

June 10, 2025

The Honorable Doug Burgum  
Secretary of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Burgum,

On behalf of the Beyond Borders Tourism Coalition—a unified alliance of leading U.S. and Canadian tourism associations including the Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA), the American Bus Association (ABA), the Canadian Association of Tour Operators (CATO), the International Inbound Travel Association (IITA), the National Tour Association (NTA), the Student & Youth Travel Association (SYTA), and the United States Tour Operators Association (USTOA)—we write to express our strong opposition to the proposed surcharge on international visitors to U.S. national parks.

The proposed surcharge on foreign park visitors is a prime example of this counterproductive trend. International travelers are not just guests at our nation's most treasured landscapes—they are essential economic contributors to the communities that surround them. In 2023, visitors to U.S. national parks spent over \$26.4 billion in gateway communities, supporting more than 415,000 jobs, \$19.4 billion in labor income, and generating \$55.6 billion in total economic output<sup>1</sup>. Roughly one-third of all international visitors to the United States—around 14 million people—include our national parks on their itineraries. Their spending sustains small businesses, tour companies, restaurants, hotels, and transportation services. For many rural communities, especially those near park lands, this tourism is not supplemental—it is foundational.

Instead, rather than raising prices on international travelers and sending the wrong message to our global guests, we urge the Department to consider more forward-looking strategies—such as discounted or free admission for domestic visitors in celebration of America's 250th anniversary. This could include an emphasis on visitation to our lesser-known, yet equally spectacular, parks. The U.S. Department of Transportation has already launched the Great American Road Trip initiative to encourage domestic travel and exploration of our country's landscapes and heritage. Aligning National Park Service policy with this initiative—by incentivizing domestic visitation instead of penalizing international travelers—would strengthen small businesses, boost local tourism, and celebrate our national parks as unifying symbols of American identity.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/socialscience/vse.htm>

At a time when the tourism sector is still working to regain momentum, we urge the Administration and Congress to rethink the proposed hike and instead align policies to promote the coming celebration of our nation.

The Beyond Borders Tourism Coalition stands ready to work with your agencies and offices to advance thoughtful, strategic, and collaborative approaches that support the tourism industry and the communities it touches.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA)  
American Bus Association (ABA)  
Canadian Association of Tour Operators (CATO)  
International Inbound Travel Association (IITA)  
National Tour Association (NTA)  
Student & Youth Travel Association (SYTA)  
United States Tour Operators Association (USTOA)