[DATE], 2020

The Honorable [NAME]

[ADDRESS]

Washington, DC [ZIP CODE]

Dear [Senator/Representative/Speaker/Secretary NAME]:

As you work tirelessly to protect the interests of your constituents, and all Americans, during this unprecedented time, we would like to call your attention to the negative impacts that COVID-19, and the required mitigation remedies, are having on the business events industry, which includes businesses that design and produce trade shows, conferences and group meetings. While our business is strongly correlated with the travel and tourism industry, we want to be sure that the million plus workers in business events—who are no less impacted than airline, hotel, or restaurant workers—are equally considered and protected.

Based on data provided by the US Travel Association (USTA), the Center for Exhibition Industry Research (CEIR), and Freeman, we believe the business events industry has contributed close to a trillion dollars to the U.S. economy, a figure that is growing faster than GDP, conservatively at 5% per year. Specifically, some noteworthy facts, in 2019 the U.S. Business Events industry:

* Impacted $885 billion in the U.S. economy, with direct spending of $366 billion
* Employed 3 million workers directly, many union, with a total impact of 7 million jobs
* Contributed over $48 billion in federal, state, and local taxes
* Enabled over 1.6 million companies to exhibit and transact business, over 80% which were small (<500 employees)

The impacts of COVID-19 have been devastating on the business events industry. Work ceased completely overnight for many. Most in our industry are small businesses without the means to weather this passing storm. We estimate the cessation of business events, due to quarantines and other mitigation remedies, will cost our industry $118 billion in 2020, with a total impact of $286 billion, including related business reliant on our events. Further, it has resulted in a loss of over a million jobs and $15 billion in tax revenues. And, all this assumes that the quarantine measures are resolved sooner rather than later.

The impacts go well beyond our industry directly. The events ecosystem we’ve nurtured helps incubate and promote millions of businesses, most of them small, who rely on our events to achieve their own goals. Eighty percent of corporate marketers say that events are critical to their business’ success. For many exhibitors, these events represent the bulk of their marketing expense and sales for the year. The impacts of the shutdown cannot be overstated.

Therefore, we respectfully ask you to consider the following as you deliberate over the stimulus bill currently being considered by Congress:

**Loans and Grants:** we are asking that $10 billion—in the form of grants or low-interest, federally-backed loans to impacted businesses, regardless of size—be earmarked specifically to help the business events industry support activities that will enables businesses in our industry to: retain employees, promote the business events industry (and accelerate our industry’s recovery), and provide remedies that will encourage small businesses—who might not otherwise have the means to exhibit at business events, even though such events represent their largest revenue-generating opportunity for the year—to continue exhibiting

**Employee Retention Credit:** we are in support of proposed measures to offer employee retention credit for all impacted businesses, to reduce furloughs and layoffs and ease demand on unemployment expenses

**Tax Relief:** we are in support of proposed measures to offer temporary payroll tax cuts and deferrals and delays in tax payments and filings for all impacted companies

**Other Measures to Support the Health and Well-Being of the Business Events Industry:** finally, other measures that may encourage faster recovery and accelerate spending in our industry:

* Creation of new tax credits to encourage travel and the promotion of the business events industry
* Restoration of entertainment business expense deductions, specifically for business events
* Boosting of community development block grants to areas most impacted, including convention centers, hotels, and hotel conference centers

Ours is a business that is driven by its employees. The relief you can offer will directly enable us to put people to work and accelerate the recovery we know will come. We hope that you will strongly consider incorporating the remedies listed above in the stimulus bill. They will go a long way to helping our people who have been so severely, adversely affected by this situation.

We look forward to your support.

Respectfully,