



Unlocking the Power of Business Travel in the U.S.

2024-2025 U.S. Policy Priorities



GBTA Global Business
Travel Association

Travel is a force for good, an opportunity to learn, communicate, share, experience and innovate.

Business travel is on the leading edge for the entire industry, in that it drives faster improvements for all travelers through corporates' combined buying power to deliver safe, efficient, and sustainable travel options. **Business travel brings people together** and fosters economic growth. **GBTA and its members will continue working closely with policymakers** to ensure our industry remains a driving force for U.S. competitiveness and the green transition.



Suzanne Neufang
Chief Executive Officer,
GBTA



Business Travel: A Driving Force for the Future of the U.S.

What is Business Travel?



IT'S TRAVEL FOR WORK

Business travel covers trips undertaken for work purposes, as opposed to leisure trips. It includes traveling to meet business partners or constituents, participate in trainings, attend events and conferences, or conduct diplomatic and political negotiations. It allows people to connect in person, offers fulfilling career opportunities, and ultimately enables societies and economies to thrive and grow. Business travel fosters connection, both within the United States and around the world.

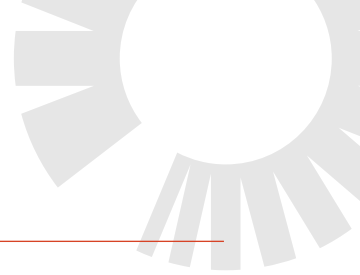
IT'S DOOR-TO-DOOR JOURNEYS

From the moment a business traveler leaves on a trip to the moment they return home, all the services they make use of are part of the business travel supply chain. This includes transport (air, ground, rail), urban mobility (public transit, taxis, shared rides), hospitality (hotel, restaurants), and ancillary services.



IT'S VERY OFTEN 'MANAGED'

Travel is managed in organizations that prioritize traveler safety and well-being, known as "Duty of Care," to ensure travelers depart and return safely. Managed travel also helps control expenses, costs, and emissions within given budgets. Organizations generally institute a travel policy that reflects these values and preferences, overseen by a travel manager. They normally contract with "preferred suppliers" to provide services that meet the goals of the organization. Travel managers can therefore use their purchasing power as a lever for change and are increasingly doing so by incorporating sustainability, safety, and diversity requirements in their travel procurement.



Supporting the U.S. Economy



ECONOMIC ENGINE

While business travel in the U.S. was severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, **travel spending was expected to fully recover to the pre-COVID spend level by the end of 2023**, reaching \$329.1 billion USD, which is 5.1% higher than the pre-COVID level (\$313.1 billion USD). In 2027, **business travel spend in the U.S. is expected to reach \$396.4 billion USD** which is 26.6% higher than the pre-COVID level.



MULTIPLIER EFFECT

Business travel has **fostered economic growth across national boundaries** for decades. Its multiplier effect benefits a wide range of sectors by boosting employment and sustaining critical trade and logistics infrastructure. Hotels, restaurants, and catering services, for example, all benefit from meetings and travel. In 2023, **business travelers in the U.S. spent, on average, \$1,256 USD per person** (including both managed and unmanaged spending), per business trip.¹



IMPACT ON U.S. GDP

According to the recent “GBTA Economics of Business Travel” U.S. economic impact study that delves into purchasing and spending, **U.S. business travel contributed \$484.4 billion to gross domestic product in 2022**. The \$421.1 billion in business travel spending in 2022 resulted in \$484.4 billion dollars generated in U.S. GDP. Essentially, every single dollar spent on business travel activity generated about \$1.15 in GDP. **Business travel was responsible for about 1.9% of 2022 U.S. GDP**. Of the \$484.4 billion total, **\$204.1 billion accrued directly to the businesses that served business travelers or meeting attendees**. Their supply chain beneficiaries received an additional indirect contribution of \$120.8 billion. Other downstream beneficiaries received an induced contribution of \$159.5 billion. This includes the impacts of wages spent by business travel industry workers on various goods and services.²

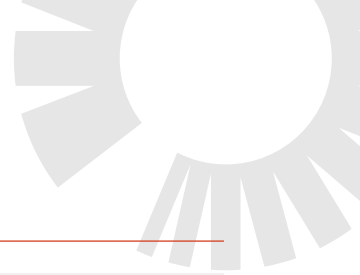


SOCIAL COHESION

Business travel also **strengthens social cohesion, by fostering personal career growth, building trust with co-workers**, clients and partners, and enabling professionals to discover new cultures and working methods. It enables networking, promotes innovation, and helps market expansion.

¹ 2023 Global Business Travel Index™ Outlook (BTI)

² GBTA Business Travel's Impact on Jobs and the U.S. Economy in 2022



Navigating the Energy Transition



MANAGING EMISSIONS

According to GBTA's latest "State of Climate Action in Business Travel" report³, 81% of travel managers have integrated, or are planning to integrate, sustainability considerations into their travel program. Companies are practicing a wide range of strategies to decarbonize their travel programs. These include demand management policies, better point of sale information to empower employees to select lower carbon options and partnering with responsible transport and accommodations providers.

INVESTING IN DECARBONISATION SOLUTIONS

Corporates are increasingly investing in emission reduction technologies within the business travel value chain. This includes electrifying their fleets, choosing more sustainable hotels, and supporting Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF), with buyers currently relying on 'Book and Claim' systems to allow them to invest in SAF environmental attributes.



FACILITATING THE RECOGNITION OF BOOK & CLAIM

Book & Claim is a chain of custody that traces the environmental attributes associated with SAF, thus facilitating investment and scale of such fuels. This is critically needed while SAF supply remains limited, to avoid generating additional emissions from unnecessary transportation and distribution.

THE ROAD TOWARDS HARMONIZATION

A common pain point for companies is the number of standards and different methodologies that exist. No harmonized international standard exists for calculating emissions, so an organization needs to pick the model that best fits their needs. GBTA has been playing a key role in this regard, with the development of sustainable procurement standards for travel, helping send a strong demand signal to suppliers for more sustainable travel options.



³ <https://gbtafoundation.org/publications/2023-climate-action-report/>



GBTA: A Key Partner for U.S. Policymakers

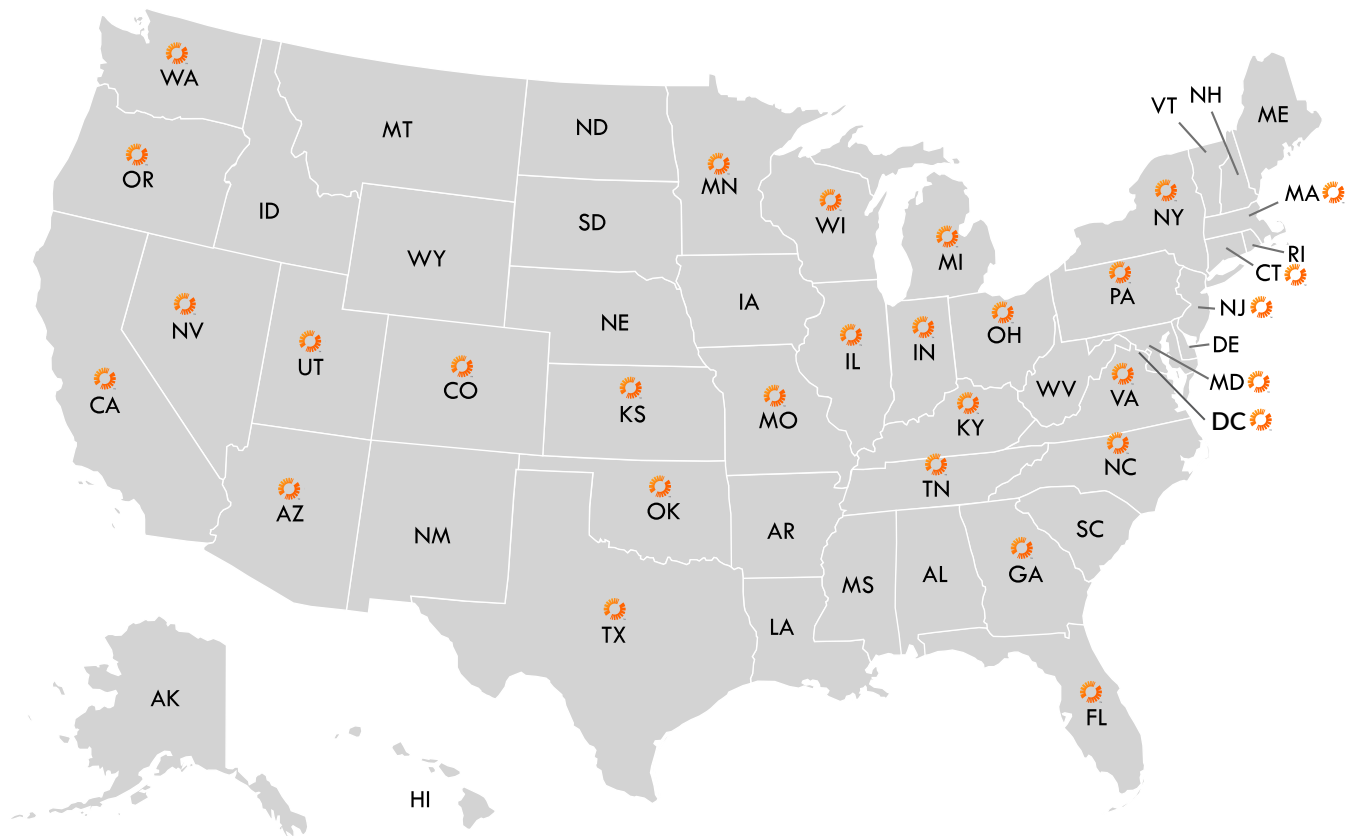
The Voice of Business Travel

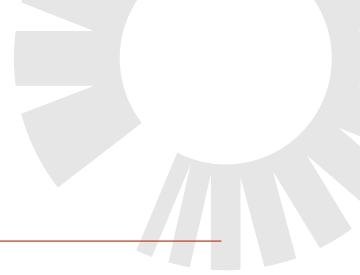
GBTA brings together the many voices of business travel, providing a common platform for buyers and suppliers to shape the future of our industry. GBTA's 8,000+ members are spread across four key regions (NORAM, EMEA, LATAM and APAC). Our members are individual business travel professionals. On the user side of travel, they are the corporate travel program managers and travel procurement leads in their organizations. On the supplier side, they are the airlines, hotels, car rentals, travel management companies, corporate booking tools, distribution technologies, travel risk management and payment and expense systems.



Strong Presence in the United States

GBTA was first established in 1968 as the National Passenger Traffic Association. In 1986 the name changed to the National Business Travel Association. In 2012, to reflect the growing nature of corporate business travel and the reach of members, the name was changed to the Global Business Travel Association. **GBTA has 37 active chapters across the continental United States**, serving as the base of GBTA's membership.





An Active Partner in the United States

GBTA has been a partner in making business travel work for all Americans since its inception. The 117th and 118th Congress were key to the survival of business travel in providing unprecedented aid to the industry during COVID-19 as well as helping to end travel restrictions. The continued investment in the nation's infrastructure and helping to assist the development of green technology is **enabling the business travel industry to sustainably grow and recover to pre-pandemic levels**. Business travel has been a partner in this transition, with GBTA presenting the views and priorities of the sector to U.S. decision-makers throughout the legislative term. We have worked on the Inflation Reduction Act, The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and participated in the rulemaking process representing the business travel industry's views on the Department of Transportation, Department of Commerce and Securities and Exchange proposed rules on technology, sustainable travel and passenger rights. **GBTA has also contributed to consultations on the decarbonization of aviation**, passenger rights, and multimodal modal travel among other topics and has joined initiatives such as the Administration's Federal Sustainability Plan.



GBTA has been a partner in making business travel work for all Americans since its inception.





Our Priorities for the 118th & 119th Congress & Administration

We look forward to continuing our cooperation with the U.S. in our common purpose of achieving smarter, more efficient, reliable, and sustainable travel.



1. IMPROVING PASSENGER FACILITATION

- a. Digitization of travel documents
- b. Responsible use of biometrics
- c. Increased CBP and TSA staffing
- d. Expanded preclearance operations
- e. Improved visa processing



2. PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS TRAVEL

- a. Decarbonization of aviation
- b. Promotion of rail and electromobility
- c. Clarity on emissions reporting rules



3. MODERNIZING PHYSICAL AND DIGITAL TRAVEL INFRASTRUCTURE

- a. Invest in the NextGen NAS and Highway Trust Fund
- b. Implement a long-term, comprehensive FAA reauthorization



1. Facilitating Passenger Facilitation across the U.S. & Globally

Why it Matters

For the business travel sector to thrive and contribute to the U.S. economy and society, the right framework of rules should be in place to improve the traveler experience while ensuring their rights are fully protected.

Our Asks to U.S. Policymakers

DIGITALIZE TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

As part of our support for sustainable, efficient, and seamless business travel, GBTA believes travel procedures should be clear and easy to use for travelers, avoiding unnecessary red tape that can create uncertainty and damage economic growth. Because of this, **GBTA encourages the U.S. government to continue to advance initiatives to digitalize and simplify travel procedures.**

RESPONSIBLY EXPAND THE USE OF BIOMETRICS

GBTA calls on the government when considering expansion of biometric screening technologies to balance security, passenger throughput, and privacy. Biometric screening of travelers has the potential to revolutionize the passenger experience, particularly in high-security modes such as air travel. GBTA supports the continued development of biometric technologies for travel, including facial recognition as an alternative to physical and digital boarding passes and identification documents. However, GBTA is concerned about the privacy implications of mandatory biometric screening.

INCREASE FUNDING FOR PASSENGER SCREENING AND STAFFING AT THE TSA AND CBP

GBTA supports increased funding for additional Customs Border Protection officers. The nation's ports of entry are vital gateways for international commerce and travel collecting almost \$112 billion in duties, taxes, and fees in fiscal year 2022. Increased funding is critical to improve the passenger experience through improved checkpoint technology, baggage screening and automation as well as efforts to expand and professionalize the TSA workforce, including through hiring additional screening personnel.

Our air, sea, and land ports are in desperate need of more CBP employees at the ports-of-entry to reduce wait times for international travelers. According to CBP's most recent workload staffing models, the agency needs to hire at least 4,000 CBP officers. Without the funding for 1,000 new CBP officers, frontline employees will continue to face excessive overtime shifts, out-of-town deployments that leave their home ports even more understaffed, and the additional stress of dealing with long lines of travelers enduring longer wait times.

EXPAND OVERSEAS CBP PRECLEARANCE OPERATIONS

What's Preclearance? Preclearance is a U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) program where travelers to the United States are 'precleared' prior to boarding U.S. bound flights from foreign airports. Travelers at foreign Preclearance airports are inspected by CBP officers prior to boarding their flights. Upon arrival in the United States, precleared passengers bypass customs lines upon U.S. arrival and proceed directly to their connecting flight or destination.

Current locations: Currently, Preclearance operations take place at fifteen airports in six different countries: Aruba, the Bahamas, Bermuda; Canada, Ireland, and the United Arab Emirates. Pre-covid, these fifteen locations processed twenty-two million passengers, representing approximately sixteen percent of all U.S.-bound commercial air travel.

Benefits: Preclearance provides a unique benefit to the business travel community by improving security while removing significant chokepoints in the travel journey. Reducing the time spent in transit provides greater productivity, economic return, and reduces cost. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, border delays result in losses to output, wages, jobs, and tax revenue due to decreases in spending by companies,



1. Facilitating Passenger Facilitation across the U.S. & Globally (continued)

suppliers, and consumers. Extended CBP wait times discourage international visitors, who spend an average of \$4,200 per visit, from traveling to the United States. Additionally, the Joint Economic Committee has found that border delays cost the U.S. economy upwards of \$5 billion annually.

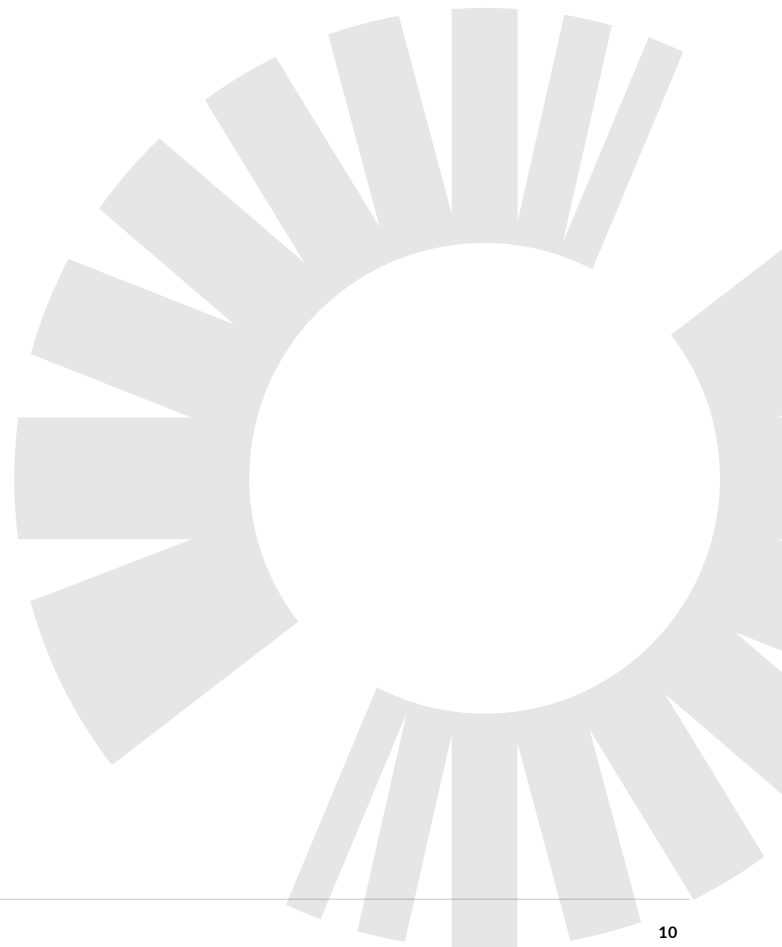
Call to action: As such, GBTA has supported U.S. Preclearance as a mutually beneficial policy framework that strengthens the relationship between the U.S. and its allies and provides a significant benefit to the business travel community. **GBTA encourages the Department of Homeland Security to continue negotiations with countries interested in joining the program.**

IMPROVE VISA PROCESSING AND REDUCE WAIT TIMES

International travelers applying for visas face unacceptably long wait times, often lasting over a year. These delays result in canceled inbound business trips, costing businesses time and money and harming the U.S. economy. By modernizing the system while maintaining our national security, we can bolster the economy without compromising safety.

GBTA supports the bipartisan Visa Processing Improvement Act and encourages Senators to co-sponsor the bill. This commonsense legislation would reduce visa wait times by:

- ➔ Requiring the State Department to set interview wait time goals and take steps to lower wait times in locations that consistently fail to achieve those goals.
- ➔ Providing the State Department with permanent authority to waive in-person interviews for certain previously vetted and low-risk nonimmigrant visa applicants.
- ➔ Creating a pilot program to test videoconferencing as an alternative to in-person interviews for certain low-risk, pre-vetted visa applicants from Global Entry countries.
- ➔ Improving the service nonimmigrant visa processing experience by providing an expedited processing fee and the opportunity to extend visitors visas while in the U.S.





2. Promoting Sustainable Business Travel

Why it Matters

GBTA has taken the initiative in recent years to support the business travel eco-system in its transition to cleaner fuel and more sustainable options. Our objective is to support the deployment of solutions that materially reduce carbon emissions from travel. GBTA is a supporter of policies that enable the transition across different travel modes and industry segments. [Our State of Climate Action Report](#) shows the major efforts the sector is making to transition towards more sustainable practices.

Our Asks to U.S. Policymakers

SUPPORT THE DECARBONISATION OF AVIATION

We recognize and applaud the U.S. push for **decarbonising aviation, a key mode of transport for business travellers.**

- ➔ **Increasing the uptake of Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF):** Sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) is a safe replacement for conventional (fossil-based) fuel that could reduce carbon emissions on a lifecycle basis. Transitioning from traditional jet fuel to SAF is the only viable, near-term solution to significantly decarbonizing commercial aviation. However, today, SAF is more expensive due to higher production costs relative to demand, among other reasons. With this in mind:
 - o GBTA supports the **extension of the blenders tax credit passed in 2023** to speed up the transition to SAF and make it economically viable compared to conventional jet fuel.
 - o GBTA also supports the **bipartisan Farm to Fly Act**, which would harmonize the definition of SAF for USDA purposes and clarify eligibilities and encourages members of Congress to pass this legislation.
- ➔ **Facilitating the recognition of Book & Claim:** Book & Claim is a chain of custody that traces the environmental attributes associated with SAF, thus facilitating investment and scale of such fuels. This is critically needed while SAF supply remains limited, to avoid generating additional emissions from bringing SAF to airports.

PROMOTE INTERCITY RAIL AND ELECTROMOBILITY AS VIABLE BUSINESS TRAVEL OPTIONS

The U.S. passenger rail network lags behind peer nations, resulting in fewer sustainable options for business travelers. **GBTA supports full funding in the FY 2025 budget cycle for Amtrak** that will help the expansion of routes. GBTA also supports the Administration's Federal State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail (Fed-State National) Program and the buildout of other intercity rail networks. The expansion of intercity rail within the U.S. will enable travelers to choose more sustainable and affordable options than short flights or long road trips. However, GBTA encourages States to ensure their funding for matching programs under the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Grant Program to be broad based and **do not place a tax burden on business travelers.**





2. Promoting Sustainable Business Travel (continued)

The transition to electric vehicles (EVs) also has an important role to play to decarbonize business travel, as more companies seek to incentivize the rental of EVs by their employees. To support electric mobility, policymakers should further encourage EV adoption, and ensure quick implementation of existing programs to build out the national charging network, particularly in urban areas and national travel corridors which will alleviate range anxiety and help boost customer adoption rates.

To meet the expected demand for power, Congress and the Administration need to consider permitting reform to remove unnecessary roadblocks in building a 21st century power grid.

PROVIDE CLARITY AND TRANSPARENCY ON EMISSIONS ACCOUNTING AND REPORTING

Around 64% of business buyers indicate that their companies track emissions for business travel and 54% mentioned that they have emissions reduction targets. Corporate travel managers find it difficult to track and report emissions data from employees' travel, as there are still many different methodologies available.

- ➔ GBTA supports the SEC's efforts to issue a climate risk disclosure rule but urges policymakers to harmonize emissions reporting standards with international partners and pursue a consistent, global framework. Business travel is a global endeavor, and a patchwork of reporting standards increases compliance costs, requires duplication of efforts, and creates unnecessary complexity in critical climate reporting. In addition, the option to choose between accounting methods risks creates a race to the bottom, diminishing the effectiveness for carbon emissions reduction.

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3. Modernizing Physical and Digital Travel Infrastructure

Why it Matters

Investment in transportation infrastructure is necessary for sustainable economic growth. Governments must support and fund air and rail modernization efforts and should take a balanced approach on taxes and fees levied to help these efforts.

GBTA supports full funding of efforts to modernize air traffic control systems, which will improve safety for flights as well as reduce delays and cancellations. In addition, intercity rail is a critical method of transport for business travelers. Increased ridership must be met with improvements in infrastructure and alignment of laws to enable cross-border travel and bookings.

Our Asks to U.S. Policymakers

INVEST IN INFRASTRUCTURE MODERNIZATION AND IMPROVEMENTS

Next Generation Air Transportation System (NextGen)

The Next Generation Air Transportation System (NextGen) is a large-scale FAA initiative to modernize the U.S. National Airspace System (NAS). Continued investment in a fully realized NextGen NAS is essential to improving safety, unlocking faster, more efficient routes, and upgrading the FAA's aging technology systems and infrastructure for the 21st century. Business travelers will benefit greatly from key NextGen advancements such as Trajectory Based Operations, which will cut down on air traffic congestion and enable more efficient routes, and an Info-Centric NAS, helping unlock the potential of advanced air mobility, automation, and new space types of space vehicles. **Congress and the Administration must continue investment in the safety of our skies.**

Highway Trust Fund

Over 56% of U.S. business travelers reported using a personal car or truck as their most popular mode of transportation. Two years after the passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), policymakers must prioritize continued investments in the aging transportation infrastructure throughout the U.S. In the 119th Congress, with IIJA programs set to expire in 2026, Congress must begin developing the next major infrastructure package, and prepare for a long-term, sustainable reauthorization of the Highway Trust Fund, which is currently on pace to run out of funding by 2028.

Congress should address different funding mechanisms for the Highway Trust Fund, including additional research and testing of a Vehicle Mileage Traveled (VMT) program that takes into account improved fuel efficiency and increased number of electric vehicles.

SUPPORT CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT WITH COMPREHENSIVE FAA REAUTHORIZATION

The future of business travel and overall competitiveness for the travel industry depends on a safe, reliable, and modern National Airspace System (NAS). GBTA applauds Congress for the passage of the FAA reauthorization. Passage of the bill addresses the safety issues facing aviation, improves the traveler experience, and paves the way for integrating future technologies.

In a recent GBTA poll, half of business travel professionals (50%) say concerns about travel disruptions or an unpleasant travel experience - such as canceled or delayed flights, crowded airports, poor customer support, and long lines for security screenings - have "greatly" (9%) or "somewhat" (41%) reduced their willingness to travel for work.

GBTA specifically supports the following and urges the Administration and Congress to begin implementation:

- ➔ Upgrades to critical FAA systems to improve safety and efficiency for the national airspace, saving passengers time and money, and reducing carbon emissions.
- ➔ Requiring studies to better understand and improve accessibility and the overall air travel experience for passengers with disabilities.
- ➔ Making necessary workforce investments and creating a long-term talent pipeline for the FAA and aviation industry.

Congress must continue funding the agency and provide the necessary oversight to ensure the aging physical and digital infrastructure meets the needs of the traveling public and business travel in particular to ensure the sustainable growth of the industry.



About the Global Business Travel Association

The Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) is the world's leading business travel and meetings trade organization, serving stakeholders across six continents. GBTA and its 8,000+ members represent and advocate for the \$1,357 trillion global business travel and meetings industry. GBTA and the GBTA Foundation deliver world-class education, events, research, advocacy, and media to a growing global network of more than 28,000 travel professionals and 125,000 active contacts. For more information, visit gbta.org and gbtafoundation.org.

Interested to get in touch?

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