

TRAVEL BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE



A Strategic Partner to 



February 13, 2007

The Honorable Louise M. Slaughter
2469 Rayburn House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Slaughter:

On behalf of the \$703 billion U.S. travel industry, and more specifically the members of the Travel Business Roundtable (TBR) and the Travel Industry Association (TIA), we want to thank you for your leadership and attention to issues surrounding the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHIT). The residents who reside in New York's 28th district have been served well by your energy and passion on this issue, as have the larger business community and the broader U.S. travel industry.

Like you, we also believe the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative can help to make our borders more secure by significantly reducing the opportunity for illegal entry through our ports by those utilizing fake or stolen travel documents. You have demonstrated a special sensitivity to the unique situation represented by binational communities along the U.S.-Canada border and have interjected a healthy dose of realism in all of the government's dealings on this subject. We especially appreciate your concern for the present and future condition of cross-border travel and your commitment to make certain the federal government implements WHIT in a manner that makes this nation more secure, while maintaining important cross-border travel, trade and exchange between the people of Canada and the United States.

We especially applaud your introduction of the PACT ACT, which includes common sense measures designed to ensure the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative does not unintentionally harm the U.S. travel industry. This bill recognizes the U.S. cannot require new, expensive documents for travel to and from Canada without considering the implications on cross-border travel and trade. From the very beginning, both TBR and TIA have maintained that new travel documents must be inexpensive and easy to obtain. We are pleased that the PACT ACT offers incentives for travelers to comply with WHIT by setting the fee for the passport card at no more than \$20 for one year, and requiring that an applicant receive the passport card within 10 business days.

The PACT ACT exempts children from the new documentary requirements and mandates that the Department of Homeland Security determine if existing documents can be enhanced and utilized for cross-border travel in a manner that meets the requirements of the law, further facilitating Western Hemisphere travel while not jeopardizing security. The legislation also directs the federal government to work with the travel industry in a coordinated fashion to provide sufficient notice to

the traveling public of the new WHTI rules and requirements. To that end, TBR and TIA launched a passport web site (www.GetAPassportNow.com) designed to assist North American travelers in the U.S., Canada and Mexico obtaining or renewing their passport and to encourage the continued flow of cross-border travel. However, like you, we believe the federal government must take the lead role in communicating these new document requirements to prospective visitors in the Western Hemisphere.

The PACT ACT is a realistic approach to WHTI that enhances U.S. homeland security while at the same time working to promote and facilitate travel into the United States. TBR and TIA strongly support the PACT ACT and we look forward to working with you and your colleagues in the U.S. Congress to move this bill forward to final passage.

Again, thank you for your tremendous leadership and vision on this matter of great urgency to the U.S. travel industry.

Sincerely,



Jonathan M. Tisch
Chairman
Travel Business Roundtable



Roger J. Dow
President and CEO
Travel Industry Association

TRAVEL BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE



A Strategic Partner to **TIA**

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Jonathan M. Tisch

Chairman, Travel Business Roundtable

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The World Travel & Tourism Council
Wyndham Hotel Group
Wyndham Worldwide

The Travel Business Roundtable (TBR), a strategic partner to the Travel Industry Association of America (TIA), is a CEO-based organization representing all sectors of the travel and tourism industry. The mission of TBR is to educate elected officials and policymakers about the importance of the travel and tourism industry to the nation's economy.



TIA Board of Directors

Roger J. Dow
President and CEO

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TIA is the national, non-profit organization representing all components of the \$703 billion travel industry. With over 2,100 members. TIA's mission is to represent the whole of the U.S. travel industry to promote and facilitate increased travel to and within the United States.