



MGM RESORTS INTERNATIONAL®

WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF

WILLIAM “BILL” HORNBUCKLE

**PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
MGM RESORTS INTERNATIONAL**

**CHAIR
U.S. TRAVEL AND TOURISM ADVISORY BOARD**

—

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

**HEARING ON
“EXAMINING THE 2022 NATIONAL TRAVEL AND TOURISM STRATEGY”**

JULY 12, 2022

Chair Rosen, Ranking Member Scott, Members of the Subcommittee:

I'm Bill Hornbuckle; chair of the United States Travel and Tourism Advisory Board (TTAB) and President and CEO of MGM Resorts International. The TTAB represents a diverse range of travel and tourism organizations, including private sector CEOs, state tourism officers, and destination marketing leaders. We advise the Secretary of Commerce on travel-related government policies "to ensure the United States remains the preeminent destination for international travel and tourism."

The [2022 National Travel and Tourism Strategy](#) lays a strong foundation for the travel industry's recovery and future growth. The Strategy focuses on four pillars: promoting the U.S. as a travel destination; facilitating travel to and within the United States; ensuring a diverse, inclusive, and accessible tourism experience; and fostering resilient and sustainable travel and tourism.

The Strategy establishes a bold goal: bring 90 million international visitors to the United States by 2027 – up from 79.4 million in 2019. Meeting this goal will generate \$297 billion in annual economic activity.

Achieving the aims of the Strategy requires engagement and cooperation from public and private sectors. Together, our priority must be to provide a positive visitor experience. From my perspective as chair of the TTAB and as a travel industry leader, I believe there are three essential elements that define a competitive travel experience: it must be welcoming, accessible, and seamless.

Let's start with *welcoming*. Travelers to the U.S. can enjoy a breadth of destinations representing the diversity of America – its people, natural wonders, and cultural traditions. This diversity is a unique asset and competitive advantage. Therefore, the Strategy underscores the need for the travel industry to closely partner with state, local, and Tribal governments to promote a diverse variety of experiences to international visitors.

The Strategy also recognizes that attracting and retaining a diverse workforce is indispensable to welcoming travelers. Stronger recruitment, retention, and career pathway programs for women and people of color are essential to building that workforce.

At MGM Resorts, we have long-prioritized such investments in majority-minority communities where we operate, like Prince George's County and Detroit. We are proud of our workforce development and training efforts that create a stronger local employment pipeline. And we intentionally design experiences to immerse regional and international guests alike in diverse architecture, culture, and cuisine.

Accessible travel means addressing the impact of climate change, which threatens the availability of many iconic attractions. Recent flooding in Yellowstone and record low water levels in Lake Mead highlight these challenges. The Strategy prioritizes sustainable practices and environmental stewardship to ensure our national treasures can continue to be responsibly shared with visitors.

Accessible also means that our nation's infrastructure must support travel and tourism. I applaud the Administration's efforts to pass the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. As our country begins investing the billions of infrastructure dollars authorized by this law, I hope that we will consider what we must do to support our travel and tourism infrastructure, as well. States and communities across the country depend on the travel and tourism economy and visitors and employees alike must have reliable modes of reaching these destinations.

Consider Interstate 15 at the Nevada-California border, where last Thanksgiving, travelers faced 20-mile back-ups. Expanding that section of I-15 is the kind of much-needed investment in high-performing travel infrastructure that will be foundational to our industry's success.

Finally, travel must be *seamless*. Technology and infrastructure play an enormous role in enhancing the overall ease and enjoyment of travel.

The entire travel industry is innovating. Companies like mine are investing significantly in digital platforms to deliver speed, convenience, and personalized service. But we alone can't achieve the transformation needed to make travel more seamless. The Strategy calls for federal investments to upgrade the travel experience, streamlining the security process, and preparing for a new era of digital IDs, with new digital equipment and new processes for CBP and TSA.

Taken together, the recommendations of the Strategy are essential to the economy and to American workers. Working together, government and the private sector can assure a highly competitive travel future – one that is welcoming, accessible, and seamless – and focused squarely on delivering growth.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.