Dear Members of Congress,

On behalf of the United States travel industry, we call on Congress to provide the necessary funding to address the increased threat of the Zika virus. As Center for Disease Control (CDC) Director Tom Frieden recently said, "We don't have a lot of time,” and “the window of opportunity is closing.”

A failure by Congress to act quickly jeopardizes not only health but also the U.S. economy. As you know, experts believe that the majority of cases in the United States are reported to be travel related and with the upcoming summer travel season upon us we will likely see the number of infected individuals grow and the impact to the travel industry will have adverse and wide spread economic ramifications. Our nation’s travel industry generates $2.1 trillion in economic output, is an economic engine driving job creation across the United States, and is a top 10 employer in 49 states and the District of Columbia. That economic activity, as well as the millions of jobs supported by travel, could be put at very significant risk during the busy summer travel months by the Zika virus. Quick action by Congress can prevent this.

Funding for Zika efforts will ramp up local responses to the growing threat, support an acceleration of research and development on vaccines as well as advanced approaches to mosquito control. We recognize that Congress has taken some steps toward addressing Zika but, according to the National Institute of Health and the CDC, it must authorize funding soon in order to have a chance at success in halting the spread of the virus.

Inaction should not be an option; we urge Congress to make funding the Zika virus initiatives a top priority.

Sincerely,