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CONTACT: Peter Clerkin
202-945-4950
peter@aahoa.com

AAHOA's Humphrey Joins Travel & Tourism CEOs on Capitol Hill to Support Brand USA

WASHINGTON, D.C., July 24 – AAHOA Interim President and CEO Rachel Humphrey joined other travel and tourism executives on Capitol Hill today in support of reauthorizing Brand USA. The executives visited with lawmakers to convey the successful program's importance to the U.S. travel industry and why the funding mechanism laid out in the current authorization needs to remain intact. Because the U.S. does not fund an official tourism board, the Brand USA public-private partnership allows the private sector and the federal government to coordinate efforts to promote the country as a destination for international travelers.

“Brand USA is a unique partnership that promotes the U.S. as a destination to world travelers. Since 2013, Brand USA has added \$47.7 billion in economic output, created 52,000 American jobs, and generated billions in tax revenue. It allows us to promote everything worth seeing and doing in the USA to the world without spending a single taxpayer dollar. Unfortunately, if Brand USA is not reauthorized, it would limit the private sector's contributions or deter investment in the partnership. This is a program with a 25:1 ROI. That's why it is so important to reauthorize Brand USA,” said Humphrey.

The program is funded through a portion of fees collected from travelers using the Visa Waiver Program. The private sector matches this amount dollar per dollar with cash or in-kind donations. Without reauthorization, the funding mechanism would expire after 2020, and fees would be directed into the general fund with none explicitly allocated to Brand USA. Without a stable funding mechanism, the public-private partnership could not exist.

The reauthorizing legislation, S.2134 and its House companion, H.R.3851, enjoy bipartisan support. Humphrey said she is optimistic about its passage and that AAHOA will continue to promote the bill at its Legislative Action Summit in Washington, D.C. on September 10-11.

About AAHOA:

AAHOA is the largest hotel owners association in the world. The over 18,500 AAHOA members own almost one in every two hotels in the United States. With billions of dollars in property assets and hundreds of thousands of employees, AAHOA members are core economic contributors in virtually every community. AAHOA is a proud defender of free enterprise and the foremost current-day example of realizing the American dream.

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