



Advocacy Update

Renewing Brand USA

The effort to reauthorize Brand USA and maintain its current funding framework is getting traction in Congress. On July 16, a bipartisan quartet of Senators introduced legislation, S. 2134, to enact a long-term reauthorization of Brand USA, extending the national destination marketing organization's funding mechanism through 2027.

The sponsors of the legislation are: Sen. Roy Blunt (R-MO), Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Sen. Cory Gardner (R-CO), and Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV). Introduction of S. 2134 is a big step forward in ensuring Brand USA will be reauthorized in advance of its sunset date of September 30, 2020.

In the House, a group of tourism champions -- Rep. Peter Welch (D-VT), Rep. Gus Bilirakis (R-FL), and Rep. Dina Titus (D-NV) introduced a companion bill, H.R. 3851, in the House of Representatives on July 18.

To bolster their effort, the Representatives are circulating a Dear Colleague letter in the House for signatures on a letter to the leadership of the Energy & Commerce Committee and the Homeland Security Committee in support of securing Brand USA's funding framework through 2027. A strong show of bipartisan support for the letter is critical to securing Brand USA's authorization this year.

Renewing Brand USA was one of the top topics of discussion at the Congressional Summit on Travel & Tourism. To date the letter has secured 28 signatures. Members from the Southeast who have signed the letter are:

- Rep. Gus Bilirakis (R-FL-12)
- Rep. Ralph Norman (R-SC-5)
- Rep. Donna Shalala (D-FL-27)
- Rep. Charlie Crist (D-FL-13)
- Rep. David McKinley (R-WV-1)
- Rep. Joe Cunningham (D-SC-1)
- Rep. Darren Soto (D-FL-9)
- Rep. Kathy Castor (D-FL-14)

A campaign to call on your congressional representatives to sign the Welch-Bilirakis-Titus-Walden letter has been posted to the Voter Voice section of the STS website and can be accessed here: <https://www.votervoice.net/STS/campaigns/67356/respond>

A strong show of support in this letter is critical to securing legislation this year to reauthorize Brand USA