

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 6965

To promote travel and tourism in the United States, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 7, 2022

Ms. TITUS (for herself, Mr. CASE, and Mr. YOUNG) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Foreign Affairs, and the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To promote travel and tourism in the United States, and
for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Visit America Act”.

5 **SEC. 2. PURPOSES.**

6 The purposes of this Act are—

7 (1) to support the travel and tourism industry,
8 which produces economic impacts that are vital to
9 our national economy; and

1 (2) to establish national goals for international
2 visitors to the United States, including—

3 (A) recommendations for achieving such
4 goals and timelines for implementing such rec-
5 ommendations;

6 (B) coordination between Federal and
7 State agencies;

8 (C) the resources needed by each Govern-
9 ment agency to achieve such goals; and

10 (D) the number of international visitors
11 and the value of national travel exports.

12 **SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

13 It is the sense of Congress that—

14 (1) setting a national goal for the number of
15 international visitors to the United States is vital for
16 aligning Federal tourism policy to support American
17 jobs and economic growth;

18 (2) setting a national goal for travel exports is
19 vital for aligning Federal tourism policy to support
20 American jobs, increase travel exports, and improve
21 our Nation's balance of trade;

22 (3) the travel industry is an essential part of
23 the United States services exports with respect to
24 business, education, medical, and leisure travel;

1 (4) the promotion of travel and visitation by the
2 Corporation for Travel Promotion (doing business as
3 “Brand USA”) is vital to increasing visitation and
4 articulating the visitation laws of the United States;
5 and

6 (5) there is an urgent need for a coordinated
7 travel and tourism industry response and strategy to
8 respond to the current state of such industry and fu-
9 ture unforeseen circumstances that may impact the
10 travel and tourism industry.

11 **SEC. 4. ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR TRAVEL AND TOURISM.**

12 Section 2(d) of the Reorganization Plan Numbered
13 3 of 1979 (93 Stat. 1382; 5 U.S.C. App.) is amended—

14 (1) by striking “There shall be in the Depart-
15 ment two additional Assistant Secretaries” and in-
16 serting “(1) There shall be in the Department 3 ad-
17 ditional Assistant Secretaries, including the Assist-
18 ant Secretary of Commerce for Travel and Tour-
19 ism,”; and

20 (2) by adding at the end the following:

21 “(2) The Assistant Secretary of Commerce for
22 Travel and Tourism shall—

23 “(A) be appointed by the President, sub-
24 ject to the advice and consent of the Senate;
25 and

1 “(B) report directly to the Under Sec-
2 retary for International Trade.”.

3 **SEC. 5. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY**
4 **OF COMMERCE FOR TRAVEL AND TOURISM.**

5 (a) VISITATION GOALS.—The Assistant Secretary of
6 Commerce for Travel and Tourism (referred to in this sec-
7 tion as the “Assistant Secretary”), appointed pursuant to
8 section 2(d) of the Reorganization Plan Numbered 3 of
9 1979, as amended by section 4, shall—

10 (1) establish an annual goal, consistent with the
11 goals of the travel and tourism strategy developed
12 pursuant to section 6(1), for—

13 (A) the number of international visitors to
14 the United States; and

15 (B) the value of travel exports;

16 (2) develop recommendations for achieving the
17 annual goals established pursuant to paragraph (1);

18 (3) ensure that travel and tourism policy is de-
19 veloped in consultation with—

20 (A) the Tourism Policy Council;

21 (B) the Secretary of Homeland Security;

22 (C) the National Travel and Tourism Of-
23 fice;

24 (D) Brand USA;

1 (E) the United States Travel and Tourism
2 Advisory Board; and

3 (F) travel industry partners, including
4 public and private destination marketing orga-
5 nizations, travel and tourism suppliers, and
6 labor representatives from these industries;

7 (4) establish short-, medium-, and long-term
8 timelines for implementing the recommendations de-
9 veloped pursuant to paragraph (2);

10 (5) conduct Federal agency needs assessments,
11 in consultation with the Office of Management and
12 Budget, to identify the resources, statutory or regu-
13 latory changes, and private sector engagement need-
14 ed to achieve the annual visitation goals; and

15 (6) provide assessments and recommendations
16 to—

17 (A) the Committee on Commerce, Science,
18 and Transportation of the Senate;

19 (B) the Committee on Energy and Com-
20 merce of the House of Representatives; and

21 (C) the public through a publicly accessible
22 website.

23 (b) VISA ADJUDICATION.—The Assistant Secretary,
24 in consultation with the Secretary of State and the Sec-
25 retary of Homeland Security, shall—

1 (1) explore strategies for improving visitor visa
2 processing with respect to—

3 (A) the maximum time for processing
4 visas, by visitation type;

5 (B) regulatory and policy changes needed
6 to meet the visa processing goals referred to in
7 subparagraph (A), including changes regarding
8 technology, processing centers, and training;
9 and

10 (C) streamlining visa applications and ad-
11 judications, including application design and
12 data collection procedures; and

13 (2) explore opportunities to establish pilot pro-
14 grams to integrate technology into the visitor visa
15 adjudication process, including video conferencing
16 and biometrics.

17 (c) DOMESTIC TRAVEL AND TOURISM.—The Assist-
18 ant Secretary, to the extent feasible, shall—

19 (1) evaluate, on an ongoing basis, domestic pol-
20 icy options for supporting competitiveness with re-
21 spect to the strengths, weaknesses, and growth of
22 the domestic travel industry;

23 (2) develop recommendations and goals to sup-
24 port and enhance domestic tourism, separated by
25 business and leisure; and

1 (3) engage public and private stakeholders to
2 support domestic tourism.

3 (d) WORKFORCE.—The Assistant Secretary shall—

4 (1) consult with the Secretary of Labor to de-
5 velop strategies and best practices for improving the
6 timeliness and reliability of travel and tourism work-
7 force data;

8 (2) work with the Secretary of Labor and the
9 Bureau of Economic Analysis to improve travel and
10 tourism industry data; and

11 (3) provide recommendations for policy en-
12 hancements and efficiencies.

13 (e) TRAVEL EXPORT PROMOTION.—The Assistant
14 Secretary, in coordination with the Assistant Secretary of
15 Commerce for Global Markets and the Director General
16 of the United States and Foreign Commercial Service,
17 shall work to promote and facilitate travel exports abroad
18 and ensure competitiveness by engaging in, at a min-
19 imum—

20 (1) promoting meetings, incentives, conferences,
21 and exhibitions;

22 (2) emphasizing rural and other destinations
23 rich in cultural heritage or ecological tourism,
24 among other uniquely American destinations; and

1 (3) promoting sports and recreation events and
2 activities, which shall be hosted in the United
3 States.

4 (f) RECOVERY STRATEGY.—

5 (1) INITIAL RECOVERY STRATEGY.—Not later
6 than 1 year after amounts are appropriated to ac-
7 complish the purposes of this section, the Assistant
8 Secretary, in consultation with public and private
9 stakeholders identified in subsection (a)(3) and pub-
10 lic health officials, shall develop and implement a
11 COVID–19 public health emergency recovery strat-
12 egy to assist the United States travel and tourism
13 industry to quickly recover from the pandemic.

14 (2) FUTURE RECOVERY STRATEGIES.—After
15 assisting in the implementation of the strategy de-
16 veloped pursuant to paragraph (1), the Assistant
17 Secretary, in consultation with appropriate public
18 and private stakeholders, shall develop additional re-
19 covery strategies for the travel and tourism industry
20 in anticipation of other unforeseen catastrophic
21 events that would significantly affect the travel and
22 tourism industry, such as hurricanes, floods,
23 tsunamis, tornadoes, terrorist attacks, and
24 pandemics.

1 (3) COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS.—In developing
2 the COVID–19 public health emergency recovery
3 strategy under paragraph (1) and additional recovery
4 strategies for the travel and tourism industry
5 under paragraph (2), the Assistant Secretary shall
6 conduct cost-benefit analyses that take into account
7 the health and economic effects of public health
8 mitigation measures on the travel and tourism industry.
9

10 (g) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—

11 (1) ASSISTANT SECRETARY.—The Assistant
12 Secretary shall produce an annual forecasting report
13 on the travel and tourism industry, to the extent
14 feasible, which shall include current and anticipated—
15

16 (A) domestic employment needs;

17 (B) international inbound volume and
18 spending, taking into account the lasting effects
19 of the COVID–19 public health emergency and
20 the impact of the recovery strategy implemented
21 pursuant to subsection (f)(1); and

22 (C) domestic volume and spending, including
23 Federal and State public land travel and
24 tourism data.

1 (2) BUREAU OF ECONOMIC ANALYSIS.—The Di-
2 rector of the Bureau of Economic Analysis should
3 annually update, to the extent feasible, the Travel
4 and Tourism Satellite Accounts, including—

5 (A) State level travel and tourism spending
6 data;

7 (B) travel and tourism workforce data for
8 full-time and part-time employment; and

9 (C) Federal and State public lands spend-
10 ing data.

11 (3) NATIONAL TRAVEL AND TOURISM OF-
12 FICE.—The Director of the National Travel and
13 Tourism Office—

14 (A) in partnership with the Bureau of Eco-
15 nomic Analysis, shall report international ar-
16 rival and spending data on a regular monthly
17 schedule, which shall be made available to the
18 Travel and Tourism Advisory Board and to the
19 public through a publicly available website; and

20 (B) shall include questions in the Survey
21 of International Air Travelers regarding wait-
22 times, visits to public lands, and State data, to
23 the extent applicable.

1 **SEC. 6. TRAVEL AND TOURISM STRATEGY.**

2 Not less frequently than once every 10 years, the Sec-
3 retary of Commerce, in consultation with the United
4 States Travel and Tourism Advisory Board, the Tourism
5 Policy Council, and the Secretary of Homeland Security,
6 shall develop and submit to Congress a 10-year travel and
7 tourism strategy, which shall include—

8 (1) the establishment of goals with respect to
9 the number of annual international visitors to the
10 United States and the annual value of travel exports
11 during such 10-year period;

12 (2) the resources needed to achieve the goals es-
13 tablished pursuant to paragraph (1); and

14 (3) recommendations for statutory or regulatory
15 changes that would be necessary to achieve such
16 goals.

17 **SEC. 7. UNITED STATES TRAVEL AND TOURISM ADVISORY**
18 **BOARD.**

19 Section 3 of the Act entitled “An Act to encourage
20 travel in the United States, and for other purposes” (15
21 U.S.C. 1546) is amended—

22 (1) by amending the section heading to read as
23 follows: “united states travel and tourism advisory
24 board; advisory committee”; and

25 (2) by striking “The Secretary of Commerce is
26 authorized” and inserting the following:

1 “(a) UNITED STATES TRAVEL AND TOURISM ADVI-
2 SORY BOARD.—

3 “(1) IN GENERAL.—There is established the
4 United States Travel and Tourism Advisory Board
5 (referred to in this subsection as the ‘Board’), the
6 members of which shall be appointed by the Sec-
7 retary of Commerce for 2-year terms from among
8 companies and organizations in the travel and tour-
9 ism industry.

10 “(2) EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.—The Assistant
11 Secretary for Travel and Tourism shall serve as the
12 Executive Director of the Board.

13 “(3) EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT.—The Director
14 of the National Travel and Tourism Office of the
15 International Trade Administration shall serve as
16 the Executive Secretariat for the Board.

17 “(4) FUNCTIONS.—The Board’s Charter shall
18 specify that the Board will—

19 “(A) serve as the advisory body to the Sec-
20 retary of Commerce on matters relating to the
21 travel and tourism industry in the United
22 States;

23 “(B) advise the Secretary of Commerce on
24 Government policies and programs that affect
25 the United States travel and tourism industry;

1 “(C) offer counsel on current and emerg-
2 ing issues;

3 “(D) provide a forum for discussing and
4 proposing solutions to problems related to the
5 travel and tourism industry; and

6 “(E) provide advice regarding the domestic
7 travel and tourism industry as an economic en-
8 gine.

9 “(5) RECOVERY STRATEGY.—The Board shall
10 assist the Assistant Secretary in the development
11 and implementation of the COVID–19 public health
12 emergency recovery strategy required under section
13 5(f)(1) of the Visit America Act.

14 “(b) ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PROMOTION OF
15 TOURIST TRAVEL.—The Secretary of Commerce is au-
16 thorized”.

17 **SEC. 8. DATA ON DOMESTIC TRAVEL AND TOURISM.**

18 The Secretary of Commerce, subject to the avail-
19 ability of appropriations, shall collect and make public ag-
20 gregate data on domestic travel and tourism trends by in-
21 dividuals traveling between points within the United
22 States.

23 **SEC. 9. DEFINED TERM.**

24 In this Act, the term “COVID–19 public health emer-
25 gency”—

1 (1) means the public health emergency first de-
2 clared on January 31, 2020, by the Secretary of
3 Health and Human Services under section 319 of
4 the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 247d) with
5 respect to COVID–19; and

6 (2) includes any renewal of such declaration
7 pursuant to such section 319.

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