

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 25, 2009

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
H-232 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515
One of Two

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Majority Leader
H-107 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader Hoyer,

As the Members representing the U.S. territories, we write to express our concerns regarding S. 1023, the Travel Promotion Act of 2009 that recently passed the Senate and is awaiting House action. We do support legislation to establish a non-profit Corporation for Travel Promotion. The districts we represent, however, are not identified in the mission of this Corporation: "to ensure that international travel benefits all States and the District of Columbia." We are concerned that the Corporation may interpret this omission as intentional and not include the territories in its promotional activities. We do not hold these general concerns about H.R. 2935, the House version of the Travel Promotion Act.

Regardless of our previous concern, we have reservations about the Corporation's ability to address the unique economic needs of the territories. The territories lag behind the rest of the United States under almost every economic measure with lower per capita income levels, more unemployment and higher poverty rates than the rest of the country. Tourism is the foundation of our economies, which have been hit especially hard by the current economic downturn. However, the combination of the territories' small size and disproportionate reliance on tourism raises the specter that we could make significant contributions to the Corporation's general fund but be largely overlooked in its promotional activities. To ensure that the territories receive support commensurate with their contribution, we respectfully request the opportunity to amend, if the bill is brought to the floor of the House, Section 5(B)(ii) to allow the funds received from fees collected in each territory to be reserved for existing travel promotion authorities within that territory. Additionally, we also request that language be considered requiring the appointment of one individual from the territories to the Board of the Corporation. These measures would ensure that the territories are not forgotten as the bill moves forward and the Corporation begins its work.

We would like to work with you and the committee of jurisdiction to explore language to amend S. 1023 or any other version of the bill that may be scheduled for floor consideration to accommodate these proposals. If the legislative improvements we seek are not possible and S. 1023 is brought to the floor unmodified, we want to ensure that the Congress communicates to the Department of Commerce, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of State, and the proposed Corporation established by the legislation, that it was and is the intent of Congress to include the Territories in its promotional activities.

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Speaker of the House of Representatives
Two of Two

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Majority Leader

We appreciate your consideration and look forward to working with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
Member of Congress



Madeleine Z. Bordallo
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Insular Affairs,
Oceans & Wildlife



Donna M. Christensen
Member of Congress



Eni F.H. Faleomavaega
Member of Congress



Pedro R. Pierluisi
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Henry Waxman, Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce
The Honorable Joe Barton, Ranking Republican Member, Committee on Energy and
Commerce