



August 5, 2015

Representative Michael Fitzpatrick  
1224 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Fitzpatrick:

Meetings Mean Business (MMB) is an industry-wide coalition that showcases the incredible value that business meetings, conferences, conventions, incentive travel, trade shows and exhibitions provide for people, businesses and communities.

We are writing to express our deep concerns with provisions contained in the Stay in Place, Cut the Waste Act of 2015 (H.R. 2810) and to urge you to work with government and industry stakeholders to make changes to the bill. While MMB strongly supports efforts to conserve taxpayer resources and ensure that government meetings serve the public interest, we believe that H.R. 2810 as currently drafted could increase federal spending, reduce efficiency and effectiveness, and harm the federal government's ability to perform important functions.

Congress and federal workers rely on in-person meetings and travel as indispensable tools to do their jobs effectively. Face-to-face meetings enable successful information sharing, employee training and development, taxpayer services, and collaboration with other agencies and private-sector partners in a way that cannot be accomplished by other means.

While fiscal responsibility and the reduction of unnecessary spending are important, across-the-board cuts to government travel budgets mean fewer federal employees are well-trained, educated, engaged in important issues, and therefore not advancing their agency's mission. Further reducing travel and limiting face-to-face meetings will result in a federal government that is less responsive and effective for citizens and ultimately, less efficient.

Earlier this year, MMB commissioned research to better understand the value of government travel and meetings to federal employees. Our research shows that in-person meetings, conferences and events provide tremendous value to federal workers and enable them to do their work more efficiently and effectively:

- Nine out of 10 federal workers believe that in-person meetings, conferences and other face-to-face events are important for advancing the mission of their agencies.
- The overwhelming majority of federal workers experience increased value from in-person meetings as opposed to remote ones.
- Eight in 10 federal workers find in-person trainings better for fostering teamwork, networking and engagement.
- Eighty percent of federal workers say they are more likely to actively participate in a face-to-face training. The same percentage says they have attended an in-person event that would not have resulted in the same level of success if conducted remotely.

Travel and meetings strengthen the connections between the public and private sectors – furthering the ability of our government to address important policy issues. Conferences are the focal point for the productive exchange of ideas across industry, academia and government. Restricting the participation of federal personnel, for example those in science, is debilitating and limits the productivity of important federal agencies. In the realm of science and technology, meetings are an essential part of the innovation process – impacting the Food and Drug Administration,



the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, the National Science Foundation and many others. Over time, such restrictions will diminish America's innovation capacity and competitiveness.

If this legislation succeeds in its current form, it will hamstring government agencies, and at the same time, create unintended consequences for local and regional economies. Face-to-face meetings contribute more than \$280 billion in direct spending each year and put another \$88 billion back into the economy through federal, state and local taxes. They sustain small businesses and local communities, and in destinations across the United States, they are the lifeblood of visitor spending.

For local markets, hosting a government meeting, convention or trade show stimulates the economy by bringing in new visitors, who stay in area hotels, eat in local restaurants, shop in neighborhood stores and return for repeat visitations. Meetings also spur local employment. In your home state of Pennsylvania, meetings and business travel contributed \$6.3 billion to the state economy in 2013 alone. They also accounted for more than 300,000 jobs.

Research by Rockport Analytics – a leading economic consulting firm – affirms that cancelling government participation in meetings and conferences can actually cost taxpayers more in the end. A copy of the Rockport Analytics report and MMB's research is attached to this letter for your reference. It shows that restricting government travel for meetings will not accomplish the goal of your legislation and in fact, will almost never result in overall savings.

We sincerely hope that you will review the attached research and re-evaluate the Stay in Place, Cut the Waste Act of 2015. Meetings and travel are critical for creating personal connections, driving positive business outcomes and supporting strong communities. Simply put, meetings make our government more effective, efficient and productive.

Thank you for your continued commitment to modernize government travel policies, and we look forward to working with you and your staff to improve H.R. 2810.

Sincerely,

American Hotel & Lodging Association  
American Society of Association Executives  
Caesars Entertainment Inc.  
Choose Chicago  
ConferenceDirect  
Convention Industry Council  
Destination Gettysburg  
Destination Marketing Association International  
Freeman  
HelmsBriscoe  
Hilton Worldwide  
Hyatt Hotels Corporation  
International Association of Exhibitions & Events  
Irving Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority  
Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board  
Maritz Travel Company and Experient  
Marriott International

Meeting Professionals International  
MGM Resorts International  
New Orleans Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Professional Convention Management Association  
PSAV  
Richmond Region Tourism  
San Diego Tourism Authority  
San Francisco Travel Association  
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Society of Independent Show Organizers  
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