



For Immediate Release

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Travel Leaders Meet with President Obama, Discuss Industry's Ability to Strengthen Economy

Washington, DC – Travel industry leaders met today with President Obama to discuss the unique role that travel can play in strengthening the American economy. The meeting focused on two critical areas: the need to welcome more international visitors and the business community's concerns about the dramatic nationwide downturn in meetings and events.

"We are pleased that President Obama recognizes the power of travel to strengthen America's economy," said Roger Dow, president and CEO of the U.S. Travel Association. "The travel community has an ally in President Obama and we appreciate the leadership he intends to bring to increasing travel to, and within, the United States."

The travel industry employs 7.7 million Americans and generates more than \$740 billion in spending annually.

"Travel will play a critical role in driving America's economic recovery," said Jonathan Tisch, Chairman of Loews Hotels and Chairman Emeritus of the U.S. Travel Association. "We are pleased to have the support of President Obama and his team, and look forward to working with them in the days ahead."

In the meeting, industry leaders discussed the urgent need to pass the Travel Promotion Act, which would establish the first-ever U.S. promotion and communications campaign to attract millions of additional international visitors to the United States annually and create hundreds of thousands of new jobs. Overseas visitors spend an average of \$4,000 per person per visit.

Participants also discussed the need to maximize the benefits of business meetings and events, which generate more than \$100 billion in spending and create more than one million jobs that are the lifeblood of local communities across the country.

(more)

The participants in the meeting were:

Roger Dow, President & CEO, U.S. Travel Association

Jonathan M. Tisch, Chairman and CEO, Loews Hotels;
Chairman Emeritus, U.S. Travel Association

Jim Abrahamson, President, the Americas, IHG

Jim Atchison, President and COO, Busch Entertainment Corp.

Jeff Clarke, CEO and President, Travelport

Howard Frank, Vice Chairman and COO, Carnival Corporation & plc

Barney Harford, President and CEO, Orbitz Worldwide

W. Stephen Maritz, Chairman and CEO, Maritz Holdings Inc.

Bill Marriott, Chairman and CEO, Marriott International, Inc.

Jay Rasulo, Chairman, Walt Disney Parks and Resorts

Colin Reed, Chairman and CEO, Gaylord Entertainment

Frits van Paasschen, President, CEO and Director, Starwood Hotels and Resorts

Tom Williams, Chairman and CEO, Universal Parks and Resorts

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The U.S. Travel Association is the national, non-profit organization representing all components of the \$740 billion travel industry. U.S. Travel's mission is to promote and facilitate increased travel to and within the United States. For more information, visit www.ustravel.org.