

To encourage our citizens to travel in this country NATO also wholeheartedly supports the "Discover America" campaign. NATO Executive Director James C. Gross, who is present here this morning, serves as special assistant to Mr. Robert E. Short, chairman of Discover America, Inc.

At present NATO is coordinating the staffing and operation of a U.S. travel information booth in the U.S. pavilion at Expo 67. At this facility we have gathered materials from each of the States and a staff knowledgeable concerning visitor attractions in the United States. Visitors to the U.S. pavilion can get an introduction to enjoyable and educational experiences awaiting them in the States.

We strongly support a National Visitor Center in the Nation's Capital that would provide orientation to past and present Washington, D.C., and would offer information on the variety and attractiveness of all our States and possessions.

By encouraging visitors from abroad and U.S. citizens to discover all of America, the Visitor Center would contribute to our Nation's economic growth. The travel industry now ranks third in its economic contribution to our Nation, generating over \$30 billion annually. In every State travel is one of the top three income producers. The combined payrolls of 12 of the Nation's largest companies are equal to only one-half of this country's annual tourist expenditures.

The stimulation of travel within this country creates employment for Americans in all levels of our work force. Hundreds of thousands of new jobs for the unskilled and the semiskilled, the very people we are trying to help under other Federal programs, is aided through development of the U.S. travel industry.

In addition, a traveler who visits a community pays taxes—sales tax, cigarette tax, gas tax, lodging tax, and entertainment tax, and more tax—and this is almost clear profit to an area because the traveler is not a major tax consumer in the area in which he is visiting.

Recognizing the new dollars that travel pours into their States, State travel director members of NATO are anxious to make known their States' special appeal that facilities at the National Visitor Center should provide such opportunity.

By encouraging the discovery of all America, the National Visitor Center would develop in the foreign visitor an empathy for America, as well as contributing to our own citizens' sense of national pride.

The foreign visitor, as he travels the States, will see the great America our citizens of different religions and colors and countries have built. They will watch us working together today to build a better America for us all. And this lesson will not be lost on our own citizens as they travel the States. We the people of the United States need to discover America. We need to see and share the common heritage and aspirations which can cement us together as Americans.

In recognition of the importance of encouraging domestic travel, Congress in 1965 passed a joint resolution calling upon the President to issue a proclamation urging our citizens and those of other lands to travel in the United States. This the President has done each year since. The establishment of a National Visitor Center would enhance these efforts to increase domestic travel.