

## AN OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT-ELECT BARACK OBAMA

The global leadership of the Association of Corporate Travel Executives (ACTE) regards Senator Obama's election yesterday as an opportunity to receive a more receptive hearing for the comprehensive agenda that ACTE developed and has been advocating for the last five years on behalf of the corporate travel industry. The agenda calls for greater recognition of business travel's value to the economy, a new emphasis on infrastructure issues essential to aviation, and more positive action and transparency on behalf of the data privacy and traveler security rights of business travelers, both domestic and foreign.

Business travel is essential to, and a driver of, the global economy. Any steps to stimulate the economy must include the business travel community – and not through half measures, but by implementing long-term safeguards that will allow it to thrive and prosper.

ACTE's position on issues affecting the business travel industry is well known and documented. Consider the infrastructure problem. Airway congestion represents the number one cause of delays and the primary source of excess fuel expenditures experienced by the airlines. While the price of fuel has dropped now, it will certainly rise again to meet future demand. Over a year ago, ACTE advocated for a new air traffic control system which is vital to saving billions of dollars for consumers. ACTE was disappointed that this issue was not assigned a higher priority by the current administration.

Our agenda also calls for tighter Congressional monitoring of security issues that compromise data privacy. These include the laptop seizure issue at U.S. borders, the suspension of REAL I.D., and any program that requires a secret database of U.S. citizens – while imposing a double standard for non-U.S. travelers. ACTE's approach would relieve federal and state governments of billions in expenditures, while improving data protection.

ACTE has already endorsed bills dealing with traveler privacy by Senator Russ Feingold of Wisconsin and Senator Daniel Akaka of Hawaii. We will consider others that may be introduced, or reintroduced, next year. ACTE has not joined the limited industry support for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's 'Secure Flight Program,' as key elements, such as data protection and traveler redress, have yet to be explained to our satisfaction. Yet now that the DHS is ready to relieve the airlines of the responsibility of comparing names to the 'Watch List,' they should also be ready to spare them of the expense and responsibility of tracking travelers through the proposed U.S. Exit program.

It is ACTE's hope that with the new administration there will be a greater likelihood that major traveler security and data privacy issues will receive greater public scrutiny, and increased Congressional oversight, before being implemented. It is our wish to be included in this important dialogue.

The Association of Corporate Travel Executives looks forward to working with President-Elect Obama, and Congress, on behalf of the business travel industry and its stakeholders.