

Sample Letter to Member of Congress

BUSINES-RELATED TRAVEL

NOTE: PLEASE PERSONALIZE WITH RELEVANT DATA FROM YOUR CITY/STATE

[Date]

The Honorable [Member of Congress]
[United States Senate or House of Representatives]
[Office Address]
Washington, DC [ZIP]

Dear [Salutation]:

Like many other companies in America, [Your Company] is working hard to survive the economic recession and keep our workers employed.

In order to succeed, we need to ensure that our nation maintains a robust travel and tourism sector. I am concerned that reactionary action by government to create heavy-handed restrictions on business-related travel would further fuel a growing negative perception about business meetings and events and cause our community to pay a heavy cost during this economic recession.

Business-related travel creates \$244 billion in spending, 2.4 million American jobs and \$39 billion in tax revenue at the federal, state and local level. The meetings and events component is responsible for 15 percent of all travel spending and generates one million jobs.

The recent mischaracterization of business meetings, events and incentive travel as unnecessary is causing havoc on travel related businesses across the country.

While I understand that Congress wants to ensure that taxpayer funds are not misused, when businesses cancel productive meetings and events, the American worker and local communities from coast-to-coast are the unintended victims. Bellmen, maids, wait staff and other hourly wage employees are the first to lose their jobs as meetings, events and travel incentives decline.

Our industry believes so strongly in ensuring the success of legitimate business travel that we have developed a set of standards that we are recommending companies follow if they have taken emergency government lending. Our standards support President Obama's call for greater transparency and accountability from companies that have received taxpayer dollars. Specific guidelines include:

- Conferences or events with a cost exceeding \$75,000 must be supported by a written business case identifying a specific business purpose and positive return on objective and investment metrics;
- At least 90 percent of incentive program attendees shall be other than senior executives (as defined by Treasury Department guidelines) from the host organization; and
- Total annual expenses for meetings, events and incentive/recognition travel shall not exceed 15 percent of the company's total sales and marketing spend.

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[Your state]'s travel sector needs your support in promoting both leisure and business travel to our state in order to battle the current economic crisis. I urge you to embrace the standards for responsible meetings and events that our industry put forward and forgo the amendment language you offered to the economic stimulus bill.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. You can reach me at [Contact Information].

Sincerely,

[Contact]

[Title]