



NEWS The United States Conference of Mayors

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USA MAYORS APPLAUD SIGNING OF THE TRAVEL PROMOTION ACT: WILL BOOST TOURISM, HELP LOCAL ECONOMIES

Washington, D.C. – The nation's mayors today are pleased that President Barack Obama has signed into law the Travel Promotion Act of 2009. The Senate passed the bill a week earlier on an overwhelming vote of 78-18. The House of Representatives passed the legislation in October, 2009.

The passage of the Travel Promotion Act, which establishes an international marketing campaign to attract foreign visitors to the United States, has been a major priority of the Conference of Mayors. The Conference of Mayors passed its first resolution in support of the Travel Promotion Act at its 74th Annual Conference in 2006 and has repeatedly done such every year since. The bill has also been a priority item for the Conference's leadership. Conference of Mayors President Burnsville Mayor Elizabeth Kautz included the Travel Promotion Act as part of the jobs platform of her 2010 Metro Agenda for America. Former Conference President and former Miami Mayor Manny Diaz included passage of this legislation as part of his five Mayors Action Forums, which were held to draw national attention to Conference priorities and mayors' challenges. Past Conference President Trenton Mayor Douglas Palmer included the Travel Promotion Act as part of the Mayors 10-Point Action Plan, which was presented to the 2008 presidential candidates.

"We applaud the President and Congress for passing the Travel Promotion Act which will create thousands of new jobs in America," stated Conference of Mayors President Burnsville Mayor Elizabeth Kautz. "Americans need jobs now and this bill will help to get our national and local economies moving again."

"I'm very grateful to President Obama for signing this important measure into law," said Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann, a Conference of Mayors Trustee and Chairman of its Standing Committee on Tourism, Arts, Parks, Entertainment and Sports. "The mayors made the Travel Promotion Act part of our 10-Point Action Plan and our 2010 Metro Agenda for America and worked very hard to secure its passage on Capitol Hill," said Hannemann. "The President's approval is wonderful news for our nation, and especially for cities where tourism is a major economic pillar."

"Today's event in the White House is a direct result of a powerful public-private partnership the mayors of this nation, The United States Conference of Mayors joined with the Travel Business Roundtable and the U.S. Travel Association coming together for the common good of our nation. "This legislation could not have been passed without the mayors and the travel industry consistently pushing and telling Washington just how important international tourism is to our metro-economies and our national economy. Today Congress and the White House are coming around to engage the federal government in helping mayors and the travel and tourism industry

to promote their cities as other nations do. Heretofore, the USA government has not spent a penny and yet international travel is a big part of our economy. This is a first step and we must do more. Today, we thank President Obama. We also thank the House and the Senate. And, today, we thank our industry partners and look forward to more victories for our cities, our strong industry partners and for our nation,” said Conference of Mayors CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran and former board member of the Travel Business Roundtable.

“America is finally coming around to what the rest of the world is all ready doing, promoting themselves to secure international visitors which mean money and jobs for their people. The Travel Promotion Act shows what can be accomplished when mayors and the business community work together,” Cochran concluded.

The Conference of Mayors partnered with the travel industry in working on the legislation. “The US Conference of Mayors has been an extraordinary partner in this effort,” stated Jonathan Tisch, Chairman and CEO of Loews Hotels and Chairman Emeritus of the U.S. Travel Association.

The Travel Promotion Act will create a public-private partnership to promote the United States as a premier international travel destination and communicate US security and entry policies. The travel promotion will be paid for by private sector contributions and a \$10 fee on foreign travelers. The US Travel Association, of which the US Conference of Mayors is a member, estimates that the bill would attract 1.6 million new international visitors, create over 40,000 new jobs in its first year, and would generate \$4 billion in new economic activity and contribute over \$321 million in new federal tax revenue each year.

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The U.S. Conference of Mayors is the official nonpartisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. There are 1,139 such cities in the country today. Each city is represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the mayor. More information about the Conference is available at usmayors.org.