



ABA urges Congress to pass the TRIP Act to boost tourism

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The American Bus Association (ABA), Washington D.C. is urging Congress to pass swiftly "The Travel Regional Investment Partnership (TRIP)" Act to provide \$50 million worth of matching federal funds for U.S. destinations to engage in outreach efforts to attract prospective tourists.

The TRIP Act, H.R. 4676, introduced by Rep. Sam Farr (D-Calif.), directs the Commerce Department to create a grant program promoting domestic tourism growth, and authorizes \$10 million in competitive grants ranging in value from \$100,000 to \$1 million each.

"In today's economy, investing in travel & tourism development is more critical than ever," said ABA President & CEO Peter J. Pantuso, CTIS. "Even as the United States continues to face tighter budgets, attracting visitors to America's destinations coast-to-coast for leisure, business and sightseeing trips is critical to our economy. Tourism spending is actually an investment."

Group tours bring in new visitors by the busload -- literally. With each coach of 55 passengers traveling to any given attraction, tourism dollars come right along. One bus tour group staying just one night in a destination stimulates that local economy with up to \$12,000 in spending -- on hotels, dining, attractions, and retail purchases that generate tax revenue and create jobs.

ABA and other travel and tourism groups have been working diligently with officials in both the White House and on Capitol Hill to focus on the economic vitality that tourism and travel stimulates across the country. H.R. 4676, which focuses on domestic travel, dovetails nicely with the Senate passage last week of the Travel Promotion Act to encourage more inbound international travel to the United States. President Obama is expected to sign that into law soon.

"Passage of the TRIP Act will not only stimulate the tourism economy, but will also show each Member of Congress how important bus tourism and travel is to their states and districts," Pantuso added. "With more than 750 million passenger trips annually by bus, every state is a bus state. Every region and destination in America benefits from motorcoach tourism and travel."