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November 13, 2025

The Honorable Doug Burgum
Secretary of the Interior
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Burgum,

On behalf of the International Inbound Travel Association (IITA), we are writing to express our deep concern with the Executive Order – Making America Beautiful Again by Improving Our National Parks - to impose higher entrance fees on international visitors to U.S. National Parks. While we understand and support the need to improve infrastructure within and enhance enjoyment of our national parks, we believe this particular policy would have serious unintended consequences for international travel to the U.S. and for the park system itself.

International travel to the U.S. has been declining in recent years, resulting in lost market share of global international travel and making America less competitive. This year, visitation has declined each month as markets adapt to new policy changes and procedures among other issues impacting inbound travel (like high costs, strength of the USD).

Overseas arrivals dropped 3.5% year-to-date through September, and Canadian visitation was down 25%.

According to the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), the U.S. is projected to lose of \$21 billion in travel revenue for the year 2025.

The U.S. is the only economy out of nearly 200 tracked by the WTTC that is projected to suffer a tourism revenue decline in 2025.

Increasing Costs for International Visitors

The One Big Beautiful Bill included new costs for international visitors to the United States:

- a \$250 Visa Integrity Fee (in addition to the existing \$185 visa fee),
- an increase of \$19 (from \$21 to \$40) to the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) fee for travelers from visa waiver countries, and
- a \$24 increase (from \$6 to \$30) to the I-94 arrival/departure record for nonresident land border arrivals.

Adding yet another fee to the cost of visiting the United States could further discourage potential travelers from coming to our great country.

Why a Surcharge on International Visitors is Problematic

- Jeopardizes U.S. competitiveness: The United States already has the second highest visa and entry-related fees in the world. Adding yet another surcharge could discourage international travel and drive potential visitors toward competing global destinations.
- Harms gateway economies: International park visitors generate significant spending in hotels, restaurants, tour companies, and small businesses in surrounding communities. A surcharge could depress visitation and ripple negatively through local economies.
- Creates operational burdens: National parks lack the staffing and automated systems necessary to differentiate between U.S. and international visitors at entry points. Presumably, implementing such a policy would require manual ID checks for every visitor, creating substantial delays for both Americans and international travelers, driving up administrative costs, and diverting resources away from the visitor experience.
- Risks lower revenue overall: By discouraging visitation, the surcharge could ultimately reduce total revenue rather than increase it.

Our Ask

We urge you to refrain from imposing an international visitor surcharge to be collected at national park entrances as it could be a costly and cumbersome implementation that would likely result in long lines and delayed entry or inhibit international visitation altogether.

IITA and the inbound travel trade have a long track record of constructively resolving operational issues with the National Park Service, and we remain fully committed to working toward practical, mutually beneficial solutions on this matter as well.

Over the years, we have demonstrated our ability to produce results-oriented proposals that carefully balance the needs and interests of all stakeholders.

Our shared goal is to ensure these national treasures are enjoyed responsibly while preserving—and expanding—their vital role as iconic magnets that attract highly valued international visitors to the United States.

We look forward to working with you on solutions that both protect our parks and preserve America's competitive position in the global travel market.

Respectfully,



Lena Ross
Chair
COO, America 4 You



Lisa Simon
CEO | Executive Director



Peter van Berkel
Advocacy Chair
President, Travalco

cc: IITA Board of Directors
Kate MacGregor, Deputy Secretary of the Interior
Kevin Lilly, Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks
Jessica Bowron, Acting NPS Director
Donald Leadbetter, Deputy Associate Director, NPS