August 3, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Democratic Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

As Congress considers policies to address the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) offers these policy recommendations on behalf of our 9,000 business travel professionals.

By way of introduction, GBTA is the world’s largest professional association representing the $1.4 trillion business travel industry. Collectively, our members directly control more than $345 billion of global business travel and meetings expenditures annually, and represent every facet of the global travel industry marketplace.

But GBTA’s core industry, business travel, has become the latest casualty of the pandemic by coming to a halt across the globe. According to our member surveys, nearly every GBTA member company (98%) reports canceling and/or suspending all international business travel. In addition, most (95%) report they have canceled or suspended all or most domestic travel.

GBTA believes confidence in travel must be restored. Unfortunately, there is no quick solution to restore travel. Instead, it will require a series of steps that allow businesses in the travel ecosystem to safely and properly re-open. Your leadership on these actions will provide companies the faith necessary to send their employees on the road again, thus kick-starting a trillion-dollar economic generator.

In order to restore safety and confidence in business travel, GBTA supports the following policies:

1) **Provide Funding for Increased Rapid Testing.** Sudden and unilateral shifts in government response, such as imposition of quarantines or border closures, take a heavy toll on the travel industry, further impeding economic recovery and causing chaos for travelers. GBTA supports efforts to increase rapid testing across the country so that federal, state and local governments have a complete picture of the virus.
2) **Provide a Limited Safe Harbor for Businesses Following Health and Safety Guidelines.** The issue of liability and companies being sued for no fault of their own by people who contract coronavirus remains a barrier for travel to resume. Not only does such potential liability impact the entire travel system, airlines, hotels, car service, etc., but it plays an enormous role in businesses allowing their travelers to go on trips. To ensure travel can resume, travel related small businesses, companies and corporations need reassurance that if they open properly and follow the safety protocols, they will be protected against fraudulent class action lawsuits.

3) **Provide Long-Term Relief Until Recovery is Possible.** Many small businesses in the travel ecosystem still have not been able to access the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). Therefore, at a minimum PPP, should:
   - Be extended through to the end of the year;
   - Be expanded to include 501(c)(6) organizations;
   - Give priority to the hardest hit sectors of the economy, including travel-dependent businesses and organizations;
   - Ensure any grants or loans are large enough to keep workers connected to their jobs and benefits throughout any sustained period of economic interruption;
   - Allow amounts to be used for any expense needed to help the business or organization withstand the effects of local shutdown orders or other health and safety restrictions; and
   - Provide a simple application process that removes any undue barriers that would otherwise prevent struggling businesses and nonprofit organizations from accessing the relief—including high interest rates and strict underwriting standards.

4) **Improve EIDL.** In addition to expanded access to PPP funding, Congress should support Senator Schatz’s legislation to improve the Emergency Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) for small businesses and nonprofits by:
   - Lowering interest rates to 1 percent, in line with the PPP loan rate;
   - Allowing new EIDL loan applicants to receive up to $2 million, based on their financial need;
   - Enabling current EIDL loan recipients to request an increase in their EIDL loan up to $2 million, based on their financial need;
   - Requiring the SBA to provide the full amount of the EIDL advance requested by an applicant, up to $10,000;
   - Creating a new EIDL advance of up to $25,000 for applicants that have experienced a reduction of 50 percent or more in gross receipts from a comparable 8-week period before the public health crisis began; and
   - Providing an additional $80 billion for EIDL loans and $20 billion for EIDL advances.

5) **Support for Business Meal Deduction.** Video and teleconferencing are changing the face of business meetings. However, these platforms cannot fully replace the impact of a face to face meeting or the impact of such meetings to the economy. GBTA supports efforts to fully deduct business meals at restaurants.
Business travel is vital to the economy. Confidence in the travel environment and the health of the travel industry is vital. GBTA calls on Congress to take the same bold actions it took in May and pass these items. Should you have any questions, please contact me at sdowney@gbta.org or (703) 459-7425.

Regards,

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Global Business Travel Association