



May 3, 2021

President Joseph Biden  
 The White House  
 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
 Washington, DC 20500

Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP  
 Prime Minister  
 10 Downing Street  
 London SW1A 2AA

Re: The Safe Restart of Transatlantic Travel

Dear Mr. President and Prime Minister:

As the collective leaders of the U.S. and UK aviation, travel and tourism industry, we are writing to underscore the importance of both governments reopening one of the world's most important aviation markets as soon as safely possible. Given the deep economic, social and cultural ties between our two nations, we believe your meeting ahead of the G7 in early June would be an ideal opportunity for a joint announcement of the full reopening of the U.S.-UK air travel market for both U.S. and UK citizens. We stand ready to support the work of governments in the interim to secure a positive outcome.

We commend the enormous success of your respective vaccine programs. In the U.S., as of April 26, 36 percent of the adult population (age 16 and over) have been fully vaccinated, and 53 percent have received at least one dose of the vaccine. In the UK, as of April 26, 23 percent of the adult population (age 16 and over) have been fully vaccinated, and 62 percent have received at least one dose.<sup>1</sup> The trend for both countries is to have all adults who want a vaccination to have at least their first dose by the end of July. It is this success that now marks a significant opportunity for the UK and U.S. to lead the world by demonstrating how to re-open this crucial air corridor safely.

The priority in any re-opening of air travel is public health. Since the onset of the pandemic, the travel and tourism sector has partnered closely with both governments to protect the health and safety of passengers and employees, working tirelessly to implement new travel restrictions and meet testing requirements. We are confident that the right tools now exist to enable a safe and meaningful restart to transatlantic travel. U.S. and UK citizens and residents should benefit from the significant testing capability, and most importantly the vaccine roll-out, which means people are benefiting from the protection of their health and the reduction in transmission of COVID-19 that vaccination brings<sup>2</sup>. These key tools were not available to us last year when travel restrictions were implemented.

Safely reopening borders between the U.S. and UK is essential for both countries' economic recovery from COVID-19. Air travel is a critical enabler of trade between our countries that was worth 273 billion USD or 196 billion GBP in 2019 and which included the transport of 900,000 tons of air cargo. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Report, "The Transatlantic Economy 2021",<sup>3</sup> "highlights that in terms of the U.S.-UK investment balance, U.S. foreign direct investment in the United Kingdom totaled a record 851 billion USD or 612 billion GBP in 2019, and the UK's foreign direct investment in the U.S. was roughly 500 billion USD or 360 billion GBP. Returning business travelers to the skies is essential to securing future investment in the world's most dynamic enterprises.

Separately, travel and tourism are essential economic engines in both the U.S. and UK and in 2019, contributed 8.6 percent<sup>4</sup> and 10.1 percent<sup>5</sup> respectively to each country's GDP, UK visitors were the second largest source of inbound international tourism revenue for the U.S. economy while U.S. visitors were the largest source of such revenue for the UK economy. The tourism and hospitality sector has been one of the hardest hit by COVID-19 in both economies and safely restoring the U.S – UK air travel market will have a significant impact. If travel restrictions are lifted by this June, we expect the market will start to recover and approach 70 percent of 2019 levels by the end of the year buoyed primarily by summer season traffic. According to a study by Compass Lexecon, a reopened corridor could respectively generate 3.7 billion USD and 1.9 billion GBP in incremental activity this summer for both economies and help to restore lost jobs in the hospitality sector.<sup>6</sup> By contrast, ongoing restrictions through the end of 2021 will result in billions in lost economic activity.<sup>7</sup>

The return of Transatlantic flying would not only have a significantly positive impact on our respective economies but will also reunite those who have been separated from their loved ones for over a year. In

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1202074/share-of-population-vaccinated-covid-19-by-county-worldwide/>

<sup>2</sup> According to an Oxera report of March 26, 2021, "Impact of Vaccination on Risk of International Air Travel", vaccines reduce the risk of imported infections from travelers and minimize domestic COVID-19 risk from air passengers by ~300 percent. <https://www.oxera.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Impact-of-vaccination-on-risk-of-international-air-travel.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.uschamber.com/report/the-transatlantic-economy-2021>

<sup>4</sup> [World Travel & Tourism Council 2021 Economic Impact Report: United States](#)

<sup>5</sup> [World Travel & Tourism Council 2020 Economic Impact Report: United Kingdom](#)

<sup>6</sup> "The U.S.-UK Travel Corridor Is A Critical Travel/Tourism Conduit That Drives Billions Of Dollars In Economic Activity In Both Countries, Which Is At Risk Of Being Lost For A Second Summer Season If The Corridor Is Not Re-Opened Now," April 13, 2021, Eric Amel, Darrin Lee, Erin Secatore, and Ethan Singer, Compass Lexecon

<sup>7</sup> <https://airlinesuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/The-Cost-of-Ongoing-Air-Travel-Restrictions.pdf>

2019, over 22 million passengers travelled between the U.S. and UK with approximately four million of those travellers visiting friends and family.

We are sure you share our ambition of reopening this vital trade and travel artery between our two nations. We believe that your joint leadership now would be an invaluable contribution to the timely reopening of air travel between our two countries,

Respectfully,

<i>ABTA-The Travel Association</i>	<i>Global Business Travel Association</i>
<i>ADS Group Ltd.</i>	<i>Heathrow Airport</i>
<i>Advantage Travel Partnerships</i>	<i>International Air Transport Association</i>
<i>Aeronautical Repair Station Association</i>	<i>International Flight Services Association</i>
<i>Aerospace Industries Association</i>	<i>Institute of Travel Management</i>
<i>AGS Airport Ltd.</i>	<i>London First</i>
<i>Air Line Pilots Association</i>	<i>Manchester Airport</i>
<i>Airline Passenger Experience Association</i>	<i>Meeting Professionals International</i>
<i>Airlines for America</i>	<i>National Air Carrier Association</i>
<i>Airports Council International</i>	<i>National Air Transportation Association</i>
<i>North America</i>	<i>Regional Airline Association</i>
<i>Airport Operators Association</i>	<i>Southwest Airlines Pilots Association</i>
<i>Allied Pilots Association</i>	<i>The Travel Technology Association</i>
<i>American Association of Airport Executives</i>	<i>Travel Again</i>
<i>American Hotel &amp; Lodging Association</i>	<i>Travelers United</i>
<i>American Society of Travel Advisors</i>	<i>UK Hospitality</i>
<i>Association of Flight Attendants – CWA</i>	<i>UK Inbound</i>
<i>Association of UK Airlines</i>	<i>UK Travel Retail Forum</i>
<i>Association of Professional Flight Attendants</i>	<i>U.S. Chamber</i>
<i>British American Business</i>	<i>U.S. Travel Association</i>
<i>Business Travel Association</i>	<i>United States Tour Operators Association</i>
<i>Cargo Airline Association</i>	<i>Virgin Atlantic</i>
<i>Cruise Lines International Association</i>	<i>WIN Global Travel Networks</i>
<i>Gatwick Airport</i>	<i>World Travel &amp; Tourism Council</i>
<i>General Aviation Manufacturers Association</i>	<i>World Travel Agents Association</i>

cc: Mr. Jeffrey Zients, White House COVID-19 Response Coordinator and Counsellor to the President of the United States  
The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet  
The Rt Hon Kwasi Kwarteng MP, Secretary of State for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy  
The Hon Gina Raimondo, Secretary, U.S. Department of Commerce  
The Rt Hon Liz Truss MP, Secretary of State for International Trade and President of the Board of Trade  
The Hon Pete Buttigieg, Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation  
The Rt Hon Grant Shapps, Secretary of State for Transport