



# **MGM RESORTS INTERNATIONAL®**

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF**

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—

**U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TOURISM, TRADE, AND EXPORT PROMOTION**

**HEARING ON  
“ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF  
THE U.S. SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT ECONOMY,  
LAS VEGAS EDITION”**

**AUGUST 25, 2023**

Chair Rosen, Ranking Member Budd, and Members of the Subcommittee:

It's great to welcome you to Las Vegas.

There is no better location in America from which to examine the vast benefits travel and tourism creates for our nation's economy – and to discuss how effective public policy can accelerate a virtuous cycle of greater travel, stronger growth, and more good paying jobs.

As CEO and President of MGM Resorts International and Chair of the U.S. Travel and Tourism Advisory Board – or TTAB – I appreciate the opportunity to share a perspective on the policies needed to meet consumer demand for new experiences by improving travel and ensuring America remains the world's premier travel and tourism destination.

Last year, I testified before this subcommittee to discuss the National Travel and Tourism Strategy. I appreciate the support Chair Rosen and the subcommittee has shown for the travel and tourism industry, including securing the position of Assistant Secretary for Travel and Tourism and working to ensure the position is fully funded.

So far in 2023, Las Vegas has welcomed nearly [20.35 million visitors](#) – nearly 10% more than the same period last year. Rising demand for sports and entertainment experiences is driving much of this growth.

In March, an estimated 3 million people flocked to Las Vegas when we hosted multiple rounds of March Madness, two Taylor Swift concerts at Allegiant Stadium, NASCAR events, and more. In June, our own Vegas Golden Knights captured the Stanley Cup – punctuating the transformation of Las Vegas into one of the NHL's great hockey towns. But that's just the start.

In addition to the Golden Knights, we are now home to WNBA champion Las Vegas Aces and the NFL's Las Vegas Raiders. More professional teams may be on the way.

Later this year, our city will welcome millions more fans for Formula One's Las Vegas Grand Prix. Next February, Las Vegas is hosting the pinnacle of sports and entertainment, with Super Bowl LVIII kicking off at Allegiant Stadium.

Good policy has a major role to play in building on this success.

One of the major pillars of travel growth is a seamless travel experience. The travel experience begins at home and extends to various aspects of the travel and tourism industry, including travel planning, transit, and the actual travel experience. We must embrace a holistic perspective that bridges these sectors, ensuring policies that help create a well-rounded enhancement of the travel experience. That requires coordination and national investments in infrastructure and systems that support seamless travel in the broadest sense.

Congress and the Biden Administration took a major step forward by passing the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law – the largest long-term infrastructure investment in our nation's history. As

America continues to invest the \$550 billion authorized by that law, I urge policymakers to ensure travel and tourism infrastructure is a top priority.

In recent years, the travel infrastructure discussion has been dominated by air travel – mainly the need to modernize airports and upgrade air traffic control systems. This is critically important to the future of travel.

But we must also remember that most of America’s travel hotspots – which draw hundreds of millions of people every year – are heavily reliant on roadways.

Take Las Vegas – where more than half the city’s visitors arrive by car. It’s the same at many popular destinations – from Colorado’s world-class Rocky Mountain ski resorts to Florida’s theme park destination resorts.

The solution starts with a national focus. Better road travel must become a national priority.

We also need better coordination of agencies at all levels of government to get projects moving faster. Infrastructure priorities don’t always carry across state or county lines and multiple layers of reviews in multiple jurisdictions continue to create higher costs and endless delays.

For example: I-15 carries 10 million travelers from southern California to Las Vegas every year – about a quarter of the city’s visitors. But what should be a 3 ½ hour trip can stretch to 10 hours or more on a Sunday. One recent New Year’s Day, the backup extended 18 miles.

The I-15 Corridor’s ability to accommodate increased capacity is imperative to the travel experience and can be realized through strategic road expansion and support for the Brightline West high-speed rail project. Pursuit of an efficient and seamless transportation system requires greater coordination across all levels of government to foster a 21<sup>st</sup> century approach that evolves with the dynamic demands of our modern world.

In addition to improved infrastructure, American travel destinations must feel more welcoming to travelers from across the globe. We must work together and commit to supporting accessible travel, resolving visa delays, and addressing workforce shortages.

Las Vegas’ rapid rise as the world’s top sports and entertainment destination is the culmination of an evolution unlike any we have ever seen in our city’s history. This transformation resulted from the public and private sectors working together to build exciting new venues, creating unique experiences that people love, and working together to revolutionize the way fans engage with their favorite teams.

In that same spirit, I look forward to working with Members of the Subcommittee to drive the next wave of growth in travel and tourism – and further boost the industry’s growing contribution to America’s economy.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.