

ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF THE U.S. SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT ECONOMY, LAS VEGAS EDITION

FIELD HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON TOURISM, TRADE,
AND EXPORT PROMOTION

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE,
SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION
UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

AUGUST 25, 2023

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF THE U.S. SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT ECONOMY, LAS VEGAS EDITION

FRIDAY, AUGUST 25, 2023

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TOURISM, TRADE, AND EXPORT PROMOTION,
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION,
Washington, D.C.

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 11:00 a.m., in Room W326, Las Vegas Convention Center, West Hall, 300 Convention Center Drive, Las Vegas, Nevada, Hon. Jacky Rosen, presiding.

Present: Senator Rosen [presiding].

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JACKY ROSEN, U.S. SENATOR FROM NEVADA

Senator ROSEN. We are gaveled into the Subcommittee of Tourism, Trade, and Export Promotion, so good morning. For all of you watching on the livestream, welcome to Las Vegas. This is the first-ever field hearing, like I said, of the Subcommittee on Tourism, Trade, and Export Promotion. Here, we are right here inside the world-renowned Las Vegas Convention Center.

We are going to discuss the economic impacts of U.S. sports and entertainment economy, and I would like to thank Chair Cantwell and Ranking Member Cruz for their leadership and for supporting the work of this critical, critical subcommittee. And I am proud to welcome the Subcommittee to Las Vegas today because Nevada, I do not have to tell anyone, has long been a leader in travel and tourism. From the excitement and energy of our Las Vegas Strip, to the magnificent outdoor opportunities at Lake Tahoe, and the impeccable and vast public lands throughout our State, people from around the world love to visit Nevada.

The Silver State is the global entertainment destination as well. In fact, this year alone, we are welcoming a number of major events. Well, Beyonce is here this weekend, and Taylor Swift was here not so long ago, so need I say any more about that?

[Laughter.]

Senator ROSEN. But Nevada is also quickly becoming a global destination for sports. We are home to the Stanley Cup champion, Vegas Golden Knights, and for us women, the WNBA champion, Las Vegas Aces. In the next 6 months, we are going to host Formula 1, Las Vegas Grand Prix and the Super Bowl. In total, Las Vegas is set to host a staggering 39 significant sporting events or tournaments through 2024, solidifying our city's reputation as a

premier sports destination, attracting athletes, fans, and tourists from around the world. And these events, while they are boosting our tourism economy, they are creating thousands of good-paying jobs, well, and they are supporting Nevada small businesses. And to get there, our city, with the help and support of the many witnesses here today, well, we grew to meet the needs of the sports and entertainment economy, notably with the creation of venues focused on enhancing the fan experience.

In the last 7 years, four large sports venues were built in our city, including Allegiant Stadium and T-Mobile Arena, which added 104,000 seats to the city's entertainment venues, and generated an additional \$1.5 million in annual ticket sales. And next month, the highly-anticipated Sphere, which I recently toured, will open as well, creating a new and phenomenally unique entertainment experience. So I cannot talk about what I saw, but, again, what I can say is this cutting-edge entertainment venue includes a dazzling 580,000 square foot LED exterior and an immersive sound system that provides individualized sound to every seat.

And it is because of the significant impact of the travel and tourism industry that we have on Nevada's economy, that this is really the reason that we are here. It is the reason I have asked them here. It is a priority for me to lead this subcommittee, along with leaders in our community, because we have to be sure that in every single way, the Senate boosts travel and tourism to help Nevada, and, of course, it is going to help other States around the Nation. So today, the Subcommittee is going to examine the impact of large sporting and entertainment events on our local economies. We are going to talk about strategies for attracting international events to the United States and best practices for cities and States that welcome a large influx of visitors for these type of events.

And what makes this hearing for me even more exciting is the amazing panel of witnesses I am so proud to work with every day that we have testifying. They are industry leaders, they are local and community leaders, and we are proud to have them here today representing MGM Resorts International, the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority, the Las Vegas Raiders, and the Vegas Chamber. Like I said, each witness here today really is a pillar of our Las Vegas community, and they have really dedicated their lives to making our city a truly remarkable place, not just to live, but to visit. So I want to thank you all for being here, and I look forward to your testimony.

So we will go right into introductions, and so I would like to introduce our first witness for today's hearing, Mr. Bill Hornbuckle. He is president and CEO of MGM Resorts International. Before also taking over as CEO, Mr. Hornbuckle served as president of MGM Resorts International, and prior to that, served as chief marketing officer of MGM from 2009 until 2012. From 2005 until August 2009, he served as president and chief operating officer of Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino. Mr. Hornbuckle also serves as the chair of the U.S. Travel and Tourism Advisory Board, which is the advisory body to the Secretary of Commerce on matters relating to the travel and tourism industry in the United States.

Bill is a pillar of our Nevada community—like I said, all of them are—not only because he leads our State's largest private sector

employer, but also because of his work to give back to our great State from education initiatives to serving on the board of Three Square, a food bank in Southern Nevada that is the area's largest hunger relief organization. So, Mr. Hornbuckle, I thank you for being here today, and I recognize you for your opening remarks.

**STATEMENT OF WILLIAM "BILL" HORNBUCKLE, PRESIDENT
AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, MGM RESORTS
INTERNATIONAL; AND CHAIR, U.S. TRAVEL
AND TOURISM ADVISORY BOARD**

Mr. HORNBUCKLE. Thank you, Chair Rosen, and Ranking Member Budd and members of the Subcommittee, I would say welcome to Las Vegas, but welcome home, first and foremost.

Senator ROSEN. Thank you.

Mr. HORNBUCKLE. And to the balance of the group who are streaming, welcome to Las Vegas. There is no better location in America for which to examine the vast benefits travel and tourism creates for our national economy, and to discuss how effective public policy can accelerate a virtuous cycle of greater travel, stronger growth, and good-paying jobs. As CEO and president of MGM Resorts International and chair of the U.S. Travel and Tourism Advisory Board, I appreciate the opportunity to share a perspective on the policies needed to meet consumer demand for our new experiences by improving travel and ensuring America remains the world's premier travel and tourism destination. Last year, I had the opportunity to testify before the Subcommittee to discuss national travel and tourism strategy. I appreciated the support from Chair Rosen and the Subcommittee has shown for the travel and tourism industry, including securing the position of assistant secretary of travel and tourism, and working to ensure the position is fully funded, so thank you for that.

So far in 2023, Las Vegas has welcomed nearly 20.35 million visitors, nearly 10 percent more than the same period last year. Rising demand for sports and entertainment experience is driving much of that growth, which I am sure you will hear much about in today's testimony. In March, an estimated 3 million people flocked to Las Vegas when we hosted multiple rounds of March Madness to Taylor Swift concerts—that was interesting—at Allegiant Stadium, NASCAR events, and more. They are a unique crowd, and I will leave it at that.

[Laughter.]

Mr. HORNBUCKLE. In June, our own Vegas Golden Knights captured the Stanley Cup, which was amazing, and punctuated the transformation of Las Vegas and the NHL's great hockey talents, but that was simply just the start. In addition to the Golden Knights, we are now home to the WNBA champion Las Vegas Aces and the NFL's Las Vegas Raiders, and more professional teams may be on the way. The only sad thing about today being here in Las Vegas and this testimony is we got invited to the White House to go see the Aces get recognized by the Vice President—

[Laughter.]

Mr. HORNBUCKLE.—but we thought this was kind of important.

Senator ROSEN. Thank you for being with us here. Thank you.

Mr. HORNBUCKLE. It is like the White House. That sounds fun.

[Laughter.]

Mr. HORNBuckle. Anyways, later this year, our city will welcome millions more fans for Formula 1, Las Vegas' Grand Prix, and next February, Las Vegas is hosting the pinnacle of sports and entertainment with the Super Bowl kicking off at Sanders Allegiant Stadium. They did not write that. I put that in there.

Senator ROSEN. Yes.

[Laughter.]

Mr. HORNBuckle. Good policy has a major role to play in building on the success, and one of the major pillars of travel growth is a seamless travel experience. The travel experience truly begins at home and extends to various aspects of the travel and tourism industry, including travel planning, transit, and the actual travel experience. We must embrace a holistic perspective that bridges these sectors, ensuring policies that help create well-rounded enhancement of the travel experience that requires coordination and national investment in infrastructure and systems that support seamless travel, in the broader sense. Congress and the Biden administration took a major step forward by passing the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the largest long-term infrastructure investment in our Nation's history. As America continues to invest \$550 billion that was authorized by that law, I urge policymakers to ensure travel and tourism infrastructure is a top priority.

In recent years, the travel infrastructure decisions have been dominated by air travel, mainly the need to modernize airports and upgrade air traffic control systems, which McCarran was beneficiary to some of that, I would add. This is critically important to the future of travel, but we must also remember that most Americans travel to hotspots, which, drawing from hundreds of millions of people every year, are heavily reliant on roadways. Take Las Vegas, a destination we all know well, where more than half of the city's visitors arrive by car. It is the same as many popular destinations from Colorado's world class Rocky Mountain Ski resorts to Florida's theme park destinations.

The solution—excuse me—starts with a national focus. Better road travel must become a national priority. We also need better coordination of agencies at all levels of government to get projects moving faster. Infrastructure projects do not always carry across State or county lines, and multiple layers of reviews and multiple jurisdictions continue to create higher costs and endless delays. For example, I-15 carries 10 million travelers from Southern California to Las Vegas every year, about a quarter of the city's visitors. But what could be or should be a 3-and-a-half to 4-hour journey can stretch to 10 hours on most Sundays, and on a recent New Year's Day, the backup was 18 miles long.

The I-15 corridor's ability to accommodate increased capacity is imperative to the travel experience and can be realized through strategic road expansion and support for the Bright Line West High Speed Rail project, which again, Senator, I know you have been supportive of, so thank you. Pursuing to an efficient and seamless transportation system requires greater coordination across all levels of government to foster a 21st century approach that evolves with the dynamic demands of a very modern world and destination, particularly here in Las Vegas. In addition to im-

prove infrastructure, America's travel destinations must--travel destinations must feel more welcoming to travelers across the globe. We must work together and commit to supporting accessible travel, resolving visa delays, which are numerous, and addressing workforce shortages.

Las Vegas' rapid rise as the world's top sports entertainment destination is the culmination of an evolution, unlike any we have ever seen in our city's history. The transformation resulted from the public and private sectors working together to build exciting new venues, creating unique experiences that people love, and working together to revolutionize the way fans engage with their favorite teams. In that same spirit, I look forward to working with the members of the Subcommittee to drive the next wave of growth in travel and tourism, and further boost the industry's growing contributions to the American economy. Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Hornbuckle follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF WILLIAM "BILL" HORNBUCKLE, PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, MGM RESORTS INTERNATIONAL; AND CHAIR, U.S. TRAVEL AND TOURISM ADVISORY BOARD

Chair Rosen, Ranking Member Budd, and Members of the Subcommittee:

It's great to welcome you to Las Vegas.

There is no better location in America from which to examine the vast benefits travel and tourism creates for our Nation's economy—and to discuss how effective public policy can accelerate a virtuous cycle of greater travel, stronger growth, and more good paying jobs.

As CEO and President of MGM Resorts International and Chair of the U.S. Travel and Tourism Advisory Board—or TTAB—I appreciate the opportunity to share a perspective on the policies needed to meet consumer demand for new experiences by improving travel and ensuring America remains the world's premier travel and tourism destination.

Last year, I testified before this subcommittee to discuss the National Travel and Tourism Strategy. I appreciate the support Chair Rosen and the subcommittee has shown for the travel and tourism industry, including securing the position of Assistant Secretary for Travel and Tourism and working to ensure the position is fully funded.

So far in 2023, Las Vegas has welcomed nearly 20.35 million visitors—nearly 10 percent more than the same period last year. Rising demand for sports and entertainment experiences is driving much of this growth.

In March, an estimated 3 million people flocked to Las Vegas when we hosted multiple rounds of March Madness, two Taylor Swift concerts at Allegiant Stadium, NASCAR events, and more. In June, our own Vegas Golden Knights captured the Stanley Cup—punctuating the transformation of Las Vegas into one of the NHL's great hockey towns. But that's just the start.

In addition to the Golden Knights, we are now home to WNBA champion Las Vegas Aces and the NFL's Las Vegas Raiders. More professional teams may be on the way.

Later this year, our city will welcome millions more fans for Formula 1's Las Vegas Grand Prix. Next February, Las Vegas is hosting the pinnacle of sports and entertainment, with Super Bowl LVIII kicking off at Allegiant Stadium.

Good policy has a major role to play in building on this success.

One of the major pillars of travel growth is a seamless travel experience. The travel experience begins at home and extends to various aspects of the travel and tourism industry, including travel planning, transit, and the actual travel experience. We must embrace a holistic perspective that bridges these sectors, ensuring policies that help create a well-rounded enhancement of the travel experience. That requires coordination and national investments in infrastructure and systems that support seamless travel in the broadest sense.

Congress and the Biden Administration took a major step forward by passing the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law—the largest long-term infrastructure investment in our Nation's history. As America continues to invest the \$550 billion authorized by

that law, I urge policymakers to ensure travel and tourism infrastructure is a top priority.

In recent years, the travel infrastructure discussion has been dominated by air travel—mainly the need to modernize airports and upgrade air traffic control systems. This is critically important to the future of travel.

But we must also remember that most of America's travel hotspots—which draw hundreds of millions of people every year—are heavily reliant on roadways.

Take Las Vegas—where more than half the city's visitors arrive by car. It's the same at many popular destinations—from Colorado's world-class Rocky Mountain ski resorts to Florida's theme park destination resorts.

The solution starts with a national focus. Better road travel must become a national priority.

We also need better coordination of agencies at all levels of government to get projects moving faster. Infrastructure priorities don't always carry across state or county lines and multiple layers of reviews in multiple jurisdictions continue to create higher costs and endless delays.

For example: I-15 carries 10 million travelers from southern California to Las Vegas every year—about a quarter of the city's visitors. But what should be a three and a half hour trip can stretch to 10 hours or more on a Sunday. One recent New Year's Day, the backup extended 18 miles.

The I-15 Corridor's ability to accommodate increased capacity is imperative to the travel experience and can be realized through strategic road expansion and support for the Brightline West high-speed rail project. Pursuit of an efficient and seamless transportation system requires greater coordination across all levels of government to foster a 21st century approach that evolves with the dynamic demands of our modern world.

In addition to improved infrastructure, American travel destinations must feel more welcoming to travelers from across the globe. We must work together and commit to supporting accessible travel, resolving visa delays, and addressing workforce shortages.

Las Vegas' rapid rise as the world's top sports and entertainment destination is the culmination of an evolution unlike any we have ever seen in our city's history. This transformation resulted from the public and private sectors working together to build exciting new venues, creating unique experiences that people love, and working together to revolutionize the way fans engage with their favorite teams.

In that same spirit, I look forward to working with Members of the Subcommittee to drive the next wave of growth in travel and tourism—and further boost the industry's growing contribution to America's economy.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

Senator ROSEN. Wow. Thank you, Mr. Hornbuckle, and I could not agree more to get that Brightline train. We are advocating for it. It will move our tourists here, creating billions of dollars of economic impact, creating tens of thousands of good union-paying jobs, supporting our tourism infrastructure, and, I will just tell you, taking, I think, an estimated 400,000 tons of emissions off that I-15. So we will—we will—we will hopefully hear about that soon, but thank you for your testimony.

And now, I would like to introduce our next witness, Sandra Douglass Morgan, President of the Las Vegas Raiders. Ms. Douglass Morgan is a native Nevadan and was named President of the Las Vegas Raiders in July of 2022. She has over 2 decades of leadership experience in the sports, gaming, and legal sectors, and she has served as a chief regulator, director, attorney, and advisor to resorts, casinos, and telecommunications companies.

Prior to joining the Raiders, Ms. Douglass Morgan served as Chairwoman of the Nevada Gaming Control Board. She also served as a commissioner on the Nevada State Athletic Commission, and was the first black city attorney in the State of Nevada when she was the chief legal officer for the City of North Las Vegas, where she served from 2008 to 2016.

Ms. Douglass Morgan is widely recognized for her excellence and for her commitment to Nevada businesses, to our education, and for her support for local causes. She is a recipient of several awards and distinctions, including the UNLV Boyd School of Law Distinguished Service Alumni Awarded, and the 2012 Attorney of the Year by the Las Vegas Chapter of the National Bar Association, which recognized her for her commitment to serving the local community, especially communities of color.

Ms. Douglass Morgan, thank you for being here today. I am so pleased to have you share your knowledge and expertise with the Subcommittee, and I now recognize you for your opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF SANDRA DOUGLASS MORGAN, PRESIDENT,
LAS VEGAS RAIDERS**

Ms. DOUGLASS MORGAN. Thank you, and good morning, Senator Rosen and members of the Committee. Thank you for inviting me here today to share with you the incredible success story of the Las Vegas Raiders, and contrary to what Bill said, our collective Allegiant Stadium.

[Laughter.]

Ms. DOUGLASS MORGAN. It is hard to believe that only 5 years ago, Allegiant Stadium was still under construction. We were eagerly anticipating our first game at the stadium and planting roots in the community to ensure that the benefits that come with this world-class facility are accessible to all. When the pandemic hit, no one could have imagined that we would have our first season as the Las Vegas Raiders with no fans in the stands and no additional concerts or events to round out the schedule. However, despite those obstacles, we are here strong 5 years later with results that showed that Nevada made an undeniably solid investment into our State's economic future.

The Las Vegas Raiders and Allegiant Stadium have opened the door to a broad, new global audience and events we would have never dreamed of that we would host in our own city. Taylor Swift and Beyonce, as you mentioned, sold out our stadium with two shows each, and I personally love all Swifties and the Beyhive.

[Laughter.]

Ms. DOUGLASS MORGAN. K-pop band, BTS, and Black Pink were an overwhelming success, and this summer we actually hosted two Concacaf summer soccer semifinals. And perhaps the most exciting event is on the horizon when we host Super Bowl LVIII in 6 short months in February.

Since opening in 2021, Allegiant Stadium has welcomed more than 3 million visitors from over 120 countries, and outside of Raider games, those additional events that we needed to bring to round out the calendar have grown exponentially with 25 in 2021, growing to over 40 in 2022. And as of now, we have over 30 concerts or events on calendar for this year. These events bring in meaningful revenue to the State and have generated over \$29 million in live entertainment tax since 2021.

We have also seen that these are incremental visitors and not just visitors who were already coming to Las Vegas and added on the stadium to their itinerary. Since Allegiant Stadium opened its

doors, 89 percent of stadium attendees said the event they attended was their primary reason to visit Las Vegas, and 54 percent of the stadium attendees actually traveled for the event either to Reid Airport or by vehicle transportation that they attended. We estimate that 1.52 million incremental visitors came to Las Vegas to attend an event at the stadium, and that was clear with events like Taylor and BTS, which also brought in a very diverse demographic, as Bill mentioned, to our stadium and to the destination.

We are happy to have been a part of creating an additional demand in this market. That is not only a significant economic impact for the State, but also for the businesses in town, both small and large, who reap indirect economic benefits of our tourism industry. The Raiders organization is committed to supporting local and disadvantaged businesses since we entered the market, and we are proud of the impact that we have had in that space. Since the stadium opened, over 20 percent of the food and beverage revenue has been generated by local businesses, and over a half a million dollars of the Allegiant Stadium Food and Beverage Program has contributed to local nonprofit organization revenue. The Stadium Raiders games and all the events I mentioned have a combined impact and reach far beyond our walls, benefiting a broad cross-section of our community.

The Raider's commitment to diversity is also unwavering, and it extends beyond the stadium workforce. Although there were specific benchmarks in our community benefits agreement, our commitment was never in doubt, given our philosophy and our values. We actually exceeded the requirements in the agreement with over 60 percent of stadium operator employees being minority and female workers on event days. And the upcoming Super Bowl will create additional opportunities through the Business Connect Program, which includes a commitment that businesses contracted for the event must be at least 51 percent minority, women, veteran, LGBTQ, or disability owned.

Outside of the stadium walls, we have been hard at work since arriving in Las Vegas supporting youth sports, veterans organizations, mental health, and countless other local efforts, and since relocating to Las Vegas, we have given over \$7 million to support local causes. Our players have also taken an active role in appearances in the community, especially with young students and athletes. As we are committed to inspiring the next generation, they know the importance of the role that the Raiders play and showing our kids as what—as to what is possible.

The ability to inspire youth in our community and to maximize their potential is one of the most vital roles we play. We do this because we understand that our commitment to excellence includes our dedication to the next generation and to the community as a whole. Our success story would be much different without the advocacy and support from our congressional delegation and, of course, you, Senator Rosen who understand firsthand the vital role that travel and tourism plays in the health of our State's economy. Ensuring the ease of travel to our State through support for our infrastructure and working to make the visa process more efficient are both essential to ensuring access for our growing international football fandom.

Thank you so much for your steadfast support and helping us continue to grow the vibrant sports industry here in Las Vegas.
[The prepared statement of Ms. Douglass Morgan follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SANDRA DOUGLASS MORGAN, PRESIDENT,
LAS VEGAS RAIDERS

Good morning Senator Rosen and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for inviting me to share with you the incredible success story of the Las Vegas Raiders and Allegiant Stadium. It's hard to believe that five years ago, Allegiant Stadium was still under construction. We were eagerly anticipating our first game in the stadium, and planting roots in the community to ensure the benefits that come with this world-class facility are accessible to all. When the pandemic hit, no one could have imagined we would have our first season as the Las Vegas Raiders with no fans in the stands, and no additional concerts or events to round out the stadium schedule.

Despite those obstacles, here we are five years later with results that show Nevada made an undeniably solid investment in our state's economic future. The Las Vegas Raiders and Allegiant Stadium have opened the door to a broad new global audience, and events we never would have dreamed we could host in our city. Taylor Swift and Beyonce sold out our stadium for two shows each. K-POP band BTS was an overwhelming success. This summer we hosted the sold-out CONCACAF soccer semifinals. And perhaps the most exciting event is on the horizon, when we host Super Bowl LVIII in February.

Since opening in 2021, Allegiant Stadium has welcomed more than 3 million visitors from more than 122 countries. Outside of Raiders games, those additional events we needed to bring to round out the calendar have grown exponentially each year, with 25 in 2021, growing to 41 in 2022. We have 31 events or concerts on the calendar for this year. These events bring meaningful revenue to the state. Since 2021, they generated nearly \$29 million dollars in Live Entertainment Tax alone.

We have also seen that these are incremental visitors, and not just visitors who were already coming to Las Vegas and added us on to their itinerary. Since Allegiant Stadium opened its doors, 89 percent of stadium attendees said the event they attended was the *primary* reason for their visit to Las Vegas, and 54 percent of stadium attendees said they traveled for the event they attended. We estimate that 1.52 million incremental visitors came to the destination to attend an event at the stadium. That was clear with events like Taylor Swift and BTS, which brought in a very different demographic to our stadium and the destination.

We're happy to have been a part of creating additional demand in the market. That's not only a significant economic impact for the state's coffers, but for all the businesses in town who reap the indirect economic benefits of our tourism industry. The Raiders organization has committed to supporting local and disadvantaged businesses since we entered the market, and we're proud of the impact we've had in that space. Since the stadium opened, over 20 percent of the food and beverage revenue has been generated by local businesses. And over \$500 thousand dollars of the Allegiant Stadium Food and Beverage Program has contributed to local non-profit organization revenue. The stadium, Raiders games and all of the additional events have a combined impact and reach far beyond our walls, benefiting a broad cross-section of our community.

The Raiders commitment to diversity is unwavering, and it extends to the stadium workforce. Although there were specific benchmarks in our Community Benefits Agreement, our commitment was never in doubt given our philosophy and values. We actually exceeded the requirements in the agreement, with over 60 percent of stadium operator employees being minority and female workers on event days. And the upcoming Super Bowl will create additional opportunities through the Business Connect program, which includes a commitment that businesses contracted for the event must be at least 51 percent minority, woman, veteran, LGBTQ or disability owned.

Outside the stadium walls, we have been hard at work since arriving in Las Vegas, supporting youth sports, veterans' organizations, youth mental health and countless other important local efforts. Since relocating to Las Vegas, we have given over \$7million dollars in support to local causes. And our players have taken an active role in appearances in the community, especially with young students and athletes. They want to inspire the next generation, and they know the importance of the role they play in showing our kids what's possible. The ability to inspire youth in our community to maximize their potential is one of the most vital roles we play.

Since 2018, our players have volunteered nearly 1,300 hours in the community—and that includes many months when COVID limited those efforts. Again, we do this because it will bring up the next generation. It gives youth a concrete image of what they can be.

Our success story would be much different without the advocacy and support from our congressional delegation, and you Senator Rosen, who clearly understand firsthand the vital role travel and tourism plays in the health of our state's economy. Ensuring the ease of travel to our state through support for our infrastructure and working to make the visa process more efficient are both essential to ensuring access for our growing international football fandom. Thank you for your steadfast support in helping us continue to grow the vibrant sports industry in Las Vegas.

Senator ROSEN. Wow. Thank you, Ms. Morgan. I really appreciate that, and I will tell you that, I know a lot of Swifties and lots of members of the Beyhive, and they are having a great time, and, really, it is great because we are diversifying the Las Vegas fan base as well. They see that there are so many other things to do when they get here, so that is, I would say, building for the future, so thank you for your—for your leadership.

Next, I would like to introduce Ms. Mary Beth Sewald, president and CEO of the Vegas Chamber. It is the largest business support organization in Nevada focused on helping Nevada businesses succeed and create jobs. As president and CEO, Ms. Sewald leads the Vegas Chamber in its strategy of supporting local businesses and pursuing initiatives to boost job growth, a robust economy, and a vibrant community.

Prior to her leadership at the Vegas Chamber, Ms. Sewald served as the president and CEO of the Nevada Broadcasters Association, and prior to that, she served as general manager of the NBC affiliate in Reno, KRNK. Ms. Sewald was recognized as Nevada's first woman to be named television general manager in 2003 and was inducted into the Nevada Broadcasters Association Hall of Fame in 2009. She currently serves on the board of directors for the Nevada Military Support Alliance, City National Bank, the Congressional Award of Nevada, and the Nevada Broadcasters Association Foundation.

Ms. Sewald, thank you for your leadership in our community and your dedication to building a stronger Nevada economy. I recognize you now for your opening remarks.

**STATEMENT OF MARY BETH SEWALD, PRESIDENT AND CEO,
VEGAS CHAMBER**

Ms. SEWALD. Thank you so much, Senator, and, again, I echo everyone's sentiments. Thank you so much for your leadership. It has made a profound impact on us. Thank you so much, and thank you to the other members of the Subcommittee as well.

I think I might be the only person on the planet who has not had the opportunity to see Taylor Swift, so—

[Laughter.]

Senator ROSEN. I did not get to see her either, but I know—

[Laughter.]

Senator ROSEN,—we will go together.

Ms. SEWALD. Yes, we will go together. Thank you.

The Vegas Chamber was founded in 1911. That is far before my time, quite obviously, but it is the largest and most robust business association in the entire State of Nevada, representing 70 different

industry sectors. Vegas Chamber members employ approximately a half million Nevadans, and 85 percent of Vegas Chamber members are small businesses, which we define as having 50 or fewer employees. The Small Business Administration estimates that Nevada has 283,000 small businesses employing about 503,000 workers.

The mission of the Vegas Chamber is to promote a strong and diversified economy by helping attract new businesses, enabling existing businesses to expand, and supporting an excellent quality of life for Nevada's workers. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Las Vegas welcomed 42 million visitors per year. In 2022, that number decreased to about 38.8 million visitors. Why do I say this? Because tourism means local jobs. Our tourism industry supports about 229,000 direct jobs and about 359,000 total jobs. Last year, Nevada's tourism industry supported \$12.6 billion in direct wages for employees and had a total wage impact of \$20.1 billion. This economic activity supports small businesses in our community who, in turn, employ thousands of Nevadans. Our small businesses benefit economically from our large tourism sector, providing good-paying jobs and careers, and many of our members at the Vegas Chamber work to support women-and minority-owned businesses by providing procurement opportunities and supplier diversity programs as well.

One of the most impactful transformations in our tourism industry, bar none, has been the development of the sports tourism sector of our economy. In less than a decade, we have seen the construction of the T-Mobile arena, Allegiant Stadium, and Las Vegas Baseball Park, which has added to our existing inventory of sports and entertainment venues. These venues and the teams and events that they host create immense opportunities for local workers and small businesses.

Allegiant Stadium was the result of Senate Bill 1 of the 30th Special Session of the Nevada State Legislature. The legislation that came from that legislative session required that at least 15 percent of stadium project construction be awarded to local small businesses, and that all phases of the project operate pursuant to a broad-based community benefits plan. In fact, 23 percent of Allegiant Stadium's construction was awarded to local small businesses, with \$293 million in contracts awarded to 168 local small businesses. Further still, more than \$80 million was awarded to 41 women-and minority-owned businesses. Perhaps equally as important, the Raiders Community Benefits Plan called for 38 percent of the project's construction workforce to be minority and female. That number ended up being 63 percent.

In cooperation with the Las Vegas Super Bowl Host Committee, the NFL's Biz Connect Program has already identified approximately 200 small, women-, and minority-owned businesses that are pre-qualified as contractors and subcontractors for the big game. And Formula 1's Las Vegas Grand Prix Project has been a model of diversity, equity, and inclusion. The database of small businesses qualified during the construction of Allegiant Stadium and the Super Bowl are the starting point for future projects, and Formula 1 has made a 10-year commitment and is investing hundreds of millions of dollars in our community.

In the next several months, new projects will open, like the Sphere, Formula 1's Las Vegas Grand Prix, and Super Bowl LVIII. These large-scale international events benefit our small business members that are in construction, food services, restaurants, security, public safety, IT, and marketing, just to name a few. For example, Jonathan Alvarez is the founder of Protective Force International, which is a Las Vegas-based private security company. Jonathan is hiring and training employees just as fast as he possibly can because of the increased demand for his company's services for events like Formula 1 and the 2024 Super Bowl. Another example are Patricia and Justin Yin. They are the owners of Clean and Green Landscape, which is a small business here in Las Vegas. Their selection by the Super Bowl's Biz Connect Program "marked a significant turning point for our company and our family. This opportunity has been profoundly impactful on both our business and our personal journey." Dr. Priscilla Johnson is another woman-/minority-owned small business in Las Vegas. She and her young son founded an eco-friendly cleaning product company called Cocoa Shoals. She started at local farmers markets back in the day and said that the business landscape in Las Vegas has become "the cornerstone of a transformative opportunity," giving her the chance to work with these major sports brands that could absolutely redefine their entire lives. That is absolutely outstanding to be able to say.

The fact is that without these sporting events, our small businesses, which are absolutely the fabric of our community, they would not have any chance at all of economic opportunities like this that they now have. That is why we must continuously invest in our future. I firmly believe that the core of that economic success is our small business owners and our entrepreneurs in our entire community.

So with that, I thank you again, Senator Rosen. Thank you again for all you do for our community. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Sewald follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MARY BETH SEWALD, PRESIDENT AND CEO,
VEGAS CHAMBER

Good Morning,

My name is Mary Beth Sewald, President and CEO of the Vegas Chamber. Thank you, Committee Chairwoman Maria Cantwell and a special thank you to Subcommittee Chairwoman, Nevada's own, Senator Rosen for inviting me today before the subcommittee. I also want to thank Ranking Member Ted Budd of the Subcommittee.

The Vegas Chamber was founded in 1911 and is the largest business association in the state of Nevada, representing 70 different industry sectors. Vegas Chamber members employ approximately a half million Nevadans and 85 percent of Vegas Chamber members are small businesses, which we define as having 50 or fewer employees. The Small Business Administration estimates that Nevada has 283,000 small businesses, employing about 503,000 workers.

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Our small businesses benefit economically from our large tourism sector, providing good-paying jobs and careers. Many of our members work to support women and minority-owned businesses by providing procurement opportunities and supplier-diversity programs.

One of the most impactful transformations in our tourism industry has been the development of the sports tourism sector of our economy. In less than a decade we have seen the construction of the T-Mobile Arena, Allegiant Stadium, and Las Vegas Baseball Park, which has added to our existing inventory of sports and entertainment venues.

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Dr. Priscilla Johnson is another woman, minority-owned, small business in Las Vegas. She and her young son founded an eco-friendly cleaning product company, "Coco Shoals". She started at local farmer's markets and says the business landscape in Las Vegas has become the cornerstone of a transformative opportunity giving her the chance to work with these major sports brands that could "redefine their entire lives".

The fact is . . . without these sporting events, our small businesses, which are the fabric of our community would not have the economic opportunities that they now have. That is why we must continuously invest in our future. I firmly believe that the core of that economic success is our small business owners and entrepreneurs.

I want to thank you for your leadership on this important issue and for the honor and opportunity to provide testimony today before this Subcommittee.

Senator ROSEN. Thank you, and I also sit on the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee, and for those of you who do not know, 99 percent of businesses in Nevada are actually small businesses, as you have heard Ms. Sewald talk about. And our business community is robust, and it is thriving because of the collaboration and commitment from everyone in our community to pull together, and I think that is really special.

And now, to round out our panel, here we sit at the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority. Our final witness is testifying

here today, Mr. Steve Hill, who is the president and CEO of the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority. As I said, it is an amazing venue where we are holding this hearing today. I know he is going to tell us all about it.

Mr. Hill moved to Las Vegas in 1987 to start Silver State Materials, a concrete sand and gravel supplier, and actually grew to one of the largest in the country. And so during his time with Silver State Materials, and Nevada is the Silver State, for those of you who do not know, and is, I think, maybe how you got that name?

[Laughter.]

Senator ROSEN. Mr. Hill, of course, was very active in our community, serving as chairman of Service First Bank of Nevada, chairman of the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce, commissioner on the Nevada Commission on Economic Development, and chairman of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Las Vegas. In 2011, Mr. Hill was appointed director of the newly-established Governor's Office of Economic Development—we call it GOED—by Governor Brian Sandoval, and he brought numerous businesses to our State. Mr. Hill has also served as chairman of the Southern Nevada's Tourism Infrastructure Committee, which led to the approval of both the \$1.5 billion expansion and renovation of the Las Vegas Convention Center, and the \$2 billion Allegiant Stadium, currently home to the Las Vegas Raiders. He has helped build Las Vegas, literally and figuratively, into the sensational city that it is today.

I am thrilled that he is here to share his knowledge and expertise with the Subcommittee. Mr. Hill, thank you for being here, and I now recognize you for your opening remarks.

STATEMENT OF STEVE HILL, CEO AND PRESIDENT, LAS VEGAS CONVENTION AND VISITORS AUTHORITY (LVCVA)

Mr. HILL. Thank you, Chair Rosen, and welcome to the Las Vegas Convention Center. You have been here a number of times. We are thrilled to have you every time. I want to thank you and the members of the Committee for the work that you do, but I want to thank you for the leadership that you have provided to the Committee and for the tourism industry. This subcommittee has brought a focus to the tourism industry that really had been missing, and this has helped fill a void, it has helped this industry make progress, and we all very much appreciate that.

It is an honor to be here today. It is an honor to be here with these panelists, and I look out in the room. Welcome to all of you to the convention center as well. There are many leaders in our industry in this room today, who would be great at this table, too, so it is an honor to be a part of this and to represent the hundreds of thousands of people who work in this industry in this great city.

You know this, but tourism is the economic engine of not only Las Vegas, but of Nevada. We have worked, and I have been on the other side of this, trying to, and successfully at some level, diversifying the economy of Nevada. That has worked over the past several decades, but it is important that this industry continue to thrive. If it does not, all of Nevada suffers. We saw that during COVID. We set a record for unemployment for any State since unemployment had been recorded back into 50s, for our unemployment rate in April of 2020. It was 30.4 percent. When this industry

suffers, this entire State suffers, and when this industry thrives, this State thrives as well.

The diversification of this industry has really accelerated over the past decade or so. The meetings and trade show industry, which is so critical, has continued to grow. During the pandemic, our city collectively added about 30 percent to the meeting space. That was in response to customer demand. People wanted—people, their meetings, trade shows want to be in Las Vegas. This city recognized that, so we have increased our meeting square footage from an 11-and-a-half million square feet to 15 million square feet. Entertainment has become a central attraction to our city, and sports has, obviously, as everyone has mentioned, been a big part of our growth recently.

I do think it is important to point out that there is a long history of sports in Las Vegas. There were people who set the stage for us, from boxing, from UNLV 30 years ago, winning a national championship in basketball, in golf over the years. We are standing on their shoulders. UFC is a remarkable story over the past 20 or 25 years in this community. NASCAR, golf, all of those happened prior to the professional teams that have come just over the last number of years. What Bill Foley has done and the success that the Golden Knights have had is remarkable. Mark Davis' commitment to come to Nevada, to bring the NFL and the Raiders to our city, and to build Allegiant Stadium and to invest a billion-and-a-quarter dollars into our city has made a huge difference. I have said often that we would not have Formula 1 if we did not have Allegiant Stadium. We have proven what we can do because of Allegiant Stadium, and it has doubled what we had originally projected from a performance standpoint.

So it is important for us to have these reasons for people to visit Las Vegas, both domestically and internationally, but it is also important that that experience be as seamless as possible, and Mr. Hornbuckle mentioned these topics, but I want to reinforce them. Visa clearance, expediting that, and we appreciate your help in not only pushing that issue, but pushing the expedited opportunity for visa clearance for people who are going to attend meetings and trade shows here. They would not be able to without that. That has been a problem that has cropped up over the last number of years. It needs to get fixed. As we try and bring, long-haul flights, international flights back, it is difficult to do, and they do not know if they are going to have passengers who can clear the requirements that it takes in order to be on those planes to fly. It is an obstacle to overcome that is really important for us.

I-15 clearly is an issue. We want to thank you for your support for Brightline. That is a critical next step. The Federal money that has been made available in the Rail Fund that has not been spent over a number of years is there and available, and if that is committed soon, this project will happen, and it is really important. It is not only important for Las Vegas and the visitors that come here. It takes cars off that road. That is a big part of the supply chain to the United States, the entire Western United States. This will help States from all across the country if this project happens, so we appreciate your support there. We have more work to do in that corridor, but it is a problem that we are working on. We ap-

preciate your partnership there and your leadership. I know we will make progress.

Thank you for the opportunity to be here today. I look forward to continuing to work with you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Hill follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF STEVE HILL, CEO AND PRESIDENT, LAS VEGAS
CONVENTION AND VISITORS AUTHORITY (LVCVA)

Thank you, Chairwoman Rosen and Ranking Member Scott for inviting me before the subcommittee today to speak on the economic impacts of the sports and entertainment economy in Las Vegas. I also want to thank Chairwoman Cantwell and Ranking Member Cruz of the full committee. We appreciate the work of your subcommittee and the spotlight it puts on the importance of the tourism industry.

Tourism and hospitality are vital to the U.S. economy, and in Nevada this industry and the people it employs are central to the state's prosperity. In fact, Las Vegas relies more on a single industry—the tourism and hospitality industry—than any other city. Las Vegas continues to diversify its economy; the city has made progress. But tourism remains our economic engine and our largest regional employer. Directly and indirectly, tourism employs 26 percent of all Las Vegasians—and provides tax revenue that funds approximately 35 percent of the state's budget. Approximately 39 million visitors spent \$44.9 billion in Las Vegas in 2022 and had an overall economic impact of \$79 billion. While visitor counts did not quite reach pre-pandemic levels, the amount spent on tourism-related activities reached new heights. Our city is a case study of the economic progress a destination can make when its public and private organizations are all invested and work cooperatively to reach a singular goal. Clearly, it is crucial the Las Vegas tourism industry continues to thrive.

Las Vegas became a tourism town in the 1930s when Hoover Dam workers traveled on the weekends to play in the city's casinos. The industry began its real growth when to draw visitors to Las Vegas during the slow weekday periods, the legislature agreed to finance the construction of the Las Vegas Convention Center. As the Resort Corridor expanded, the convention center—the only building large enough to accommodate both the largest trade shows and the largest sports events—became the entertainment nerve center of the city, hosting the earliest boxing matches, basketball, and rodeos.

As Las Vegas has expanded to accommodate every type of traveler, our destination has become one of the world's premier meetings and conventions destinations. The 150,000-square-foot convention center Las Vegas opened in 1959 is now 2.5 million square feet, hosting some of the largest meetings and trade shows in the world. Trade show producers choose Las Vegas because our destination is purpose-built for their needs, with entertainment and world-class dining all along our eight-mile stretch from the south end of the Strip to Downtown. In fact, according to Trade Show News Network, Las Vegas has been named the No. 1 Trade Show Destination in North America for over 25 years. Combined with our resort partners' spaces, our destination now totals 15 million square feet of convention space, up from 11.5 million in 2019. Our city also has more than 150,000 hotel rooms and event venues totaling 590,000 seats.

Last year, 5 million people attended conventions, spending \$7.5 billion, supporting \$2.1 billion in wages, and contributing to an overall economic impact of \$13.2 billion. And we continue to grow: In 2021, the Las Vegas Convention Center added 750,000 net square feet—our new West Hall—and is now investing \$600 million to renovate 1.9 million square feet of our legacy campus.

Las Vegas has a rich history of delivering sports and entertainment to a global audience. This community has expertise in hosting events spanning back to the Rat Pack era, countless Elvis appearances, and blockbuster boxing matches. Those were the types of events that set the stage for what happened next. UFC, headquartered in Las Vegas, was founded nearly 30 years ago and has grown that organization and sport as a whole into a multibillion-dollar business. In the mid-1990s, the first NASCAR race took place at the Las Vegas Motor Speedway. In 2004, Las Vegas welcomed the NBA Summer League, which continues today. In 2017, Bill Foley brought the Vegas Golden Knights, Las Vegas' first major professional franchise. The NFL's Raiders and WNBA's Aces have followed. This city is also on the verge of welcoming MLB's Athletics. Minor league teams in a wide range of sports, including baseball, continue to drive demand for local and visitor dollars. Importantly, sports-related activities extend well beyond the high-profile nature of professional

sports as exhibition, youth, and other sporting events play a key role. Turning specifically to entertainment, Las Vegas is synonymous with some of the most well-known bands, acts, and talent to perform. In fact, concert residencies of today were started by Liberace right here in Las Vegas in 1944. Headliners continue to fill seats throughout the Las Vegas Valley, and high-profile performers such as Rolling Stones, Taylor Swift, BTS, Elton John, and Bad Bunny packed Allegiant Stadium.

Sports and entertainment activity falls within the broader tourism industry and has been a key driver of our post-pandemic recovery; the profile of visitors and their propensity to attend sports and entertainment events has changed forever. During 2022, approximately one out of 10 visitors cited attending a special event or sporting event as the primary purpose of their trip to Las Vegas. Additionally, 30 percent of visitors attended a show and six percent attended a sporting event while in town. At the same time, 16 percent of visitors watched a sporting event while in town at a sportsbook, watch party or on television.

Allegiant Stadium has propelled the sports and entertainment industry in Las Vegas forward. Since its opening in 2020, the venue has hosted nearly 3.2 million attendees across a wide range of events, including NFL games (1.1 million), UNLV football games (174,000), concerts (1.0 million) and other events (0.9 million). Among notable ticketed events, more than half of attendees during the past year indicated they were from out of town, with over 80 percent of those visitors indicating that the event was the primary reason for their travel. Actual visitor counts for the stadium exceeded initial estimates by 19 percent and the number of incremental visitors (those that would not have come but for the stadium) exceeded early expectations by 93 percent. Between greater visitor counts and elevated spending levels, economic activity more than doubled and job counts increased by a third from original estimates. During the past year, the visitor impacts sourced to those travelers alone equate to \$1.8 billion in economic activity, \$440 million in wages, and 7,900 jobs.

Growing Las Vegas into a premier sports destination has laid the groundwork for our coming special events. The Formula One Las Vegas Grand Prix in November is estimated to have an economic impact of \$1.3 billion in its first year, \$360 million of which will be wages paid to local workers. The Super Bowl, which Las Vegas will host in February 2024, is forecast to have an economic impact of over \$600 million and will support over \$200 million in local wages. We're preparing to host the inaugural NBA In-Season Tournament, an event that will draw thousands more winter visitors. And in the last year, we secured the NCAA Men's Final Four for 2028. We are attracting more and more international sports fans with recent events such as Concacaf's Nations League Finals in June, which was estimated to bring \$39 million in direct visitor spending to the city in only three days, with an estimated overall economic impact of \$68.4 million.

The LVCVA's research shows that Las Vegas visitors stay longer and spend more when they come to see sports. Our guests who attend a show or other entertainment activity indicate they spent nearly \$310 per trip specifically on those activities—a 785 percent increase from the prior year. In fact, the visitor who attends a sporting event in Las Vegas spends, on average, 25 percent more than other tourists.

Sporting events can also drive incremental visitation and economic activity among travelers who may not otherwise have planned to visit or were even willing to consider Las Vegas as a destination. Sports has provided an entirely new reason to visit Las Vegas, expanding our portfolio of offerings and our potential customer base.

The largest impediment to attracting visitors and large events to Las Vegas, both internationally and domestically, is the travel required to get here.

Internationally, travel to the United States for first-time, non-immigrant visitors is often contingent on obtaining travel visas. As the country continues its post-pandemic recovery in terms of international visitation, wait times for B1 and B2 visa interviews, which can span well over one (1) year in certain key markets such as Brazil, Mexico, and India, are preventing visitors from visiting Las Vegas. U.S. Travel Association reports that the United States will lose close to 6.6 million visitors in 2023 due to visa interview wait times and that over 65 percent of visitors from the key markets will travel elsewhere rather than wait for their visa interviews to travel to the United States.

We appreciate the efforts that Chairwoman Rosen has initiated to assist with the visa processing issues affecting our potential visitors and large events. The Omnibus Travel and Tourism Act, which the Chairwoman co-sponsored and which passed late last year through the 2023 Omnibus Appropriations bill, will undoubtedly help alleviate visa processing delays as it establishes a senior Federal official position within the Commerce Department to focus specifically on travel and tourism. Additionally, Chairwoman Rosen has assisted in establishing a program through the Visa Business Office which coordinates expedited visa interviews for confirmed attendees

of large tradeshows and conventions. As we seek not only full recovery of pre-pandemic international visitation numbers, but growth from them, we need to lower visitor visa wait times to less than thirty (30) days, while modernizing national security measures with new and available technology, so that the visitors who want to visit the United States, and Las Vegas specifically, can get here.

Domestically, travel is also a major impediment to visitation. Southern California remains the top feeder market for visitors to Las Vegas, accounting for twenty-seven percent (27 percent) of visits to the destination. Ground transportation through Interstate-15 proves problematic for our visitors with 20+ mile backups common for return drives to California following holidays and major events. The proposed Brightline West high-speed rail project connecting Las Vegas and Southern California will help alleviate highway crowding that may deter visitors and remove an estimated three million vehicles and over 700 million vehicle miles from this important artery. We ask that the United States Department of Transportation fully fund the project.

The nearly 70 miles of planned underground Vegas Loop tunnels funded privately by The Boring Company will transport guests from their resorts to venues all over the city and will also be part of that solution.

Tourism works, grows, and thrives in Southern Nevada thanks to the collaboration among all our private and public partners including our local, state, and Federal elected leaders and their staffs, public safety officials, and our resort partners.

Thank you, Senator Rosen, for your leadership and unwavering commitment to the tourism industry. We are also grateful to our entire Nevada Federal delegation who understand the impact tourism has on local and U.S. economies. Thank you again for inviting the LVCVA to tell the Las Vegas tourism story.

Senator ROSEN. Wow. Thank you. Again, tourism is a top economic driver. We do need an all-of-the-above approach, from our broadband, our infrastructure, our workforce, our labor workforce, our STEM workforce, every other kind of workforce, our visa processing, and, of course, investment for our small businesses.

So with that, we are going to turn it over to some questions, and let us talk a little bit about what you all are actually doing and what we can do going forward. So, you know, we want to keep bringing marquee events to Las Vegas, and according to UNLV's Center for Business and Economic Research and UNLV Sports Innovation—I do not have to tell anybody here—Las Vegas is increasingly becoming more and more of a sports destination with the capacity to seats hundreds of thousands of fans in professional sports arenas. That indicates an impressive potential for sports employment.

So each of you are industry leaders with many years of experience, so, Mr. Hornbuckle, I am going to start with you. Can you help us understand the process of getting marquee events and large sporting events to come to Las Vegas? And we will start with you, and then we will go on to Mr. Hill and Ms. Sewald.

Mr. HORNBUCKLE. Thank you, Senator. The process, and I think Steve said this well, and it was said maybe collectively, it truly takes a village. And I think when people think about Las Vegas now as a destination and a place to bring something like the Super Bowl, or Formula 1, or many of the other things we have had the privilege of hosting, you know, our hotels run 93 percent. So the infrastructure that is already here, the proximity to rooms, the ease and convenience of transit and activity is a world renowned, so what is important about us is protecting that and trying to make it better.

So to me, Las Vegas knows how to do these things, and it is proving it over and over, and with the exception of maybe Formula 1, which is a little disruptive, and it will continue to be, I might

add, but it will be an amazing catalyst. The opportunity to put an event, which I would arguably say is an operative, is the second worst weekend of the year for us, and put an event that I can speak to our properties, will be 4X the revenue stream, a normal event weekend, and normal weekend would be, never mind the second worst weekend of the year, is a stellar economic—between it and Super Bowl, we are talking about \$2 billion of economic activity. Our pre-bookings into it are the biggest thing for Formula 1 we have ever seen in our history by a wide margin. And so we are extremely excited by what that brings, but it does take everyone pulling together. And I think what is relevant maybe to you and where you can be helpful—

Senator ROSEN. I just want to ask you before you finish, what—

Mr. HORNBuckle. Yes.

Senator ROSEN.—what can Congress do, and then I will add that onto the other questions as well.

Mr. HORNBuckle. Yes. Well, I think what is relevant, particularly for this committee and your committee members, you know, as I have gotten involved through tourism with Secretary Raimondo, it has quickly come to my, not attention, but my understanding, a whole-of-government approach is needed when it comes to tourism. It just is. What happens in Commerce, it needs all of the other departments, whether it is Transportation or Homeland Security, to participate.

And so what can be helpful, go back to—starts with visas, starts with the journey here. It starts with safety and security around these events. Obviously, we at MGM resorts are extremely focused on that, given the god awful thing that did happen October 1. And so making sure that not only the community is ready to host these, but particularly on those two events. And I will bring to your attention there is for the Super Bowl, something called a Special Events Accessibility Rating.

Senator ROSEN. A SEAR.

Mr. HORNBuckle. SEAR.

Senator ROSEN. We call it the SEAR rating.

Mr. HORNBuckle. It is a 1. We are petitioning to get Formula 1, which, to me, has far more logistical moving parts across a broad spectrum of the city, to at least a 2, which will give us some economic funding, some coordination from some of the national agencies that we so rely on to host these kind of events. And so anything I think you could do there would be very appreciative and hopefully be meaningful for us as we go forward. You know, Steve has been the architect of many of these broader deals, and so I want to thank him for his leadership on that, and, presumably, he could better tell some of the story on how they kind of came together.

Senator ROSEN. And that is what I was going to say. Mr. Hill, how do we get the marquee events here, large sporting events, and what can I do to help?

Mr. HILL. Well, thank you, Chair Rosen. Thanks for the kind words, Mr. Hornbuckle, and, as you say, this is a—you know, this is something Las Vegas does. We have had decades of practice. We have thousands of workers who know how to put these events on.

It is—if the opportunity is there, the folks who are putting on these events see how much it means to them to be in Las Vegas. And so I often say, and I completely mean this, I have the easiest product in the world to sell. We just often get the answer to the phone and then work with the entire community to figure out how to put the event—bring it here, and put it on. It is also somewhat easier in Las Vegas for a couple of reasons. This city was built as a platform for events. The airport is right there. All these hotel rooms are within a 4-square-mile area. You can—the experience around the event is so much better because of the logistics in Las Vegas, then—it has the opportunity to be in other great cities, but in other great cities, when you go to these fantastic events, that is what you do that day. It is—it is work to get there, it is a fantastic experience, and then it is work to go home, and it takes the entire day, where here you can surround that with so much more, and it is just such an advantage for Las Vegas.

The other is our industry is typically more consolidated and has a long history of working together. Understanding that when we all come together and support Las Vegas, we can compete for the customer after they have come, but let us all work together to bring them. That is a different environment and it has different leadership here than we see in many other cities. And so that has been very helpful as well.

I will point out a couple of things, a little bit repetitive from Mr. Hornbuckle, but in thinking about bringing events here, we are not only—they have to think about bringing the visitors here, but the event itself, and particularly, for example, CES or the National Association of Broadcasters. Those exhibitors come from all over the globe, and it is not only the people that are coming. It is all of their freight, all of their workforce, everything that supports them being here. So it is not just people moving. It is the freight movement as well, but it is the certainty of, you know, if they are going to have 10 people man a booth, they need to be able—if they are going to sign up and pay for that space, pay for the booth, pay to set it up, they need to know that their workforce is going to be able to clear the visa process as an example. And that uncertainty is slowing the growth, or the recovery, really, of the media and trade show industry. That would be very helpful.

I want to thank you for moving the FAA reauthorization forward recently. That was critical. The reliability of flights in our airport matters tremendously. So those types of efforts and partnerships really matter.

Senator ROSEN. Thank you, and, Ms. Sewald, you know, we think about the small businesses. It takes—as we think about conventions or some of our vendors in different places that it takes to support these major events, what is the process for our business community to help here, and what can we do here to help in Congress?

Ms. SEWALD. Well, thank you Senator, Rosen. Yes. Yes, ma'am. You know, I would—I would echo what Mr. Hornbuckle said and Mr. Hill. It does take everyone. I come at it from a slightly different approach. I am on the board of the LVCVA, so I knew that Steve was going to say, you know, he has the easiest job in the world, but, truly as a board member, a lot of times we sit back and watch him and his team work because they are tremendous at

what they do, and it is truly astonishing. So first, I just wanted to say that about Steve and his entire team.

We do have a world-class global community here. Our small businesses are the fabric of that community, and for a lot of them, it means the world for them to have access to other world-class global organizations like the Raiders, like Formula 1, and like the Super Bowl. The Biz Connect Program at the Super Bowl Super Bowl Host Committee is probably, which I mentioned in my testimony, that is probably one of the most impactful projects that has ever come along for our local business community here. And so for them to get engaged through our Chamber, through other chambers across Southern Nevada, has been probably the most impactful thing for them, and it truly is life changing.

Senator ROSEN. Thank you. Before we move onto another topic, I am going to ask each one of you, and we will start with Mr. Hill and go back down to everyone, quickly, like you said, now we are planning these things. We have not done it before, so what are the challenges you did not expect that arose, and what are some of the best practices, that you are using that maybe I should be hearing about and we can partner with you to be sure we potentiate those best practices. So we will just go down the road quickly, please.

Mr. HILL. Yes. Thanks, Chair Rosen. I will mention Formula—a couple of things about Formula 1 first, and I want to start by echoing Mr. Hornbuckle's request for assistance on the SEAR rating. It matters. It is a theme. Security around major events is a much more complex topic than, most people would think about. It was much more complex than I realized before getting involved with this, and the Federal Government's assistance is critical. Obviously, the Federal Government is monitoring bad actors across the globe. They are looking at these events. Having access to that information is a part of that SEAR process. It is really important that that Federal resource is provided to this city as we move forward.

Everything around transportation is more difficult than it seems for an event of 60,000 or a hundred thousand. We have events here that have 120,000, 160,000 people come. The assistance that we get, from a transportation standpoint, is exceptionally helpful. People think about that typically in terms of ground transportation, but everything around the airlines, including pending pilot shortages and shortages there that are very difficult to recover from once they get started because it takes so long. So thinking about how to expedite the workforce issues is important, too, and I may have stolen your thunder on that one. Sorry.

[Laughter.]

Senator ROSEN. That is okay. You can steal my thunder.

Ms. SEWALD. Yes. I would—I would echo what Steve said, but also Congress supporting initiatives like Brand USA, National Travel and Tourism Office. Those are things from a tourism standpoint that we—absolutely would be very impactful for our destination. Also, we have talked a lot about I-15 and funding Brightline, the project that we had our press conference this week. We are very hopeful that that will happen as well.

You know, and drilling down to a more local level, at the Vegas Chamber, our members still consistently tell us that workforce con-

tinues to be a problem. And so while we are very excited at the demand and the influx of and the increase in tourism and so forth, keeping up with that demand remains a challenge for our local employers. And so I think that is one of the areas—one of the key areas where the Vegas Chamber is working with our partners at Workforce Connections to help shore up those challenges.

Senator ROSEN. Thank you. Ms. Douglass Morgan, please.

Ms. MORGAN. Thank you, Madam Senator. I would have to echo Mr. Hill and Ms. Sewald's comments as well. Obviously, improvements and making sure that they are expedited with respect to I-15 so people can kind of come in and out of the stadium would be of great importance, the Brightline Project as well, and just making sure that our international airport continues to be top notch. As we plan for the Super Bowl, obviously transportation concerns are, are top of mind to making sure that some of the people maybe that have never come to Vegas before have a great experience. So I would just echo their comments with respect to that.

Senator ROSEN. Mr. Hornbuckle?

Mr. HORNBUCKLE. Thank you, Senator. Echoing the same but focusing on workforce for a moment, it is not just small business, I can assure you. We spent most of last year 5,000 employees short, give or take, if we had had our druthers. We have managed that number down in half, and now we are managing our programs, our people, and our service based on what we can and cannot do when it comes, and that is a normal circumstance. When it comes now to staffing up for something like the Super Bowl or any of these events, it is an ongoing struggle.

And so one of the things and where you can be helpful, and, ultimately, obviously, the Committee and Congress in general, Senators Klobuchar and Moran put together a visa bill, which I think, in the context of keeping visa—the permitting program and how you can still do this alive for another year or so—I know there are security issues tied to that, but I think is critical. It just gives the underpinning of people, resource, and focus, particularly in the service sector. Hospitality is about a million-and-a-half jobs short, probably down to a million at best case scenario right now.

So we never rebounded from COVID, full stop, and so the industry and—look, we have the good fortune of running places like Bellagio, where it is an attractive place for an employer to get employees, and we struggle there. And so you start getting down to some of the smaller venues, some of the smaller hospitality contingents throughout the country, and particularly here in Southern Nevada, it is a challenge. And so any help with even helping and keeping that program alive could be meaningful for another year or so.

Senator ROSEN. Thank you. Those are really good things to think about. One of my other committees is a Homeland Security Committee, where we work on what we call the SEAR ratings for special events, and also on what we call our Urban Area Security Initiative, or UASI grants. Those are the formulas for funding for big events like you might see on New Year's Eve here at—in Las Vegas, where the whole Las Vegas Strip is closed down, or now we are going to have Formula 1, is very similar, the Super Bowl, and other large events. So improving those ratings, we have been work-

ing on that, trying to improve our formula overall so that all of Las Vegas is recognized in this way to be sure that we have the resources we need to put on a safe, fun, and, I will say, fabulous because it is fabulous Las Vegas—a fun, safe, and fabulous event, so thank you for those. And of course, we have a lot of things—Travel America, our one-stop-shop for people coming in, visa—we will continue to work on those issues.

But I want to focus a little bit now, we got Formula 1, we got the Super Bowl, and, so we are going to talk a little bit now about attracting our visitors to sporting events because the value of the Las Vegas Raiders, I think it has increased, just a little bit. And, actually it is 76 percent over the past 3 years since the team's relocation from Oakland, California. Its value grew from \$2.9 billion in 2019 to \$5 billion in 2022, and last year, I am pleased to say overall attendance at Allegiant Stadium, like you have talked about, topping in around 1.7 million. And so, Ms. Douglass Morgan, I know you talked about in your opening statement, you know, the positive impacts the Raiders have had, if you want to talk about that a little bit more. But really, now that you are here in this job and part of this community, of course born and raised here, how do sports teams attract new residents to our state?

Ms. DOUGLASS MORGAN. Yes. Thank you for the question, Senator, and I have been here since I was 2, so it is pretty much raised. But, you know, these are—absolutely, these are things and opportunities now that I have been able to have a little over a year with the team to see what true impact it has on our Nevada community, and it does not just include Southern Nevada. It is northern as well.

We have—I cannot help but mention Bo Bernhard and the great partnership that we have at UNLV and their sports innovation group, and really giving students here a pipeline to actually have more exposure in the sports management opportunities. Those are things that I did not have as a child here. I knew that there were opportunities, obviously, in hospitality, and if there were other things, I would have to go out of State for that. We are actually offering a pipeline now for children and students to have a career in sports, physical therapy, our physicians. There is an entire operation obviously that goes into running an NFL team, and we have been able to do that with respect to our football team.

With respect to our events and concerts, there are obviously careers in stadium operations and gaming experiences. And so just seeing people having another opportunity for other job opportunities, which is why it is so important to diversify our economy, has been great and really personally fulfilling for me as well. Being able to come and go to a Raider game and walk over the Hacienda Bridge, thanks to Bill, and go to an Aces game, and then being able to have someone—a family experience all of that in one day is something that we did not have 10 years ago. And I think that appeal definitely would help hopefully continue to grow our Southern Nevada resident base.

Senator ROSEN. And let us not forget our world-class restaurants as you are working up an appetite going from event to event, right?

Ms. DOUGLASS MORGAN. Mm-hmm.

Senator ROSEN. So I am going to ask the remainder or three of you on the panel, Mr. Hill, Hornbuckle, and Ms. Sewald, just briefly, a few sentences, again, the economic impact of sports. We hope a few more things are coming, but, we have got plenty here to be proud of and lots of fun things to do.

Mr. HILL. Chair Rosen, the economic impact of sports has been dramatic and has been one of the driving reasons that we have done so well coming out of COVID. It supports directly 40,000 jobs in this community, big companies, small jobs, and that is why we do it, you know. What we do in the tourism industry, ultimately, is for this community. It is to provide great jobs, it is to provide a great quality of life, and there is no place better to do that than here in Las Vegas.

Senator ROSEN. [technical issue] emphasize economics of sports.

Ms. SEWALD. Thank you, Senator. It is so true, and when I look around this room alone, too, I see people who have had opportunities, like Shaundell Newsome of Sumnu Marketing. He has had opportunities to work with Super Bowl, Super Bowl Host Committee. Things like these would never come across the stage if not for the work of the LVCVA, Mr. Hill, and having the influx of the sporting events that we have. The Raiders, we could not be more proud of them. It really has put our small business community on the global stage, and it truly does change lives for the better. And so we hear these stories every single day.

Senator ROSEN. Mr. Hornbuckle?

Mr. HORNBUCKLE. Maybe just a macro thought. You know, most sporting events are 3 hours, give or take. People do not come to Las Vegas for 3 hours. They come for 3 days, and just think of the extension on that, and that is how people think about it.

Senator ROSEN. Mm-Hmm.

Mr. HILL. When I first started, 85 percent of people said, why are you going to Las Vegas? I am going to gamble. Today, Steve, that number is than 10 percent. Like, when he does polls every year, the vast majority of them come for an event, which is a 3-day event, irrespective of how long the actual sports takes place. And so that economic driver, when you can go into T-Mobile on a Tuesday night, and the Canadians are in or the Winnipeg Jets, and you can see as many red or blue jerseys as you see black and gold, you know it is working. I love it. I am not so sure Bill Foley does.

[Laughter.]

Mr. HORNBUCKLE. I am not so sure. Like, the Denver Broncos bring a lot of people last time I checked. There are local fans who still like the Broncos. Maybe you got to work on that.

[Laughter.]

Mr. HORNBUCKLE. But the point is there are thousands of people who are coming for an extended stay. They do not come for 3 hours, they come for 3 days, and that extension has just been so meaningful to all of us.

Senator ROSEN. Thank you. Well, I am going to talk about—we have talked about the hospitality, the sports, our economic impact on small businesses. But here we sit—here we sit at the beautiful convention center, and we know Las Vegas ranks among the country's top cities for our convention business. I know you can—you talk about this all the time, but it is pretty mind blowing to think

that we have more than 15 million square feet of meeting and exhibit space, and I think you are continuing to grow just a little bit, right?

And so we are so proud to host CES, the most influential tech event in the world. I am proud to lead a group of senators there every year for the past few years, and last year, we had over 115,000 attendees, and it exceeded even the most optimistic projections, and I know you have more than—more to come. Last year, I believe you secured 14 new trade shows to take place. New trade shows. That is in addition to the ones you already have through fall of 2029, including companies like Nike, Fabtech, and Money20/20. So how do you go about the process of talking nationally and internationally to people about who we are, what we have, how we have grown, and how you can have a great 3 or 4 days here as an add-on to your convention?

Mr. HILL. Chair Rosen, thank you for that question.

Senator ROSEN. And how can I help you make that even better? We will just give you --that is a two-part question for you.

Mr. HILL. Thank you. We are not only among the top trade show cities in the United States, we are by a long way the top trade shows city and have been for 27 straight years. We have 42 of the top 250 trade shows in the country here in Las Vegas between the three main—major convention centers. We have three of the top nine convention centers in the United States, all in Las Vegas. Again, it is an easy product to sell.

The people who have meetings, trade shows, recognize what Las Vegas does for them. We have great sales teams. We work in great partnership with not only our resort partners, but Metro and Clark County Fire, everything in this community, the airport, the RTC, that it takes to put these shows on, and we work together to attract those shows to Las Vegas. The city has been exceptionally successful.

What we talked about earlier, making that trip easy, comfortable, seamless is really where our partnership with the Federal Government really meets. And so, you know, the international recovery that we talked about is important, the transportation infrastructure, the support from a security standpoint are all exceptionally appreciated, and even more would be helpful.

Senator ROSEN. I know we are going to talk about this later, but we did pass into law, through my committee and our tourism omnibus, the creation of a new position, the assistant secretary in the Department of Commerce, that is going to take all of these factors into consideration, whether it is visa, transportation, IT, workforce, labor, STEM, sports, small business, security. And so we know that all of that matters, and we will continue to work with you on that.

But job growth, we are here to talk—we heard the Vegas chamber talking about it. We know we have a lot of jobs that are still open. We want to continue to grow jobs, diversify our economy, and so there has really been a significant job growth because of the sports events. And researchers at UNLV conservatively forecast a 12.4 percent increase in employment within performing arts, spectator sports, and related industries for 2022 to 2030. This equates to nearly 3,000 permanent jobs by some estimates and indicates a

promising future for job seekers, for individuals interested in career paths in sports economy.

Like I said, it takes a physical therapist. You talked about a lot of the jobs, but it takes IT, marketing. There are a lot of things that happen behind the scenes. And so this is a question maybe for all the witnesses if you think you have something to say about it. I am going to start with you, Ms. Douglass Morgan. Elaborate a little bit more on the types of jobs that people might not think that come because of the sports or entertainment, maybe the people who build the shows, all of that that really are—they come here because of our sports economy.

Ms. DOUGLASS MORGAN. Sure. Thank you, Senator Rosen, and I kind of briefly touched on this in my—in my prior remarks, but the kind of new jobs that are going to be and that have been created by our sports economy are truly limitless. And there are additional ones every day as technology continues to kind of—we use that to immerse with the customer service experience in the stadium, and I am sure at the arenas at T-Mobile as well. So every single industry is really impacted.

For us, we look at sports therapists, architects, engineers, construction management, event planners, and the list could truly go on and on. And the best part, again, is being able to show these to our Southern Nevada and Nevada residents as well, and giving them exposure to these potential job —different job opportunities.

Senator ROSEN. Thank you. Events planner. Maybe you can get married at one of the sporting events. You can sure get engaged.

Ms. DOUGLASS MORGAN. Oh, we have—

Senator ROSEN. You put them on the big screen, right?

Ms. DOUGLASS MORGAN. Engaged, married, just hopefully not divorced.

[Laughter.]

Ms. DOUGLASS MORGAN. But everything actually, yes, we can—we can host type of any event, yes.

Senator ROSEN. Put it on the kiss cam.

Ms. DOUGLASS MORGAN. Yes.

Senator ROSEN. You have the kiss cam, right?

Ms. DOUGLASS MORGAN. Yes, absolutely.

Senator ROSEN. There you go. Yes, please, the jobs.

Mr. HORNBuckle. Look, what we need to as an industry, because we do suffer from this, is present this industry that has better career track and career pathing for people because it is real.

Senator ROSEN. Mm-hmm.

Mr. HORNBuckle. I will take MGM Grand as a hotel. There are 418 different job categories.

Senator ROSEN. Wow.

Mr. HORNBuckle. Four hundred and eighteen, from attorney to—okay. I mean, just think about it, 400 different job categories. So there is not probably a job—I mean, everything from animal—we have we thousands of different of things people do. Tiger training, yes, exactly.

[Laughter.]

Senator ROSEN. What is the most unique job that—the tiger training. Okay. There you go.

Mr. HORNBUCKLE. Yes, marine—we have a marine biologist because we have turtles. And so anyway, so it is fascinating, very fascinating, and so you can literally do anything in this town, period, full stop. Where we need help is making sure that entry-level people understand the—look, I started as a busboy in this community. Forty-five years later, I am not. There are huge opportunities within this industry. Getting Brand USA, back to how you can help, and keeping it funded to do a better job with and promote not only tourism here, but the opportunity of, you know, what work can do for a career and career development, I think is critical. And so any continued help with that would be essential.

Senator ROSEN. A call out to all marine biologists. Even in the desert, you can have a job. I do like that one. There you go. Do you want to—I know, Ms. Sewald, you have talked about it a bunch, and then, Mr. Hill, if you have anything to add about kind of the different jobs people might not expect that support these new sports industry. I had a lot of entertainment, but sports is—big sports, like we have, pretty new.

Ms. SEWALD. Yes, Senator. There are a lot of new opportunities on the horizon, and researchers are forecasting about a 12-and-a-half percent increase in job opportunities.

Senator ROSEN. Yes.

Ms. SEWALD. So while it is wonderful to have those new opportunities—

Senator ROSEN. Right.

Ms. SEWALD.—like we have pointed out, the need for that talented workforce is something that we are absolutely going to have to solve for. But other opportunities include a growth in new enterprises like coaching, for example. You know, coaching instruction, that industry or a portion of the industry alone has increased by about 150 percent. And so there are so many entrepreneurial opportunities that go along with that, and so we are really excited about that piece of it in—at the Vegas Chamber as well because we have a lot of people asking us about those very things, what are the opportunities and how can we take advantage.

Senator ROSEN. Las Vegas loves to be an incubator for entrepreneurs. That is for sure. Anything? I know. Do you hire a marine biologist, Mr. Hill, or maybe, maybe not. I do not know. That is the most unique one I have heard so far.

Mr. HILL. We will leave that one to Mr. Hornbuckle.

[Laughter.]

Mr. HILL. When you look at what happens in Las Vegas, in any one of the major properties, as an example, the general manager of the MGM is like the mayor of a pretty decent sized city. It is—you know, you have got 6,000, 8,000, 10,000 employees. You have 10,000 guests, 12,000 guests at a time. There may be more. Everything happens. The same thing happens in this building here when we have 40,000, 50,000, a hundred thousand people. It is—it is a big place. Every type of job that you would be interested is available in Las Vegas.

Sports brings all the jobs that have been mentioned. A lot of what sports is about is the content, the media, the broadcasting, the production, the social media aspects of this. We are the intellectual center of endgame betting, which is this virtuous circle that

creates fans. My wife is now an NFL fan because she plays fantasy football, you know. All of those things matter, and there are jobs around all of that.

Senator ROSEN. If you play fantasy football, do your teams compete on that? I do not know. I maybe would not suggest be a fan of her team. I think you are better off there.

[Laughter.]

Senator ROSEN. But what I want to ask you now, of course, all of this does not happen without transportation. Of course, we are a unique city because we were really built for being a resort town, right? So we have an airport close by, and a fairly small footprint compared to some of the other larger cities. And so I want to talk a little bit with all of you about transportation because the large influx of visitors, we probably plus up and go maybe down in the mid-week and up on maybe the weekend where these events might take place.

We have a challenge of providing reliable transportation options to move people around the city. And one of the efforts to address the Strip's frequently clogged traffic is the Vegas loop. It is right here at the Las Vegas Convention Center. It is an all-electric, zero-emission, high-speed underground public transportation tunnel. It is a system that carries people in Tesla cars. And we know Vegas Loop is expanding throughout the Strip downtown to Allegiant Stadium and the airport with, I believe, about 81 planned stations. Maybe they have added some more. You could correct me there.

Another option we have, people see it above ground, the Las Vegas monorail, which connects lots of Las Vegas with the Convention Center, some of the—our big resorts. And so, Mr. Hill, Mr. Hornbuckle, Ms. Sewell—Sewald, excuse me—what do we need to do better? How can we help, me, at the Federal level? I know that you work in partnership with our transportation community to be sure we get everybody over to Allegiant Stadium, to the T-Mobile here, there—here, there, and everywhere, I guess I am going to say that. So I guess we will start at the end with you, Mr. Hill, please.

Mr. HILL. Thank you, Chair Rosen. I will say that Las Vegas does this better than most any place else for a couple of reasons. Again, we are built as a platform for this, so while it can be a little frustrating to be in—

Senator ROSEN. Mm-hmm.

Mr. HILL.—maybe traffic for a couple of miles, it beats being in traffic for 20—

Senator ROSEN. Mm-hmm.

Mr. HILL.—which is virtually impossible here in terms of our visitors getting to events. And you see when T-Mobile opened and the Golden Knights played there, when Allegiant Stadium opened and the Raiders played there, for the first few games it was, it was a little bit of a tangle, but we learn quickly, and it is a pretty seamless experience at this point.

Senator ROSEN. Mm-hmm.

Mr. HILL. We are going to tax it a little bit over the next number of months. Just as an example, in a 3-and-a-half month stretch, from the beginning of November until the middle of February, we have SEMA here with 160,000 people, and then we have Formula

1 with a similar number of people. In December, we will have the rodeo. We will have the first in-season NBA tournament played when the rodeo is also here. Early in January, we will have CES and another 150,000 people, then we will have the Super Bowl in the middle of February.

No place in the world can do that, and it is—it is a testament to how we move people around here. We are proud of The Boring Company system. We are excited to see it expand. We are proud to be the owners of the monorail and actually have it be profitable. It is doing well enough that we are looking for ways to extend the years of operation there.

Senator ROSEN. Well, that is what I said. How can I help, thinking outside the box—

Mr. HILL. Yes.

Senator ROSEN. And, like, we are going to bring—hopefully bring that Brightline train d

Mr. HILL. Yes, absolutely.

Senator ROSEN. I will ask you.

Mr. HILL. Yes. Thank you.

Senator ROSEN. Let us know.

Ms. SEWALD. Yes, ma'am. Thank you, Senator. I just wonder if we should call Bill "Mayor Hornbuckle" now.

[Laughter.]

Senator ROSEN. I was—I was planning to when I called on him next.

Ms. SEWALD. Sorry.

Mr. HORNBUCKLE. No, it does not pay enough. Thank you.

[Laughter.]

Senator ROSEN. Mayor of MGM we will call him.

Ms. SEWALD. Yes, and, I mean, I have to echo, I would say considering the challenges, we know what they are, but we have a world class airport. We have the loop. We have the monorail.

Senator ROSEN. We want to be forward thinking, right.

Ms. SEWALD. Congratulations to Steve and the team for monetizing that monorail because I think there was a time when there was question about that, so congratulations again on that. You know, we are—we are also working on our relationship and leveraging the value of the Regional Transportation Commission. RTC is a—is a huge benefit for us, so any way that we could bolster the RTC is probably going to be another way that we could facilitate additional travel options.

Senator ROSEN. Mm-hmm.

Ms. SEWALD. Yes.

Senator ROSEN. Perfect. Please.

Ms. DOUGLASS MORGAN. Great segue. I was actually going to highlight that we have instituted our Game Day Express that solves for transit and parking to Allegiant Stadium. We have also worked with other transportation providers, whether it be taxi and ride share companies as well, to kind of ensure that we are having a good, smooth common ingress and egress to Allegiant Stadium. But the Game Day Express from the Regional Transportation Commission has definitely been an amazing partnership between the Raiders and them, again, another government entity, but very forward thinking and making sure they are—they are really enhanc-

ing the overall Game Day experience for the—for the fans that are at the stadium.

Senator ROSEN. Yes. I know a lot of people that take that Game Day Express, too, and they have other similar programs for, I believe, T-Mobile and other events. It is a—it is a game changer on game or concert day. How's that? So mayor of MGM, Mr. Hornbuckle.

Mr. HORNBUCKLE. All right. Do not start. Please do not start that.

[Laughter.]

Senator ROSEN. No, we will not.

Mr. HORNBUCKLE. Please.

Senator ROSEN. Mr. Hornbuckle, please. You know what?

Mr. HORNBUCKLE. Thank you. Thank you, Senator.

Senator ROSEN. You know what? How do we help get people around, and what are you thinking about because I want to fund innovation in transportation.

Mr. HORNBUCKLE. Look, I think the community does a very good job and will continue to do so on local transportation. Obviously, the vision around what is happening underground here and ultimately extend down the Strip --

Senator ROSEN. Mm-hmm.

Mr. HORNBUCKLE.—I think is fascinating to watch. I do not think it is a hundred percent figured out, and that is kind of the interest and the fun in it, but I think it will be meaningful over the long haul. Yes, I would continue to stay focused on helping us get folks here.

Senator ROSEN. Mm-hmm. Okay.

Mr. HORNBUCKLE. So, I mean, even think about McCarran. McCarran is doing 45,000, 48,000—million visitors, thousand. You know, the capacity of that thing is 55,000 or 56,000, and then it starts getting a little shaky. It does not happen overnight. That is a decade from now, if you started today, to really do anything that is impactful. So thinking about McCarran.

Senator ROSEN. Mm-hmm.

Mr. HORNBUCKLE. Thinking about an alternate to all kinds of—you know, you cannot move the airport, nor do you want to, but what else can be done? Obviously I-15 we hammered on. Brightline is important. And then go back to some of Steve's comments and the earlier comments, Convention is essential to this community now. I can speak for corporate America, meaning the business that comes to us via Convention, by and large, with exception of Mandalay, it is down about 10 points still, and it has not fully recovered from COVID. And in this community, we rely heavily, heavily on tech because it is obviously—not obviously, but—

Senator ROSEN. Mm-hmm.

Mr. HORNBUCKLE.—Northern West Base, whether it is Seattle and/or down through California, and that business, you all can pick up the paper and see what is happening within that sector. And so picking up 10,000 people and, hey, let us go to Vegas for the weekend, is not high on that agenda right now. And so keeping us as a first-class destination that has just the ease of in and out is just so critical to us.

Senator ROSEN. Mm-hmm.

Mr. HORNBUCKLE. And the same with international. We are not fully recovered there, most notably China. I know there are some initiatives to begin to open up air back and forth on a bilateral basis.

Senator ROSEN. Mm-hmm.

Mr. HORNBUCKLE. Really important to, I think, this community in the long haul. In that instance, it is not necessarily the magnitude of visitors. It is the quantum of economics they bring—

Senator ROSEN. Mm-hmm.

Mr. HORNBUCKLE.—that is really important to us. And so just helping and continuing to help, as you have been from the outside, on those key initiatives is where I think your office, your committee, and, ultimately, Congress can help us the best.

Senator ROSEN. Well, thank you, and I—you just talked about the tech sector, so you do not even—you did not even realize that is a segue into my next comment. And I could start again, I guess—actually, I could go down the line. I know that all of you might be using different platforms and innovative new technologies for your organizations to attract the events, to support the events. And we think about the tech industry, of course, so critical to so much of what we do. Of course, important we have really good broadband, that we have that good working Internet and robust everywhere across the country, especially here in Nevada. But do any of you want to talk about the tech side of what some of this means and some of the, maybe interesting or—aspects that you are working on?

Mr. HORNBUCKLE. Maybe I will kick it off.

Senator ROSEN. We will go back that way. How's this?

Mr. HORNBUCKLE. Oh, I am sorry.

Senator ROSEN. No, that is all right. I figured I will just go back and forth this way.

[Laughter.]

Mr. HORNBUCKLE. For us, the digital platform has become critical. So now, arguably, when you land at the airport—well, you get in a day before. Do you want to check in electronically on your phone? The answer is yes. Do you want to use this as your registration and room key? Hopefully answer is yes. And so by the time you hit the elevator in your room, you go like this, and you are let into your room.

Senator ROSEN. Vacation begins.

Mr. HORNBUCKLE. Vacation begins at home, and so the opportunity to set that tech—

Senator ROSEN. Mm-hmm.

Mr. HORNBUCKLE.—to keep the environment here ripe for employees to want to come here, to make sure we have in play when it comes to tech industry—it is a sector we could and should not have historically needed to grow into is one side of it. The other side of it is our industry, and Steve alluded to this, sports betting has become a huge content draw for Raiders or anyone else for that matter, new eyeballs, new focus, new people. Many of Las Vegas' companies are behind it in a significant way, whether it is domestic or here in the local community, but, most notably, domestically and even internationally in our case, making this environment ripe for that. It is a place that this community and our industry ought to

own, and, frankly, we have let things like that get away from us to places like Atlantic City and New Jersey. So getting the State refocused on being tech savvy and tech friendly in every way, shape, or form.

Senator ROSEN. Yes.

Mr. HORNBuckle. This community ought to own the notion of tech anything to touch gaming, it just ought to, and so helping us stay focused on that would be exactly that helpful.

Senator ROSEN. Yes. Creating innovation and entrepreneurship and all of that, especially for our small businesses that help our large businesses—

Mr. HORNBuckle. Yes.

Senator ROSEN.—I am key to supporting that. Please.

Ms. DOUGLASS MORGAN. At Allegiant Stadium, we are definitely encouraging new innovative technology, from being able to order food and beverages from your seat through our—for our partnerships with some biometric companies actually being able to allow a purchase of alcoholic beverages from your seats as well. We have implemented a lot of just touchless concessions where you can—and I had to go through it myself because I did not believe it, but you just kind of—you pick up, you know, a bottle of water, a bag of chips. You walk right through. You really do not have to interact with anyone. And we initially implemented that on our upper levels in the upper bowls, and it was so popular that we are bringing in all the way down throughout the stadium.

Senator ROSEN. Mm-hmm.

Ms. DOUGLASS MORGAN. So constantly looking at ways to engage and enhance the customer experience, obviously wanting people to get back in their seats and still enjoy the game or the entertainment we have to offer. So, you know, I am just so proud of our stadium and the investment that the community has given in it, but also the investment with respect to broadband, Wi-Fi, and just making sure it is a connected stadium as well. I think the Super Bowl coming is definitely going to help with that. From the other teams that I have talked to, anytime it is there, you know, we want to make sure it is, again, the best show on earth, and that is definitely the going to be a benefit that our stadium will receive after the game.

Senator ROSEN. And reducing the time people wait in line so they can have more fun.

Ms. DOUGLASS MORGAN. Yes. Mm-Hmm.

Senator ROSEN. I think everybody's all for that. Would you have anything to add about the—some of the interesting innovation platforms or tech that you are using, hoping to use that people should know about?

Ms. SEWALD. Yes, ma'am. We have all seen in the—in the news a lot lately, and this is something that is a high priority for the Vegas Chamber, and that is AI, artificial intelligence.

Senator ROSEN. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Ms. SEWALD. We plan at Preview Las Vegas this year in January, we will have a large section of the program focused on AI.

Senator ROSEN. Mm-hmm.

Ms. SEWALD. So that is something that we are focused on and we are looking at. We are getting some member interest in—

Senator ROSEN. Mm-hmm.

Ms. SEWALD.—educating themselves about it and learning more so that they can use that. In terms of the LVCVA, and I will let Steve speak to this as well, we use a lot of technology to market the destination.

Senator ROSEN. Mm-Hmm.

Ms. SEWALD. Kate Wick, I get to serve on the marketing committee, and we use a ton of social influencers, social media, and so forth. So I think that has also made a big—probably a really big dent in the whole process for the destination to really maximize the social media platform.

Senator ROSEN. Mm-hmm. So STEM education and good broadband.

Ms. SEWALD. Yes, absolutely.

Senator ROSEN. Okay. I got it.

Mr. HILL. Kate is in the audience, so I ought to let Kate come up and answer part of this question.

[Laughter.]

Mr. HILL. But certainly the way that we have marketed Vegas over the last decade or two has changed pretty dramatically. It used to be print and television, and now it is largely social media. It is also largely personalized, and the ability to understand what our customers want—

Senator ROSEN. Data, right. Mm-hmm.

Mr. HILL.—and connect them to what they are looking for just keeps improving, and that will be a part of artificial intelligence as well. I will mention that there are real opportunities in technology to make the travel experience seamless.

Senator ROSEN. Mm-Hmm.

Mr. HILL. All the biometrics that are available there, the improvement of those, the implementation of those. You, Senator, mentioned the waiting in line concept.

Senator ROSEN. Yes.

Mr. HILL. Basically, any place—

Senator ROSEN. No one likes waiting in line. No one.

Mr. HILL. Any place that somebody is waiting in line is an opportunity for technology to solve that problem because that is not what anybody—you are right. That is not what anybody wants to do, so we are focused on that here, but we see the opportunity for application, particularly around events and in the travel space that will really help make everything just more enjoyable and more efficient.

Senator ROSEN. So really us in Congress helping to promote, I would say, a lot of STEM education, engineers, innovative thinking, these are things that are done really well with our small business and entrepreneurship communities as they try to imagine maybe some things that are niche for a convention or for a sporting event, and, of course, they can be maybe scaled up, so thank you for that.

I want to kind of round this out with my last question because I am—I am proud to be—serve on many committees that intersect with the Tourism Committee here that I hold the gavel on in Commerce and Transportation. I am also on the Homeland Security Committee, like I said, and on the Small Business and Entrepre-

neurship Committee. But I was really pleased that the appropriations bill that we passed in 2023 was signed into law, in December, it included my Omnibus Travel and Tourism Act, and like we spoke about, this kind of wraps it all up here, created the position of assistant secretary of commerce for travel and tourism. I am going to talk a little bit about the jobs for everyone out --what this new secretary position is so everybody understands it. It has quite a few things in it.

The new assistant secretary is required to increase and facilitate international business travel to the U.S., like we have talked about, including facilitating large conferences, exhibitions, emphasizing rural destinations. We have beautiful, vast public lands here in Nevada, beautiful mountains. It is wonderful for people to take a drive out, maybe under 3 days, and see some of that, and we want to support our ecotourism. We want to facilitate sports and recreation events and activities in the U.S.

The other thing that this new position will do is, for the first time, create a national strategy that overlooks really the—or oversees the umbrella of what it takes for our tourism economy because as you have heard here today, it is a lot of things. Well, maybe at the base it is broadband, IT. We need that fiber everywhere, right? It is important. Whether you are a large community like ours or smaller community, people want to come here to visit. They have to have it at home. It is about our infrastructure—our roads, our ports, our bridges, our trains. Your vacation experience begins the minute you leave your front door, sometimes even before if you could check in now, right?

Having our workforce, whether it is labor to build it, whether it is—again, we want to talk about the marketing, the STEM, all of these different jobs, even a marine biologist and a tiger trainer at MGM, but there are so many more jobs than people imagine. So how do we build out our workforce robustly to take on all of these new jobs, empower our small business community? Again, Department of Homeland Security, how are we sure here and somewhere, like Las Vegas, in a small area, that we are safe? People come here. They feel safe and secure for these large, amazing events, boosting our international tourism, of course, and our visa process.

So I wanted to bring that up because this new position is extremely important. Tourism is the top economic driver in Nevada, but for the United States of America, it is a top economic driver, I would say, in every State in this country—in our beautiful country. And so what happens in this case in Las Vegas, what we do in this top destination, those best practices, maybe they do not just stay here. We get to export them out and let others learn for that. And so can all—would you each like to give is maybe some closing remark or comment about what you think about how this—having this person in this position and going forward, funding this position and thinking about it, what do we do for a new—new airports 10 years from now. How are we thinking not just for today, but for tomorrow, and how does Congress, Federal Government, State and local partner, to be sure that it lasts? So I am going to start in the middle this time. Ms. Douglass Morgan, I will start with you. How's that? We will go with the ladies, then we will—we will go in the end there.

Ms. DOUGLASS MORGAN. I think having, Senator Rosen, to your point, having someone that is dedicated and truly focused on all of the different pieces that you just outlined in your—in your kind of initial remarks looking forward and not just kind of being a little reactive, and being able to kind of use the playbook, really, that Steve and the LVCVA has already created on what does it take to be able to have a strong, stable, collaborative tourist destination. And I think that Southern Nevada has really been the golden child in that.

And so having one person that is dedicated for the country that can kind of focus on that and help and grow and build different communities to be able to really strongly establish a tourism economy is—would be incredibly important. I think that I would nominate Steve Hill to do that when he is—

[Laughter.]

Ms. DOUGLASS MORGAN.—maybe not in the LVCVA because has done an incredible job, but it really would—I do think that Southern Nevada has been the blueprint of that, and I think those of us that have been here for a while have taken it for granted because when you have events like F1, like the Super Bowl, these—the great thing about Nevada is that there is a mentality to kind of get things done. So when you are working with the airport, you are working with NDOT, you are working with RTC, you are working with the private sector, everyone is willing to go in because they know that if they are working together, it benefits everyone as a whole. So your vision in having that position, I think would be incredibly important, not only to the State but to the country as a whole.

Senator ROSEN. And any other thing you want to let us know that I have not asked before I move on to round out the last question?

Ms. DOUGLASS MORGAN. No, I just—if anything, we really appreciate having the opportunity to tell our story and what—and how your leadership and what you have done has really helped us all to flourish.

Senator ROSEN. Thank you.

Ms. DOUGLASS MORGAN. Yes.

Senator ROSEN. Thank you. Ms. Sewald?

Ms. SEWALD. Thank you. Now we have Mr. Mayor and Mr. Secretary.

[Laughter.]

Ms. SEWALD. You are giving everybody new jobs up here.

Senator ROSEN. I am just telling you, you know what? I say what happens in Vegas does not stay here. We want to export all the good things out, and we are going to be the master plan.

Ms. SEWALD. Yes, absolutely. Your vision for focusing on this initiative, I think, is going to be critical for our destination for our entire State and for our country as well. I think one of the things that we are working on at the Vegas Chamber in conjunction with the Governor's Office is things like additional trade missions.

Senator ROSEN. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Ms. SEWALD. Those things are going to be highly beneficial not only for our—you know, for our local businesses and employers and our economy—

Senator ROSEN. Mm-hmm.

Ms. SEWALD.—but also for, you know, as we look ahead to economic development and expanding our footprint here in Southern Nevada, obviously with corporations that are—that have a friendly water footprint and so forth, so these are—these are things that we are looking at.

Senator ROSEN. Mm-hmm.

Ms. SEWALD. But I think that this position is going to be—have an exponential benefit for the destination and probably the entire State and country.

Senator ROSEN. Mm-hmm. Really working maybe with our mayors and governors—we do that very well here—on those trade missions so people get educated about what they can do here. That is something great I can help partner on too, as well. I am not going to call you “Mr. Secretary,” but we will—we will make a little—Mr. Hill, please.

Mr. HILL. The appointment or the creation of this assistant secretary position was long overdue. Tourism is 10 percent of the GDP in this country. The fact that we did not have an assistant secretary over something that is that important in the country is really an omission, and we really appreciate the work that you did to fill that void. The Federal Government, as you may not know, is a little tough to navigate at times.

Senator ROSEN. A little.

Mr. HILL. And having a place to go, having an office that is the focal point for our industry is really important. There are ramifications from not having that position that we are still trying to—and are recovering from, trying to still recover from. For example, there has been a transportation freight plan in this country for decades, and just until a few years ago, the first time we had a transportation plan for people.

Senator ROSEN. Right.

Mr. HILL. And that is the type of omission that happens when you do not have a central point of contact that can shine a spotlight on this industry and the specific needs for this industry, so it is really critical that that position is there. Thank you for putting that together, and I also just want to mention that I really appreciate Congress funding Brand USA.

Senator ROSEN. Yes.

Mr. HILL. You know, putting on my old economic development hat, economic development largely is about bringing money from outside of your jurisdiction into your jurisdiction.

Senator ROSEN. Mm-Hmm.

Mr. HILL. Tourism does that, 10 percent of our economy, and Brand USA is the LVCVA for the Federal Government.

Senator ROSEN. Mm-Hmm.

Mr. HILL. During the pandemic, they did not have funding.

Senator ROSEN. I see.

Mr. HILL. And Congress stepped up—

Senator ROSEN. Mm-Hmm.

Mr. HILL.—and just helped Brand USA recover, which is the recruiting organization that we have—

Senator ROSEN. That is right.

Mr. HILL.—to bring tourists internationally to the United States, critical organization. Thank you for doing that.

Senator ROSEN. Of course. Well, thank you. Well, Mr. Hornbuckle, I am going to give you the last word about the assistant secretary and just what you think about what we are doing here.

Mr. HORNBUCKLE. Sure, and, again, thank you for getting it here, obviously, and anything we can all do to help get it funded, giving programming, giving budget, which is never simple, so we respect that and appreciate that, will be critical. You know, because of TTAB, or the tourism, I have had the opportunity to meet with three secretaries now. One was facilitated by your office, so thank you. So between Secretary Raimondo, Buttigieg, and Mayorkas, the opportunity to coordinate. Steve said it. These departments are massive in terms of employees and remit and what they can focus on. And so the opportunity to have someone—just forget what happens locally, but to bridge what happens back in D.C. is—it just does not go anywhere without that, and it—I think we have seen some of the outcroppings because of that, so I think it is hugely important.

I would also echo Steve's comments on Brand USA. What is the brand USA budget, like \$7 million, \$5 million? It is some—it is a de minimis amount of money.

Senator ROSEN. Yes.

Mr. HORNBUCKLE. Steve's budget here is literally 10 times what Brand USA's budget is, put it in perspective, and we are talking about promoting America --

Senator ROSEN. That is right.

Mr. HILL.—of which we are a major destination. And so you are help in continuing to keep that funded is just essential, but the assistant secretary is a priority other than visa waiver.

Senator ROSEN. Yes.

Mr. HILL. And keeping that alive could not be more important, so thank you for your efforts there.

Senator ROSEN. Well, thank you. I just I know all of you sitting out here, I am just so lucky. We are also lucky here in Nevada to have leaders like the one you see on the stage with me today and some of the leaders sitting out there. I see many friends out here and, of course, ones that could not be with us today. I really do believe that the intersectionality of technology, of labor, transportation, workforce, all of the things we talked about with great fun music venues, sports venues, world-class dining, all of those things, it matters, our goods, our services, our transportation, our workforce. And so I really feel like Las Vegas is in really good hands because the four of you are here to support not just the business hat you put on every day, but you care about the Nevada community. And that is where the heart comes in, and that is what makes the collaboration work be successful. So I thank you.

And so now for a little bit of housekeeping, the hearing record will remain open for two weeks until Friday, September 8 of 2023. Any senators that would like to submit questions for the record may do so. You might get some questions from someone else on Commerce, but they need to do that by Friday, September 8, 2023. And so for those of you who testified today, if we do get additional

questions, we ask that your responses be returned to the Committee as quickly as possible, and then no later—in no case later than two weeks after receipt.

And I know we have lots more to do. We have another big opening of another great entertainment venue coming up pretty soon. That is just going to be another value-add to our world-class destination. We look forward to having future field hearings talking about all of that, and someone special is going to open that new venue. I think it is Bono and U2, and I have a quote from him, and I am going to close with this: “Here’s to the future. The only limits are our imagination.” So thank you for being here. Thank you all.

This hearing is concluded.

[Whereupon, the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

