



May 19, 2025

The Honorable Senator Dan Sullivan
706 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Sullivan:

The Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA) understands that Brand USA's funding was cut in the House Judiciary Committee's reconciliation bill. With tourism being an important natural resource in Alaska, this is concerning for our industry. We rely on Brand USA to help drive international visitors to Alaska and it will be a critical tool to restoring international travel. Prior to the pandemic, 10 percent of Alaska's visitors came from overseas. As the Senate considers reconciliation language, please support efforts to restore funding for Brand USA.

As you are aware, Brand USA is the highly successful public-private partnership, formed under the bipartisan Travel Promotion Act of 2009, that is charged with promoting America as a travel destination and communicating official visa and entry policies to help international visitors comply with U.S. immigration laws. It is funded solely by travel industry contributions and fees paid by international visitors from Visa Waiver Program countries who use the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA).

The House Judiciary Committee's reconciliation bill would raise the ESTA fee from \$21 to \$40 and would cut funding to Brand USA to just \$20 million annually, currently \$100 million. Brand USA uses no taxpayer dollars, reduces the deficit, and drives business to small businesses. These proposed cuts to Brand USA would lead to a nationwide loss of:

- \$1.87 billion in visitor spending each year
- \$538 million in federal and local taxes
- 25,000 jobs supported

ATIA works with Brand USA to market Alaska in places like Germany, India, South America and Japan. They have been critical in helping us leverage our small tourism marketing budget. Before Brand USA existed, the U.S. was one of the only major destinations without a national tourism marketing organization. Since its creation, Brand USA has made a significant difference by boosting international visitation, increasing spending, and bringing tourism dollars to communities across the country. Budget cuts will negatively impact our ability to attract this important consumer segment.

We greatly appreciate your leadership and all you have done already to support Alaska's travel industry, and we encourage you to protect Brand USA funding. Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jillian Simpson
President & CEO