

I look forward to working with you and your colleagues during the conference to produce legislation that effectively addresses these concerns.

Sincerely,

BILL CLINTON

NOTE: Senator Ernest F. Hollings was the ranking member of the Communications Subcommittee of the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 30.

Remarks to the White House Conference on Travel and Tourism October 30, 1995

Thank you. Please sit down. This is not an endurance contest. *[Laughter]* I am delighted to be here, delighted that this day has finally come. I want to thank Greg Farmer for the fine job that he has done, and the others who are here: the FAA Administrator, David Hinson; the Deputy Transportation Secretary, Mort Downey; Bill Norman, the president of the Travel Industry Association of America. I want to say a special word of thanks to Lorraine Ausley Ellis, who was the executive director of this conference. I don't know if she's had any sleep for the last week or two, waiting for you all to appear. And a thanks to my good friend Congressman Oberstar.

I was telling Greg Farmer when Jim was up here speaking that Jim Oberstar, once he gets the bit in his teeth, he never lets go. If Jim had been a dog, half the people in Washington would have rabies. *[Laughter]* He is the most determined person I ever saw. And it might not be so bad, depending on which half it was. *[Laughter]*

Jim Oberstar came to me with this idea, and I could look in his eyes and tell it was going to happen. I might tell you also, on a totally different subject, for a very long time he was one of only literally a handful of Members of the Congress who supported me in what I ultimately had to do in Haiti. Because he speaks Creole—he'd lived in Haiti—he knew it was the right thing to do. He knew it was the right thing for our country, for the cause of freedom. And when we celebrated one year of democratic freedom in Haiti just a couple weeks ago, I thought to myself, if it hadn't been for Jim Oberstar and just a couple of more, this might not have happened. So he, in a real way, is the father of this conference, and I thank him for it very much.

I do want to thank the Members of Congress and the citizens of both political parties who worked so hard to make this day possible. I want to thank those of you who took time away to attend this conference. I know there are a lot of people here today, as there were at the White House Conference on Small Business, who don't work for big companies, who don't have generous leave policies and travel allowances, and who really had to make a personal effort and a personal sacrifice to come. And I thank you for coming because I know what an important part of the tourism industry you are.

I want to thank the State employees who are here who work with tourism and the local employees and elected officials who are here. I want to thank the students from the Academy of Travel and Tourism programs who wrote essays that won prizes about encouraging people to visit the United States.

I am very proud that this is the first White House Conference on Travel and Tourism. And I know all of you agree that it's about time.

This industry has been near and dear to my heart since I was a little boy. I grew up in a resort town that also embraced a national park. As an adult I've had the good fortune to travel a fair amount, although as President I must say one of the more frustrating aspects of the job is I go to a lot of interesting places and never get to be a tourist.

As Governor, I enthusiastically attended our Governor's conference on tourism every year. And I want you to know that this is very important to me personally and that this time is a very important time for you to be gathering here.

This industry holds much promise for the future of America. It has a lot to teach us as Americans, as we stand on the dawn of a new

era, moving from an industrial age to one that will be dominated by technology and information and our ability to relate to one another and to move quickly in terms of ideas and technology and people across the globe. We've moved at a breathtaking pace from the divided world of the cold war to a global village. If the 21st century is going to be an American century, we have to master this transition as surely as we mastered the shift from the agricultural to the industrial economy. And we will.

To meet the test of the time, we have to dedicate ourselves to promoting and strengthening those aspects of American society which will clearly work best in the global economy. And we know that trade and tourism and travel, all these things are tailor-made for what we do well and what the 21st century will value.

That's why I have dedicated myself to helping this industry grow. A healthy travel and tourism industry is good for the economy, and it also gives Americans a larger service. If you think back to the first time as a child you left home to go somewhere new, recall the first time you met someone who was visiting you from a far-off place, I know that you came away from the experience with a greater knowledge of other people and other communities, a stronger sense of the common humanity that unites us all. And I would guess that you returned with an increased appreciation for something just as important, your own home, your own community, your own roots.

Travel leads to understanding. It increases the chances of peace, and therefore, it increases the chances of a better life for all. When you just travel this land you learn the miracle of America. Our people are as diverse and wonderful as our landscape. Going to another State can almost be like going to another country, and if you come from another State to Washington, it's almost like space travel. *[Laughter]*

Travel is also democratic, with a small "d." It used to be a luxury reserved for the aristocracy. But in the history of American travel and tourism you can see that the marvelously optimistic quality of our people made this something that everybody ought to do. We look at something set aside for the very few at the top and we say, "Hold on, everybody ought to have the opportunity to work hard and then enjoy that." Most Americans may not travel first class, but for a long time now our families have been able to load up the car and head for a fall-

colored national park or a warm beach or a clean motel on the side of a road leading to a place they have never been before.

Of course, the travel and tourism industries are also essential to providing opportunity for all Americans in the 21st century. You are our largest business service export. As Greg said, in 1993 you generated a \$22 billion trade surplus for the United States. You're the second largest employer in the Nation, providing jobs for over 6 million Americans. And of course, you employ millions more through the industries that thrive when you do well. As the circle of freedom expands around the globe, the tourism industry will keep growing all around the world. And as you grow, here at home the hardworking Americans whose jobs are changing along with our economy will have a chance to find a home with you.

Many Americans have general worries about all service-sector jobs. Somehow they think they're not as steady and don't have as good of prospects for the future. But I know that we're all working to prove otherwise. Service industry wages are among the fastest rising wages in our economy. And I support your efforts to reward hard work and to give people incomes that they can build solid lives on and raise children with. For all these reasons, I have committed myself to giving your industry the opportunity to flourish that it deserves. It is part of a strategy that I have embraced to restore the American economy and to ensure the American dream and America's leadership into the 21st century.

The first thing I want to tell you is that your country is clearly on a roll. We have a resurgence of economic growth. We have a dramatic reform in the size and scope and way of operating of our Government. And most important of all, we have a reassertion of basic American values in every community in this country.

In the last 2½ years since I have been privileged to be your President, Americans have produced 7½ million new jobs; 2½ million new homeowners, bringing home ownership to a 15-year high; over 2 million new small businesses, the most rapid growth of small businesses in American history, with the lowest combined rates of unemployment and inflation in 25 years. The Government's role in this economic resurgence was to reduce the deficit while increasing our investment in education, in training, in technology, in research, and in partnerships with

the private sector to promote American products and services all around the world.

Our trade with other countries has increased by 4 percent in '93, 10 percent in '94, and 15 percent in '95. As a percentage of our national income, the deficit is less than half of what it was when I became President. For the first time since Harry Truman, the deficit has actually been driven down for 3 years in a row. As a percentage of income, the United States of America now has the lowest Government deficit of any industrial country in the world except Norway. Every other country has a higher deficit as a percentage of their income than we do. I'm proud of that, and you should be proud of it, too.

We are now debating here in Washington how to balance the budget. But the good news is the leaders of both parties want to finish the job. I believe we have to do it in a way that is consistent with our values, that keeps our economy going, and that maintains our leadership in the world.

More important even than the economy to me is the encouraging signs that Americans are getting back together around the values that make life worth living. In almost every State and significant community in America the crime rate is down, the murder rate is down, the welfare rolls are down, the food stamp rolls are down, the poverty rate is down, the teen pregnancy rate is down, and child support collections have increased 40 percent in the last 3 years. Our country is moving in the right direction and coming back together. That is a terribly important development.

Specifically with regard to the tourism and travel industry, we have taken a series of very specific steps designed to help you succeed at what you do. First of all, we have a disciplined, coordinated leadership effort and a commitment to promoting travel and tourism, beginning with the Secretaries of State, Commerce, and Transportation; our Trade Representative, Ambassador Kantor; the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, led by Ruth Harkin; and the Export-Import Bank, led by Ken Brody. Secondly, we have worked very hard to open markets and to support U.S. exports including travel and tourism around the world. We have concluded more than 80 separate trade agreements in less than 3 years. Tourism is an export, and we have fought for it just as we have fought for other industry.

The U.S. Trade and Tourism Association is leading a public-private partnership to double the number of Japanese visitors to the United States by the year 2000. The reason is clear: Of the 7½ million new jobs that have come into the United States since I have been President, 2 million, 2 million came from the expansion of the sale of American products and services overseas. International visitors spent \$78 billion here last year.

The second thing we've worked to do is to sign open-skies agreements with more countries to facilitate air travel here. Earlier this year I signed an open-skies agreement with Canada, deregulating the world's largest aviation market: more flights, lower fares. Last month we concluded an open-skies pact with nine European countries. We've expanded air service around the world to Great Britain, Brazil, Ukraine, the Philippines.

We've worked hard to give you a healthy airlines industry. They were in deep trouble when I came into office. Every airline in America but one was losing money. Three were in bankruptcy. From 1988 to 1992, the industry lost \$12 billion, more money lost in 4 years than it had made in its entire history. I appointed a special commission headed by the former Governor of Virginia, Gerry Baliles, to revive the industry. Secretary Pena has now carried out the vast majority of its recommendations. Today the airlines are healthy, the fares are down, the passengers are up, and they are turning a profit. We are moving in the right direction.

We've also worried about industry safety, to try to make America a safe harbor and to try to guarantee the safety of Americans around the world. We see today ironic and mostly encouraging developments, peace in the Middle East coming along, more peace and less violence in Northern Ireland, tomorrow peace talks opening about Bosnia here in the United States, something we are proud to host. We also know that there are new threats to our security that go across all national boundaries, that the organized forces of destruction and terror know no nationalism.

We saw terrorism at home blow up the Federal building in Oklahoma City and foreign terrorists try to take the World Trade Center down, plan to bomb the United Nations. We see abroad when a religious fanatic sect can take a small vial of sarin gas into a subway in Japan and break it open and kill scores of people and

injure hundreds of others. And we know we have to work together, together with other countries, to reduce the menace of terrorism and violence and drug trafficking and organized crime in this world. That was the subject of the speech I gave to the United Nations last week on the occasion of its 50th anniversary.

But I also want you to know that we are doing everything we can to help your local officials and your community bring the homegrown crime rate down in America. The crime bill that was passed in 1994 was an astonishing piece of legislation. It provided for putting a hundred thousand more police officers on our street in community policing settings so that we could reduce the incidence of violent crime. It provided for prevention programs, not designed and run by the Federal Government but run by local communities to give our young people something to say yes to, constructive endeavors, avoiding a life of crime. It provided for tougher punishment. And we now have the first convictions coming in under the "three strikes and you're out" law, where we take career criminals and just put them away. It provided for all these things, plus the Brady bill, which kept 40,000 criminals from getting handguns last year—40,000. Next time somebody tells you that didn't work, tell them to think again.

Now, that's one big reason the crime rate is down. We're on time—we're actually slightly ahead of schedule in putting these police officers out there on the street. And we are trying to give you a safe America that everyone is happy to travel in and to be a part of, in every State in our community, in cities and rural areas alike. That is a very important priority with me. And we've got to keep this crime rate coming down, down, down.

The other thing we're trying to do is rooted in a lesson I learned as a Governor when I realized that every time we opened a new State park or refurbished an old one, or did something to one of our State's landmarks, we helped the private sector tourism in the area. We have done everything we could to promote and enhance our national parks and our national landmarks and our national monuments, as well as to maintain the ability of the United States to have clean air, clean water, safe drinking water, and a generally very healthy and high-standard environment. I am therefore opposed to changes which would undermine our ability to provide

a clean environment or would require us to sell off any of our national parks or national assets.

I congratulated Congressman Oberstar on the victory won and headed by Congressman Richardson of New Mexico, in the Congress just last week to get rid of this hit list of over 300 American treasures that some in the Congress wanted to sell off, including the home of President Roosevelt, where I met with President Yeltsin last week. I hope that idea is dying a very timely death. We need to enhance our public investments.

So we are committed to doing things that will help the tourism industry, that will promote travel, that will enhance your efforts. Let me say, we are also doing it with a much smaller Government. There are 163,000 fewer people working for the Federal Government today than there were the day I became President. Next year, the Federal Government will be the smallest it's been since John Kennedy was President, under the budget we passed in 1993. And as a percentage of the civilian work force, it will be the smallest it's been since 1933. The era of big Government is done. The era of smart Government is here. It is the right thing to do.

We have 16,000 fewer pages of Government regulations. My favorite, because I'm from Arkansas, was when I showed up I realized there was a whole page of Government regulations on what grits were. [Laughter] And I could have just given the name of 400 people they could teach something to, and they could say this is grits or it's not. [Laughter] So we're getting rid of a lot of that. We got rid of 16,000 pages—you think I'm kidding, it really was there—[laughter]—16,000 pages of regulations have been eliminated. We have proposed to eliminate hundreds of programs.

But we also want to make the Government work better. A lot of you are small business people. Maybe you've had some help from the Small Business Administration. In the last 3 years, we have cut the budget of the SBA by 40 percent, but we have doubled the loan volume. We have emphasized making loans to women business people and to minorities without in any way reducing the loans that white males were getting or without watering down the standards for making the loan one bit. The SBA is simply working in a more entrepreneurial, more effective way to try to help more small business people get started in the United States

in every part of the United States no matter who they are or where they come from. That is the kind of Government that the taxpayers of this country are entitled to. And it will help the travel and tourism industry if we can accelerate the growth of small business in America.

Another thing we are trying to do in this Congress—and I think we have a good chance to get a bipartisan agreement on this—that affects an awful lot of small business people, and I would imagine a lot of you in this audience, is to make it easier for small business people to take out retirement plans for themselves and their employees. The present rules and regulations are a nightmare. They are too cumbersome; they are too expensive. The legal fees alone keep thousands of small business people from doing anything in this important area.

So if you're interested in this and this will affect you personally, I would urge you to contact your Member of Congress and get a status report on this. As far as I know, there is no partisan difference here. We just know that small business is creating most of the new jobs in this economy; that retirement programs, health care programs are often too burdensome, too inaccessible for small business people; and this legislation can make it much, much, much easier for people in small business to take out retirement plans for themselves and to help their employees. And I would urge you to help me get this done. I think we have a broad coalition for it. It just needs to be made a priority so that no matter how busy we are, we take care of this. I am committed to it, and I hope you will be as well.

Finally, let me say that we are trying to do two more things to make the Government work better and cost less that directly affect the travel and tourism industry. The Vice President is going to speak to you tomorrow, and he will talk about the work we've done in reinventing Government with the Customs Service and the Immigration and Naturalization Service which has changed the way we greet our own citizens and visitors as they enter the United States. If you're coming or going legally, we want to get the Government out of the way and get you on your way. And that will make a big difference if we do it right.

Now, finally, I want to mention this second point. We have worked very hard to enact reforms at the Federal Aviation Administration. Having a Federal Aviation Administration that

works, that has the confidence of all Americans, that operates the airports efficiently and safely, that has a lot to do with how well those of you in travel and tourism do, unless you get all your customers off the road. And it is a very important thing for the United States, for our economy, for the convenience and for the safety of our people.

The FAA controls the bottom-line efficiency of the airline industry. Yet, believe it or not, its air traffic control system in many places still depends upon stone age technology that's often older than the flight controllers using it. [*Laughter*] I know that's hard to believe. At a time when our private sector is building the most advanced airplanes in the world, the FAA is still buying vacuum tubes like this—the Vice President gave me this just before I came over—to run the computers and the radar systems that ought to be run by chips. We actually have to buy these vacuum tubes for some of the old computers and radar systems from other countries because they're not even produced here anymore.

Now, this is unacceptable. Americans have a right to believe that the FAA will be run with the highest technology in the world and that they will get where they're going on time at a reasonable cost and at maximum safety. I never want a parent to think twice when a child asks if the flying is safe.

Now, we've been very blessed by very safe and careful airlines, and our control and regulatory system has worked very well over time. But we also know that there's no point in pretending something's all right when it's not. It is not all right that the FAA does not have the highest technology, safest, most efficient equipment in the world. That is not all right. We have to change that.

That's why more than 2 years ago I made FAA reform a top priority and asked the Vice President to include it at the top of his list in the National Performance Review. In early 1994, almost 2 years ago, we sent Congress a plan to overhaul the Agency. Building on suggestions from the airline commission that helped us to turn the airline industry around, we called for a procurement system that gets the FAA new technology while it's still on the cutting edge, a new personnel system that puts controllers where they're needed and rewards them for good work, and a radically new financing

system that ensures stability, demands accountability, and provides incentives for efficiency.

We've done everything we could to fix the FAA on our own. Secretary Pena and Administrator Hinson brought in a new management team and put in plans to modernize the system. We have speeded up the replacement of failing computers at some of our busiest air traffic centers, so there will be fewer of these and more of the chips. And we have stepped up training for controllers and technicians.

But unfortunately, we cannot do everything we need to do alone. We have to have some legislative help. And I am very pleased that Congress has put together finally a transportation appropriations bill that embraces the personnel and the procurement reforms we asked for 2 years ago. I am very gratified that members of both parties came together to create this important legislation, and I'd like to give a special word of thanks to Senator Mark Hatfield of Oregon. When this bill hits my desk—[*applause*—we've got the Oregon group back there. When this bill hits my desk, I intend to sign it. And we will get FAA back on a glide path to the 21st century.

But there's more to do. We still have to overhaul the financing of FAA. Today's budget process simply does not guarantee the agency the long-range funding it needs to operate safely and efficiently. Again let me thank Congressman Oberstar and Senators McCain, Ford, and Hollings for their work on this. I want Congress to redouble their efforts. We have got to fix this problem once and for all.

Now, let me say that these are my ideas for what the National Government can do to support you in what you're trying to do. I'm sure that you have some ideas about that, too. I never met a group of people that I thought had more consistently higher levels of energy and more consistent openness to new ideas than the people I work with throughout my career who are in tourism and travel.

One big point of a White House Conference on Travel and Tourism is for us to listen to

you, not for you to listen to us. I came here to make a report to you because you're entitled to that and it will help you to know where we are and how we're thinking. But when you leave, I want you to report back to me and tell me what more you think we can do to help you to succeed.

I will say again: Next year the whole world will be looking at the United States when the Olympics open in Atlanta. They may let the Braves carry the torch in now. [*Laughter*] But the world will be looking at us. It will give us a new opportunity, an even greater opportunity, as billions of people all over the world look at the United States, to enhance the chances that more and more and more of them will want to come here to see what America's like up close, to share in all the things that too many of our fellow countrymen sometimes take for granted.

We want to be ready for that. We want to keep this country on a roll. We want to keep coming back to our values, and we want to keep pushing our economy forward. And we want to keep being a leading force in the world for peace and freedom and prosperity.

In order to do that, we have to have a healthy travel and tourism industry. And by next year when the eyes of the world are on America in a clear and focused and open-hearted way, I want to know that you and I together have done everything we can to make sure that one of the things those eyes take away from the sight of the Olympics is a deep, yearning desire to come to America and to be with us in friendship and partnership as we pave the way for greater opportunity for these young people in the 21st century.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:35 a.m. in the Grand Ballroom at the Sheraton Washington Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to President Boris Yeltsin of Russia.