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U.S. COMMERCE DEPARTMENT FORECASTS GROWTH IN INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL TO THE UNITED STATES THROUGH 2016

LOS ANGELES – U.S. Commerce Secretary John Bryson today announced that the United States can expect 4-5 percent average annual growth in tourism over the next five years, and that 65.4 million foreign travelers are projected to visit the United States in 2012 alone. The spring 2012 Travel and Tourism Forecast, released semi-annually by the U.S. Commerce Department's International Trade Administration (ITA), predicts continued strong growth through 2016 following two consecutive visitor volume records set in 2010 and 2011. Bryson announced the Forecast at the U.S. Travel Association's International Pow Wow annual event in Los Angeles, which draws more than 5,000 people from 70 countries from the travel and tourism industry.

“Growth in travel and tourism – which impacts nearly every state and community across America – will help support millions of American jobs and achieve the President’s National Export Initiative goal of doubling U.S. exports by the end of 2014,” Bryson said. “Today’s forecast is a positive sign that the travel and tourism industry – our number-one service export – is growing stronger. We must keep up efforts to support the industry and do everything we can to make the United States more welcoming to international visitors.”

Tourists from all world regions are forecast to grow over the five year period, ranging from a low for the Caribbean (+9 percent), to a high for Asia (+49 percent), South America (+47 percent), and Africa (+47 percent). All but three of the top-40 visitor origin countries are forecast to grow from 2011 through 2016. Countries with the largest total growth percentages are China (+198 percent), Brazil (+70 percent), Argentina (+46 percent), Australia (+45 percent), Korea (+35 percent), and Venezuela (+35 percent).

The North America world region is forecast to account for the largest proportion of the total visitor growth of 14 million visitors (42 percent). Asia (25 percent), Western Europe (11 percent), and South America (13 percent) are expected to account for the bulk of the remaining 58 percent of total growth in visitor volume forecast in 2016 compared to 2011 actual volume. The top countries contributing to this total growth in 2016 are Canada (4.47 million additional visitors), China (2.16 million), Mexico (1.54 million), Brazil (1.06 million), and Australia (463 thousand).

Commerce recently [released](#) data showing that 62 million international visitors traveled to the U.S. in 2011, generating a record \$153 billion in receipts and a \$43 billion trade surplus. International and domestic tourism spending increased 8.1 percent, supporting an additional 103,000 jobs for a total of 7.6 million Americans employed in travel and tourism industries or in industries that support them. Further, 1.2 million jobs are supported directly or indirectly by international traveler spending within the United States and on U.S. carriers.

For more information, visit the Office of Travel and Tourism forecast page on the website:

<http://www.tinet.ita.doc.gov/view/f-2000-99-001/index.html>

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