:16 48:21	importance 7:8 15:11	28:6 30:5 34:14 51:8
53:15	56:19	19:2	54:7,13
governors 28:5	helping 9:5 40:14 43:17	important 11:3 12:18	internationally 7:17
grant 37:16 38:1	58:16	30:13 32:20,22 52:5	interoperability 7:19
grants 17:2	heritage 1:20 14:20	56:5	8:7
granular 27:9	45:19	importantly 15:13	interpretation 19:21
greater 1:16 52:3	Hey 35:3	incentive 56:4 57:3	interpretive 19:21
greatly 20:14	HHS 23:19 25:21	incentives 55:9,14,17	interrupt 32:11
greetings 41:15	higher 36:17,19 37:19	56:1 57:7	intrigued 57:3
GREG 2:20	highlighted 16:7	incentivize 39:22	invest 38:16
group 2:19 32:4 45:22	highly 39:7,20 52:12	including 7:6 28:2	investing 23:6 24:1
growing 25:4	hiking 20:2	inclusion 15:12	46:16
GTAB 55:4	Hill 3:5 11:1 45:5	inclusive 16:1	investment 44:14,15
guess 52:7	historic 41:18	income 49:21 55:21	46:4
guests 33:2	historically 45:9	increase 19:22 30:16	investments 21:7 38:18
guidelines 37:11	history 43:8 49:9	incredible 7:1 20:21	39:21
guiding 58:16	hit 16:12 41:6	56:11	investors 50:9
gusto 39:19	holistic 56:22	indicated 29:10	invite 13:19
Guzman 17:5	home 12:18	individual 24:21	Isabel 3:5 8:21 12:8,16
	homework 25:14 40:2	industries 15:10 44:7	45:2,4 51:12,15 53:4
	honeymoon 20:18	55:15	58:15
	honor 51:5	industry 3:4 6:15,19	Isabella 17:5
	honored 6:12	7:13,22 8:2 9:4,6	island 9:7 18:5,12,16
	hopefully 21:20 39:16	10:11,16 14:1 15:21	30:3,4 44:8
	41:8	16:1,12,13 20:16	islands 18:11 20:6
	hopes 29:1	25:17 36:22 40:5,14	isolated 18:18
	horsepower 31:1	40:16,19 43:6,8 44:3	issue 8:6 28:20 33:5,10
	hospitality 2:19 9:9	46:20 49:14 50:3,7	49:6 53:1
		52:1 56:7 58:21 59:3	
H			
half 46:18			
hampered 28:13			
hand 5:11 14:4,5 24:16			
41:7 47:20			
handle 35:19			
hands 46:10,19			

issues 7:6 8:9 28:1
33:16 48:8

J

J- 34:13
J-1 30:8 32:19
Jeff 12:13
Jen 35:10
Jennifer 3:10 4:19 6:8
14:8 44:20 58:12
59:11,13
Jersey 26:15 27:3,17
28:11
job 12:9 20:9 28:16
40:16 44:3 45:10 48:7
jobs 9:9,20 18:16 34:3
34:4 49:8,9,15 50:12
56:3
JOHNSON 1:18
joined 8:21
joining 5:20 6:10 8:15
Jones 1:19 14:12,14,18
14:19 17:15

K

Kaua'i 18:5 38:7
keep 5:9 11:13 22:4
34:20 47:9,21 50:17
51:11 54:18 57:12,14
key 55:12
kick 53:7
kicked 51:19
kids 30:5 34:4,15
kinds 34:6 37:21 39:21
knowing 49:20
known 5:12 12:13
30:10
knows 8:22 17:7 44:5
Kuai 18:7,12
Kurt 1:11,13 4:4,16,18
6:7 14:14 22:6 48:4
51:4 53:20 59:18
KY 2:6

L

L.P 2:1
labor 30:5 33:14 39:18
49:15
launch 13:19
leader 9:21 50:13 56:11
leadership 8:12 43:9
51:3 59:7
lean 43:1
leave 50:5
led 57:22 58:6
legend 27:4,7
legendary 27:5
legislation 55:16

leisure 7:14 9:10 10:3
38:10,17 39:12,13,17
40:7 42:20 47:5 52:16
55:18,20 58:6

lend 58:9
lending 13:7
let's 35:15
level 28:18 30:19
leveling 15:16
leverage 37:2,3
leveraged 23:7
leveraging 23:1
light 39:2
limit 28:14,15
limited 57:7
line 19:15 34:19 35:10
44:22 59:19
linings 52:7
listen 22:8
literally 8:4 14:6
little 21:15 29:17 33:4
34:5 40:10 44:1
living 23:22 39:3
Liz 1:15 47:8,9,10,10,12
58:6

LLC 2:12
loan 38:21
loans 16:15 17:1
lobby 10:16,22
local 15:19 37:18 52:4
locals 18:22
long 10:2 12:3,14 16:8
40:15
look 6:13 8:10,11 9:1
10:8,15 17:11 54:9
59:7
looking 23:6 27:11 31:3
31:18 43:10 45:16
53:3 58:3
looks 14:11 41:10
lose 34:1
loss 20:10
losses 36:14 37:15
lost 11:9
lot 7:21 10:6,7 17:1
29:21 32:17 36:19,20
37:6 48:11 50:14
55:20
love 15:14 16:2 22:21
40:13
loves 8:22
low 41:21 55:21
LUNDBERG 1:21

M

MA 2:12
ma'am 23:16
Madam 6:12 8:14 11:5

17:18 21:22 22:7
32:15 35:21 41:13,16
45:5 47:14 48:5 49:17
51:4,9 53:22 54:4
56:14 57:17 58:19
Madame 50:15,20
maintain 49:12
maintains 13:4
major 51:16
making 27:14 28:20
56:5
Man 25:3
management 8:3 22:12
Managing 1:15 2:16
mandate 24:11
March 1:8 4:3,8
market 18:17 33:14
46:8
marketers 42:3 47:4
marketing 2:4 38:21
42:8 43:22 44:4 53:8
Marriott 2:8
Mary 2:3 17:16 19:4,6,7
20:17
Maryland 1:15
masse 24:8
massive 49:21
mastermind 43:17
match 37:4
matter 28:12 60:2
maximize 37:8
MD 1:15,18,22 2:8
mean 20:9 23:20 37:3
43:12 44:18
meaning 8:6
meaningful 58:17
means 37:1
measure 44:5,6
measuring 44:3
medium-size 38:21
meet 10:2 51:6 55:3
meeting 1:6 5:4,7,18
6:10 25:12 41:2 51:12
54:5 59:14,18,19,21
meetings 49:18,18
52:17,19 53:13 55:1
55:17
member 5:14 14:14,18
17:15,18 19:11,13,17
20:20 21:21 22:6
23:16 24:4 26:5,10,16
27:6 29:7,20 30:7,18
32:3,14 33:15 35:4,6
35:13
members 5:16,21 14:3
41:3 59:11
Menendez 28:3
mentioned 27:11 28:19

34:12 35:22 59:18
messaging 50:2
met 1:10
metaphor 50:6
middle 55:21
Milkie 2:1 32:9,14
million 13:18 18:11,13
25:3 36:12,17 37:9
48:18 56:21
minimal 53:11
minimum 36:12 40:9
minority-owned 16:11
17:3
minute 50:18
minutes 22:5 40:22
47:22 51:15
missed 45:3
mission 39:8
MN 1:13
model 31:5
money 10:7,15 17:1,8
18:3 21:9,16,18 36:20
37:1,2,3,6,11,12,13
37:14,16,17 38:3 39:5
40:8 44:17 45:17 46:2
46:8,15,16,19 49:8
MONICA 2:14
monitoring 26:2
month 9:6
months 6:21 40:20
Morey 2:2 26:14,16
27:6 29:7,20 30:7,18
32:3 33:15
Morey's 2:2 26:14 27:1
27:5 31:5
Motsenbocker 2:3
17:17,18 19:11,13,17
20:20 21:21
move 7:22 32:8 35:19
40:3 56:14
Murphy 28:2
mute 5:9 6:6 11:6 19:5
19:15
myriad 8:9

N

name 5:13 22:10 23:15
named 30:8
Narrangansett 30:4
NASCAR 42:14 50:6
nation 15:10 42:4 44:5
national 2:6 3:11 7:10
14:21 15:6
nature 40:15
necessarily 29:21
necessary 12:1,2,2
21:18 53:16
necessity 7:9

need 7:12,13 12:4
 13:21,22 19:20,22
 20:2,6,8 37:8 39:22
 40:3 42:16 43:2,5
 48:22 50:10 51:17
 53:13 54:12,12,19
 56:22
needed 55:2
needs 13:7 19:17 29:15
 42:2 44:11 53:10
network 42:3
networks 20:3
new 25:11 26:14 28:11
 39:3
newly 30:8
Newport 30:4
news 21:10 31:21 46:17
 46:17 52:11,21
nice 27:6
NJ 2:3
non- 58:3
non-infrastructure 38:8
 38:20
non-profits 37:18,21
 39:1
nonprofits 51:20
normal 33:18 34:7
note 57:18
noted 7:11
notes 5:8
notion 49:12
NTTO 58:12,15
number 11:18 49:12
NY 2:8

O

obviously 39:14 56:22
occurring 23:10 24:20
Ocean 9:7
off-cycle 33:17
offer 14:4,10 41:3 46:12
offering 22:3 47:19
office 1:15,18 3:11 7:5
Officer 1:13,14,16,18
 1:20 2:2,4,5,8,9,12,18
 2:20 3:13 4:20 5:6
officially 5:7 59:19,22
old 41:9
Olga 2:9 35:1,3,5,14
once 28:9 31:1
one-time 43:6 50:10
ones 16:14
open 5:7 17:13 33:1
 34:2 40:1 47:15 50:2
 54:11 57:13
opening 4:2,3 12:19
operate 32:19
Operating 2:18

opportunities 45:11,16
 58:4,9
opportunity 5:21 36:3
 41:2,18 43:3,7 57:21
 59:2
order 7:3 13:22 29:16
 39:22
organization 44:4 51:7
organizations 42:6,9
 51:10,20 53:6
organize 40:21 41:1
organizing 28:4
oriented 58:22
outbreak 24:19
outdoor 36:15
outlook 26:20
outsourced 49:16
overall 18:10 20:8
overview 4:3,12 51:12

P

P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S
 5:1
p.m 1:11 5:2 60:3
PA 2:13
package 10:21 36:6
 37:7 56:4
paid 48:15 50:7
pandemic 6:16 8:5
 23:10 51:19 52:8
paper 40:5
parks 21:8 33:2,6 34:2
part 9:5 10:22 15:18
 36:6 55:13
participating 59:17
participation 59:15
particular 16:3 20:12
particularly 12:10
partner 6:21
pass 25:1
passed 16:22
passengers 25:1
passes 7:12,19 8:7
passion 50:14
patching 38:9
PATEL 2:5
pathogens 23:4
patient 48:11
pattern 34:1
pedal 42:16
pent-up 46:22
people 14:8 21:14
 22:20 25:16 33:19
 38:12,18 39:6 42:22
 44:22 47:18 50:17
 53:8 55:6
people's 46:10
percent 8:4 18:15,19,19

50:8
permanently 9:17
permissible 44:18
person 55:3
perspective 15:15
 22:22
phase 24:7
phenomenally 42:22
phone 5:12 14:6 25:14
 32:12 34:19 41:7,8
 59:13
piece 38:5
Piers 2:3 26:14 27:2,5
 31:5
pink 59:1
pipe 45:2
place 9:20 20:21 52:18
 54:17
places 22:19
plan 11:18 16:22 43:19
 54:12 56:22
plane 21:15
planners 53:2
planning 3:11 20:7
plans 39:2
play 7:12 9:5 13:7 55:13
playbook 49:3
playing 15:16
please 5:8,10,12,15 6:3
 6:5 22:4 41:6 56:18
 58:11
pleased 5:7 54:8
pleasure 8:20 51:5
point 14:2 18:10 27:16
 29:8,12 31:14 34:21
 35:18 42:2 49:17
pointed 47:1
points 22:16 24:9 41:3
poised 50:3
Policy 1:22 3:10,18
 55:4
PORFILIO 11:5,9
portion 5:22
possibility 18:2
possible 5:11 39:5
 46:11 58:14
posted 11:13
pounding 13:10
power 28:21 29:5
PPP 16:15 31:11
PR 1:14
PRATHER 2:6
precisely 43:12
predictable 53:15
preference 38:3
premise 53:5
prepared 13:9 22:15
preregistered 47:17

prescribed 36:12
PRESENT 1:12 3:1
President 1:13,16,17
 1:19,21 2:1,3,5,6,7,9
 2:10,13,14 3:16,17
 27:1 52:12
presiding 1:11
pressing 57:12
pretty 21:2
prevent 23:9
previous 45:17
PRIMROSE 2:7
prior 12:7 18:20
priorities 39:4
priority 17:3 30:20
private 13:8 24:12 37:7
 42:6,10
privilege 59:4
probably 29:13 40:10
 40:17
process 5:19 12:10
 20:7 38:2 46:1 57:13
processed 31:20
processing 28:6,21
 29:5 30:17,22
productive 51:13
profound 6:18
program 29:3 30:8,11
 30:11,19 31:11 32:19
 46:17
programs 31:12 38:21
progress 7:18
projects 38:8,8 39:12
promoters 42:13
promotion 21:16 37:20
 38:20 44:17 46:16
 48:14,20 50:9 54:12
 55:12
promotions 44:1
proper 25:18 32:2
proposal 10:18
propose 57:1
proposition 52:2
proud 52:1
provide 7:14 22:3 23:3
 53:1 55:16 56:1
providing 15:19
public 1:22 2:7 3:15,17
 4:16 5:22 47:15,17,20
 54:1,15
Puerto 1:14 41:15 42:7
 46:13
push 25:19
put 7:1 16:19,20 25:17
 37:5 38:2 40:5 41:22
 50:1 52:13 53:8 54:17
putting 42:9

<p>Q</p> <p>quarters 36:21</p> <p>question 14:3,9 15:1 19:8 23:12 26:13 32:7 34:21 35:15,17 41:6 47:8</p> <p>questions 22:4 32:12 34:18,20 35:19 41:4 44:21 45:21 47:21</p> <p>queue 14:12 17:17</p> <p>quick 44:14 47:6</p> <p>quickly 46:1,11,21 49:8</p> <p>Quinn 2:8 35:11</p>	<p>record 59:12,20,21 60:3</p> <p>records 7:15</p> <p>recover 51:17</p> <p>recovered 50:12</p> <p>recovery 7:12 8:11 27:13,14 50:11 56:6</p> <p>recreation 36:16</p> <p>recruit 33:20</p> <p>recruitment 34:8</p> <p>redo 39:2</p> <p>reducing 31:16</p> <p>refer 15:16</p> <p>referring 45:8</p> <p>refresh 11:22</p> <p>regarding 15:2</p> <p>region 19:20</p> <p>regional 3:8 48:22</p> <p>regulations 34:3</p> <p>reinvestment 28:16</p> <p>related 38:6 56:7</p> <p>relates 13:17</p> <p>relationships 16:14</p> <p>relatively 24:6 47:9</p> <p>relief 21:10</p> <p>rely 34:11,13 38:4 51:21</p> <p>remains 6:19 8:3</p> <p>Remarks 4:3,7,18</p> <p>remediate 24:22</p> <p>remember 6:5 25:4</p> <p>reminder 5:20</p> <p>reopen 53:9 54:20</p> <p>reopening 54:13</p> <p>represent 12:9 14:21</p> <p>representative 31:13</p> <p>represents 32:17</p> <p>request 41:1 57:19</p> <p>require 7:18,20</p> <p>required 37:12</p> <p>requirements 24:11</p> <p>rescue 2:12 16:22 22:11 36:6 37:6</p> <p>resiliency 49:11</p> <p>resistant 48:14</p> <p>respect 45:22</p> <p>respond 34:22 56:18</p> <p>responded 52:1</p> <p>responsive 58:22</p> <p>rest 13:11</p> <p>restaurants 9:9,16</p> <p>restore 55:17 59:3</p> <p>results 7:15 46:21</p> <p>retrofit 43:20</p> <p>return 34:15 44:13,14 46:4</p> <p>returns 47:6</p> <p>revenue 11:15</p> <p>REVETRIA 2:10</p>	<p>revitalize 9:5</p> <p>RFPs 24:12</p> <p>Rhode 9:7 30:3 44:8</p> <p>Richards 2:11 22:2,6 22:10 23:16 24:4 26:5 26:10</p> <p>Rico 1:14 41:15 42:7 46:13</p> <p>risk 22:12</p> <p>roadmap 54:13</p> <p>ROB 2:16</p> <p>role 7:11 30:14 55:13</p> <p>ROLF 1:21</p> <p>RON 2:18</p> <p>round 48:19</p> <p>rules 48:12</p> <p>run 10:2 12:2,3 37:19</p> <p>running 50:18</p> <p>rural 15:18</p> <p>RUSSELL 1:17</p>	<p>45:1,5 46:9 47:14 48:5 49:18 50:15,20 50:22 51:5,9 53:22 54:4 56:14,17 57:18 58:18,19 59:6</p> <p>Secretary's 58:7</p> <p>sector 13:8 24:12 37:7 42:6,10</p> <p>secure 7:7</p> <p>seen 34:13</p> <p>segment 42:20</p> <p>segments 52:11,15</p> <p>segregate 24:22</p> <p>Senator 21:3</p> <p>Senators 28:3</p> <p>send 57:5</p> <p>sense 9:17 57:4</p> <p>sentiment 18:21 49:5</p> <p>serve 33:2 42:6</p> <p>serves 30:13</p> <p>set 7:5</p> <p>severely 28:13</p> <p>shame 31:3</p> <p>share 32:20 56:16</p> <p>shone 16:9</p> <p>shops 29:22</p> <p>shore 27:3,17</p> <p>short 12:2 56:11</p> <p>short-term 27:12</p> <p>shorten 56:5,9</p> <p>shoulder 34:14</p> <p>show 25:4</p> <p>shows 55:22</p> <p>shuttering 31:15</p> <p>side 38:10,11 43:1,3,12 43:17,18 45:7,9,19 47:2 54:12</p> <p>sign 55:5</p> <p>signage 19:21 20:1</p> <p>silver 52:7</p> <p>similar 49:3 55:1</p> <p>simply 57:10</p> <p>sites 20:1</p> <p>situation 20:14 34:10</p> <p>situations 29:18</p> <p>Six 25:3</p> <p>slightly 44:12</p> <p>small 9:15 17:2 18:7 26:21 38:21</p> <p>smaller 15:17</p> <p>smallest 16:10</p> <p>smart 23:21 25:22 37:2 57:6</p> <p>SMITH 2:14</p> <p>social 15:4</p> <p>Society 2:15</p> <p>solicit 40:5</p> <p>soon 7:5 21:11 58:13</p>
<p>R</p> <p>race 42:14</p> <p>racial 15:4</p> <p>radar 29:21</p> <p>Raimondo 3:2 4:7,9,14 8:16,19 11:7,11 14:17 16:4 19:4 20:17 21:1 23:13,17 25:9 26:8 27:4 29:4,19 30:2,15 31:21 33:12 34:17 35:7 36:5,11 43:11 44:16 45:1 50:22 56:17 59:6</p> <p>raise 5:11 14:4,5 24:16 28:17 41:7 47:20</p> <p>raised 27:10 32:21</p> <p>Ramudo 2:9 35:2,4,6 35:13</p> <p>range 7:6</p> <p>rapidly 24:6,17,21 58:18</p> <p>reach 20:7</p> <p>reaction 23:19</p> <p>reactions 10:13</p> <p>ready 7:4 42:15,17 47:6 50:3</p> <p>real 9:17 33:9 53:12 59:4</p> <p>reasonably 10:9</p> <p>rebuild 10:2</p> <p>rebuilding 19:2</p> <p>receive 30:19</p> <p>received 37:6</p> <p>recession 49:10</p> <p>recognize 5:13</p> <p>recognizing 15:11</p> <p>recommendation 16:3 16:5,20,21</p> <p>recommendations 4:4 4:8 7:4 9:22 10:14 15:2,15 25:18 39:11 39:12 40:6 45:18 58:18</p> <p>reconnect 56:2</p>	<p>record 59:12,20,21 60:3</p> <p>records 7:15</p> <p>recover 51:17</p> <p>recovered 50:12</p> <p>recovery 7:12 8:11 27:13,14 50:11 56:6</p> <p>recreation 36:16</p> <p>recruit 33:20</p> <p>recruitment 34:8</p> <p>redo 39:2</p> <p>reducing 31:16</p> <p>refer 15:16</p> <p>referring 45:8</p> <p>refresh 11:22</p> <p>regarding 15:2</p> <p>region 19:20</p> <p>regional 3:8 48:22</p> <p>regulations 34:3</p> <p>reinvestment 28:16</p> <p>related 38:6 56:7</p> <p>relates 13:17</p> <p>relationships 16:14</p> <p>relatively 24:6 47:9</p> <p>relief 21:10</p> <p>rely 34:11,13 38:4 51:21</p> <p>remains 6:19 8:3</p> <p>Remarks 4:3,7,18</p> <p>remediate 24:22</p> <p>remember 6:5 25:4</p> <p>reminder 5:20</p> <p>reopen 53:9 54:20</p> <p>reopening 54:13</p> <p>represent 12:9 14:21</p> <p>representative 31:13</p> <p>represents 32:17</p> <p>request 41:1 57:19</p> <p>require 7:18,20</p> <p>required 37:12</p> <p>requirements 24:11</p> <p>rescue 2:12 16:22 22:11 36:6 37:6</p> <p>resiliency 49:11</p> <p>resistant 48:14</p> <p>respect 45:22</p> <p>respond 34:22 56:18</p> <p>responded 52:1</p> <p>responsive 58:22</p> <p>rest 13:11</p> <p>restaurants 9:9,16</p> <p>restore 55:17 59:3</p> <p>results 7:15 46:21</p> <p>retrofit 43:20</p> <p>return 34:15 44:13,14 46:4</p> <p>returns 47:6</p> <p>revenue 11:15</p> <p>REVETRIA 2:10</p>	<p>S</p> <p>SACKS 2:13</p> <p>sad 21:4</p> <p>safe 7:7</p> <p>safely 55:3</p> <p>safer 26:4 38:17</p> <p>safety 54:15</p> <p>sales 43:22</p> <p>saludos 41:15</p> <p>Sandusky 2:2</p> <p>saving 10:6</p> <p>saw 9:13</p> <p>saying 11:14 21:6 32:17</p> <p>SBA 17:2</p> <p>scanned 24:17</p> <p>Schatz 21:3</p> <p>school 34:16</p> <p>seaside 27:2</p> <p>season 28:8 29:16 34:15</p> <p>seasonal 34:9</p> <p>seat 11:16 18:16</p> <p>second 27:2,8 45:2 58:5</p> <p>seconds 34:20</p> <p>Secretary 2:1 3:2,2,3,5 3:7 4:7,8,13 6:12 8:14 8:16,19 11:5,7,11 14:9,15,17 16:4 17:15 17:18 19:4 20:17 21:1 22:1,7 23:13,17 25:9 26:8,18 27:4 29:4,19 30:2,15 31:21 32:3,15 33:12 34:17,22 35:7 35:20,21 36:5,11 41:16 43:11 44:16</p>	<p>SACKS 2:13</p> <p>sad 21:4</p> <p>safe 7:7</p> <p>safely 55:3</p> <p>safer 26:4 38:17</p> <p>safety 54:15</p> <p>sales 43:22</p> <p>saludos 41:15</p> <p>Sandusky 2:2</p> <p>saving 10:6</p> <p>saw 9:13</p> <p>saying 11:14 21:6 32:17</p> <p>SBA 17:2</p> <p>scanned 24:17</p> <p>Schatz 21:3</p> <p>school 34:16</p> <p>seaside 27:2</p> <p>season 28:8 29:16 34:15</p> <p>seasonal 34:9</p> <p>seat 11:16 18:16</p> <p>second 27:2,8 45:2 58:5</p> <p>seconds 34:20</p> <p>Secretary 2:1 3:2,2,3,5 3:7 4:7,8,13 6:12 8:14 8:16,19 11:5,7,11 14:9,15,17 16:4 17:15 17:18 19:4 20:17 21:1 22:1,7 23:13,17 25:9 26:8,18 27:4 29:4,19 30:2,15 31:21 32:3,15 33:12 34:17,22 35:7 35:20,21 36:5,11 41:16 43:11 44:16</p>

sorry 26:16 31:12 32:10
 32:11 50:21
sort 27:11 31:17
sorts 24:11
Southeast 2:15
space 22:13
speak 5:10,22 14:7
 28:22 31:18
speaking 5:9 19:15
 47:11
special 20:21
specific 10:21 23:20
 24:3 40:6 46:13 57:20
specifics 57:16
speed 46:7
spend 40:8 56:21 57:9
spending 8:3 10:7
 18:12 40:18
spent 20:18
sphere 22:17
spoken 52:10
Sports 1:17
spot 14:8
spotlight 16:9
spread 19:19
spring 34:15
staff 58:12
stake 44:9
stand 31:13
standpoint 40:16 53:8
start 43:22 50:10 53:7
state 9:7 26:21 30:12
 37:17,19,21 42:5 47:4
 52:21,21
state-of-the- 43:20
states 1:1 5:5 7:17
 27:22 32:19 33:6 37:4
 37:5 38:3,4 39:1
 43:15
stating 5:13
statute 44:19
statutorily 37:12
stay 59:11,19
step 50:6
Stephanie 1:19 14:11
 14:12,19
STEPHEN 2:10
steps 4:18 56:15
stimulative 40:18
story 43:8
strange 11:7
strategy 7:10 11:19,22
 12:4
strong 10:14 16:5 28:2
 52:16 53:3
strongly 53:5
struck 31:4
struggle 31:17

struggling 39:6
students 12:21,22
 27:21 28:7,10,12,22
 30:5
subcommittee 25:13
 58:2,5,13
subcommittees 57:22
subsidize 37:15
substantively 8:6
success 48:16
successful 10:9
successfully 31:9
suffered 36:14
suggestion 10:1 11:21
 14:4
suggestions 56:20
summer 27:19 29:16
 30:7,11 31:6,7 34:3,4
 39:17
Sununu 28:4
supplemental 30:13
 31:15 57:20
supply 43:1,12,18 45:7
support 7:8 10:17 20:6
 27:21 28:6,10 31:10
 31:14 45:17 54:8 56:4
supporter 10:14
supporting 54:15
supposed 37:13
sustainability 19:3
sustainable 19:9
system 12:12 13:5
 22:14 43:21

T

T&E 10:7
tackling 41:19
takes 55:3
talented 42:22
talk 13:16 17:21 40:21
 47:18
talked 12:15
talking 16:21 17:4
 21:20 43:22 45:7,20
 46:3,7 51:16
tangible 58:17
tank 42:17
target 52:13
targeted 37:2 39:7
tax 55:14,16 56:1,4 57:3
 57:7
taxes 46:15 51:21,22
team 8:9 12:8,16,16
 13:21 58:15
tech 25:16
technical 38:22 39:2
technologies 23:7
technology 14:5 23:1,1

23:6 24:5 25:2,5,12
 26:1 38:15 41:9 58:9
technology-enabled
 26:3
Teleconference 1:11
tell 8:1 21:5 39:14 51:18
tend 42:22
tenure 56:11
term 40:15
terminal 24:9
terminals 22:19
terms 30:21 34:5 48:21
 49:3 52:3
terrific 12:9 40:12 48:10
territory 43:16
test 7:15
thank 6:8,9 8:14,16,20
 11:12 14:14 16:3
 17:15,16,19 20:15,17
 20:22 21:21,22 22:5,6
 22:7 23:11,14 25:9
 26:7,18 32:3 33:11
 35:4 36:6 41:14 43:9
 43:11 44:20 48:4,5
 50:16 51:1,4 53:19,20
 54:4,5,9,22 56:10,13
 56:18 57:10 58:20
 59:4,6,9,14,16,17
Thanks 14:17 32:14
things 12:14 13:16
 29:18 40:5,18 45:15
 45:20 49:14 50:15
 51:18
thinly 16:16
Thompson 3:16 51:14
thoughts 13:15 16:2
three 36:20 47:16
thrive 10:11
throughput 30:17
tickled 59:1
tight 35:21
timeline 54:14 56:6,9
timing 30:20,21
tip 22:17
today 6:9 7:16 8:13
 16:22 17:21 24:5 25:2
 26:19 27:19 28:20
 32:6 43:19 49:6 55:10
 58:20
today's 48:6 59:17
Tony 31:22
top 24:2
topic 32:8
TORI 3:17
TORRES 2:16
total 57:4
totally 18:7,9 25:11
touch 11:12

touching 26:21
tough 21:3
Tour 2:6
tourism 1:4,15,19 2:4
 2:13,15 3:6,11,12 5:5
 6:11 7:10 9:8,20
 11:22 13:18 14:1,22
 15:9,13,19 17:20 18:3
 18:9,16,21 19:2 27:22
 28:11 30:14 36:15
 37:20 38:5 42:5 44:8
 45:12 47:4 50:9,14
 55:4 59:22
Trade 3:3
trail 20:2,3
trails 20:2,3 21:8 38:10
training 15:20
transformational 43:6
transit 24:9
transitional 43:4
transportation 22:14
 22:18 25:21
travel 1:4 2:9,16 3:6,11
 3:12,18,20 5:5 6:10
 6:15 7:7,10 8:2,3,11
 9:8,10,11,19 10:3,5
 11:22 12:19 13:1,18
 14:1,21 15:9,13 17:20
 18:3,8 22:12,20 26:3
 27:20 28:10 30:8,11
 36:3,15 38:4,17,17
 39:13,13,17,18 44:8
 45:12 48:14,20 49:14
 52:14 54:2,13 55:7,18
 55:20 56:1,6 58:2,6
 59:21
travel-related 7:8
travelers 7:14
Travelport 2:20
tremendous 58:21
trial 15:8
TRICIA 2:7
tried 9:21
trifecta 42:12
trillion 36:22
true 16:10
try 25:19
trying 27:7
TTAB 25:12 41:3 59:10
tube 24:16
turn 5:15 6:6 31:1 46:21
 59:13
turning 33:3
two 22:4 34:18 39:4
 43:15 46:18 47:22
 52:15 57:21
typical 34:11
typically 15:18 47:5,16

<p>U</p> <p>U.S 1:4 3:18,20 6:10 7:21 24:10 33:7 51:11 53:6 54:2</p> <p>ugly 15:5</p> <p>uncertainty 34:2</p> <p>under-served 20:4</p> <p>under-visited 20:5</p> <p>understand 9:3 28:4 36:2</p> <p>understanding 52:4</p> <p>unemployment 18:18</p> <p>unfortunate 52:19</p> <p>unfortunately 15:5 19:1</p> <p>uniform 29:9</p> <p>uniformity 30:21</p> <p>United 1:1 5:5 7:17 27:22</p> <p>university 12:21</p> <p>unmet 42:1</p> <p>unnecessary 31:19</p> <p>unparalleled 6:18</p> <p>updated 7:10</p> <p>USA 1:18 3:16 10:15 11:10 30:9 42:11 54:9 54:10 57:1</p> <p>use 5:10 7:21 18:5 25:6 26:1 37:11 47:20</p> <p>utilizing 5:17</p> <hr/> <p>V</p> <p>VA 2:5</p> <p>vaccination 7:15 12:11</p> <p>Vaccinations 27:15</p> <p>vaccines 52:13</p> <p>value 52:2</p> <p>valued 9:19</p> <p>ventilation 43:21</p> <p>venture 23:5</p> <p>Vice 1:14,21 2:1,7 3:17 41:12,14 43:13 46:12 57:22</p> <p>video 1:10 5:15</p> <p>view 41:3</p> <p>views 12:9</p> <p>VINAY 2:5</p> <p>virtual 10:8 33:18</p> <p>visa 11:15 27:20 30:6,8</p> <p>visas 30:22</p> <p>vision 48:12,19</p> <p>Visit 3:19 48:2</p> <p>visitation 18:14</p> <p>visited 19:19</p> <p>visitor 18:12 51:22</p> <p>visitors 18:11,13 19:19</p> <p>vitality 32:20,22</p> <p>VLASIC 2:18</p> <p>voice 48:10 49:7</p>	<p>vulnerability 22:13,17</p> <hr/> <p>W</p> <p>WA 2:17</p> <p>wait 56:12</p> <p>wanted 28:17 32:16 33:3,8</p> <p>warm 6:9</p> <p>warning 23:3</p> <p>Washington 1:20 51:6</p> <p>watching 15:7 25:4</p> <p>way 11:1 14:7 20:18 21:11 23:7 39:7</p> <p>ways 26:3 46:7</p> <p>weak 44:1</p> <p>WEBB 2:20</p> <p>WEDNESDAY 1:8</p> <p>week 17:6 54:6</p> <p>weeks 12:7 57:15</p> <p>weeks' 39:10</p> <p>welcome 5:4 6:9 14:18</p> <p>WELSH 3:21 51:4 53:20</p> <p>went 11:6 18:19 19:5 36:18 60:3</p> <p>West 48:9 49:11</p> <p>wheel 33:3</p> <p>White 12:9</p> <p>wide 7:6 17:13 40:1</p> <p>willing 21:14 57:9</p> <p>window 29:14 31:2</p> <p>wishing 5:10</p> <p>withstand 9:16</p> <p>women-owned 16:11</p> <p>wonder 11:11</p> <p>wonderful 25:6 26:6 60:1</p> <p>wondering 46:5</p> <p>work 7:2 9:4 10:12,19 26:12 27:19 30:7,11 31:15,19 32:1 33:12 34:8 40:4 41:9 42:4 42:11 49:1 52:5 53:9 56:12 59:2</p> <p>worked 12:14 43:14,15</p> <p>workers 34:14,14</p> <p>workforce 30:13 33:20</p> <p>working 6:13 10:16 12:6 43:10 46:6 54:10 54:20 59:5,8</p> <p>works 41:5</p> <p>world 28:7 39:3</p> <hr/> <p>X</p> <hr/> <p>Y</p> <p>year 8:5 9:12 15:3,8 28:14 31:5 33:22,22 34:6,11 57:7</p>	<p>years 6:22 30:10 44:2 46:18 49:19</p> <p>yesterday 51:11,13 53:4</p> <p>yield 33:11</p> <hr/> <p>Z</p> <p>Zients 12:13</p> <hr/> <p>0</p> <hr/> <p>1</p> <hr/> <p>1.4 18:13</p> <p>10 18:11 44:2</p> <p>100,000 27:21 28:10</p> <p>12 40:19</p> <p>13 4:14</p> <p>15 44:2 48:18 51:10</p> <p>17 18:11</p> <hr/> <p>2</p> <hr/> <p>2.6 18:19</p> <p>20 18:19 48:18</p> <p>2019 18:10,13</p> <p>2020 18:13 31:7</p> <p>2021 1:8 31:8,10</p> <p>2022 31:19</p> <p>21 31:6,18</p> <p>21,000 50:9</p> <p>22 31:3 53:2</p> <p>23 53:3</p> <p>23rd 40:2,7 56:20</p> <hr/> <p>3</p> <hr/> <p>3 13:17 36:7,13 41:22</p> <p>30 29:13 34:20</p> <p>30- 31:2</p> <p>31 1:8</p> <p>330,000 18:14</p> <hr/> <p>4</p> <hr/> <p>4 4:3,8</p> <p>4:00 1:11</p> <p>4:03 5:2</p> <p>45-day 31:2</p> <p>47 4:16</p> <p>486 51:11</p> <hr/> <p>5</p> <hr/> <p>5 4:2</p> <p>5,000 28:11</p> <p>5:01 60:3</p> <p>500 42:14</p> <p>5100 42:7</p> <p>56 4:20</p> <hr/> <p>6</p> <hr/> <p>6 4:5 40:19 51:20</p>	<p>60 4:22</p> <p>625 51:9</p> <hr/> <p>7</p> <hr/> <p>75 18:14</p> <p>750 13:17 36:12,17 37:9 40:9 41:21 56:21</p> <hr/> <p>8</p> <hr/> <p>8 4:9</p> <p>80 8:4</p> <p>85 8:4</p> <hr/> <p>9</p> <hr/> <p>9/11 49:3</p> <p>90 46:14 51:15</p> <p>99 50:8</p>
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This is to certify that the foregoing transcript

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Advisory Board

Before: US DOC ITA

Date: 03-31-21

Place: teleconference

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