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Contact: Melissa Gong (TBR)  
202.408.2137 (office)  
202.355.3718 (cell)  
[mgong@tia.org](mailto:mgong@tia.org)

## **Travel Industry Leaders Speak to U.S. Conference of Mayors 76<sup>th</sup> Annual Winter Meeting**

### ***Mayors Announce Presidential Forum on Travel and Tourism and Creation of Olympics Task Force***

WASHINGTON, DC – Jonathan M. Tisch, Chairman of the Travel Business Roundtable and Chairman and CEO of Loews Hotels and J.W. “Bill” Marriott, Jr., Chairman and CEO of Marriott International, Inc., addressed more than 300 U.S. mayors at the United States Conference of Mayors 76<sup>th</sup> Winter Meeting – in the first-ever USCM plenary session dedicated solely to travel and tourism.

During the session, the mayors announced they would pursue opportunities with TBR and the travel community to insert travel and tourism issues into the 2008 presidential candidates’ platforms. Near-term initiatives include a forum with presidential candidates on travel and tourism this spring and the creation of an Olympics task force to help Chicago secure the 2016 bid.

“The U.S. Conference of Mayors has long understood the value of travel and tourism as an efficient and effective way to build and revitalize the economies of communities around the nation,” said Tisch. “The mayors are crucial to the process of making travel and tourism a national policy priority.”

As part of the USCM’s new 10-point proposal titled “Strong Cities, Strong Families, for a Strong America,” the mayors are reaching out to the presidential candidates to advocate strong diplomatic and economic security through the power of travel. To view the 10-point plan, [click here](#).

“There is no better way to ignite our economy than through travel and tourism. When travelers visit our cities, they contribute to tax revenues and job creation that help to grow our communities and continue to create a positive trade balance for America,” said USCM President Mayor Douglas Palmer of Trenton, NJ.

“Travel is trade. Every time a visitor rents a room in Maui, dines along the Riverwalk in San Antonio, or shops on Chicago’s Magnificent Mile, it’s a U.S. export – just as much as exporting airplanes, iPods and software,” said Marriott. “I know security should

absolutely be a priority, but we need to implement appropriate security processes in the context of enabling an open exchange of people, ideas, services and products.”

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*The Travel Business Roundtable (TBR), a strategic partner to the Travel Industry Association, is a CEO-based organization representing all sectors of the travel and tourism industry. TBR's mission is to educate public officials and policymakers about the important social and economic contributions of the travel and tourism industry. For more information, visit [www.tbr.org](http://www.tbr.org).*

*The Travel Industry Association is the national, non-profit organization representing all components of the \$740 billion travel industry. TIA's mission is to promote and facilitate increased travel to and within the United States. TIA is proud to be a partner in travel with American Express. For more information, visit [www.tia.org](http://www.tia.org).*