

CALIFORNIA CHAMBER of COMMERCE



February 5, 2026

U.S. Customs and Border Protection
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC
CBP_PRA@cbp.dhs.gov

To Whom It May Concern:

*Re: OMB Control Number 1651-0111
U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security*

On behalf of the California Chamber of Commerce, we appreciate the opportunity to submit comments on U.S. Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) proposed revisions to the Arrival and Departure Record (Form I-94) and the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA), OMB Control Number 1651-0111.

As you know the U.S. travel industry generates substantial economic activity through international visitation and global commerce. International visitors support hundreds of thousands of jobs across the United States and contribute meaningfully to national economic prosperity and competitiveness. We are deeply concerned that the proposed expansion of data collection requirements on the ESTA application, particularly social media information covering the previous five years, will have unintended and far-reaching consequences for inbound travel and international business engagement. These changes have already generated significant confusion and alarm among international travelers, foreign media, and Visa Waiver Program (VWP) partner governments, and are creating uncertainty for international visitors.

Established in 1890, the California Chamber of Commerce is a broad based nonprofit membership organization through which business, industry and agriculture join forces to work toward positive action on key issues affecting California's economic climate.

The CalChamber serves as an advocate and resource for California employers and to engage in activities, domestically and internationally, that enhance the California economy and make the state a better place to live, work and do business.

We encourage increased travel to California by fostering investment in advertising and improvements to tourism infrastructure, considering the important role of tourism in the state's economy.

In 2024, visitor spending in California reached \$157.3 billion, supported 1.16 million jobs and generated \$12.6 billion in tax revenue for the state and local governments – with overall international airlift to California growing steadily in 2025.

A recent survey of international travelers from VWP countries conducted by the World Travel & Tourism Council revealed that two-thirds of the over 4,500 travelers surveyed said they were aware of the proposed policy already, with a large share saying it would make the U.S. feel less welcoming and less attractive for both leisure and business travel. Further, over one-third of those surveyed revealed that they would be somewhat or much less likely to visit the U.S. due to the new proposal. The potential decline in travelers—over a 23% reduction from VWP countries—could cost the U.S. an estimated \$15.7 billion in lost visitor spending and over 150,000 lost jobs. This would be devastating to not just the travel economy, but to states and communities across the country.

The chilling effect of this proposal on inbound travel from VWP countries cannot be overstated. For international travelers—particularly business travelers—mandating that they provide extensive social media information, and highly sensitive personal data such as DNA, are deeply concerning. Faced with these requirements, many travelers may opt to conduct business and visit alternative markets rather than the U.S.

We commend CBP for all it does to improve and secure the American travel experience. Our industry appreciates CBP's mission to protect national security while facilitating lawful travel and trade, which is so vital to our economy. Policies that increase barriers to entry or create uncertainty for travelers risk deterring lawful visitation, weakening the United States' competitive position as a global destination, and undermining the success CBP has made to improve seamless and secure travel at our ports of entry. The VWP, which is intentionally different from a cumbersome visa process, has long-balanced security, economic growth, and strong international partnerships. Preserving that balance is critical to maintaining U.S. leadership in global trade, travel, and innovation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments. We encourage CBP to reconsider this proposal and stand ready to work together to implement policies that protect security while maximizing economic growth.

Sincerely,



Mrs. Susanne T. Stirling
Senior Vice President – International Affairs