



FEDERAL DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION, Washington, DC 20429

SHEILA C. BAIR
CHAIRMAN

August 31, 2009

Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Reid:

Thank you for your letter concerning Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation travel policies.

I understand your concern regarding recent press coverage of government agencies prohibiting staff from attending conferences in Las Vegas and Reno, Nevada. The FDIC does not have any travel or conference policy that discriminates against specific U.S. cities. In conducting our own internal conferences, we are fortunate to have a large FDIC conference facility in Arlington, Virginia, where most of our FDIC conferences are held. We also require that conference planners take into consideration other factors including the adequacy of rooms and facilities, security and safety, and public perception. If conference planners proposed going to Las Vegas for a conference, the over-riding factor in the decision-making process would be cost, not location.

If you have further questions or comments, please contact me at 202-898-6974 or Paul Nash, Deputy for External Affairs, at 202-898-6962.

Sincerely,

Sheila C. Bair



STEVEN T. WALTHER
CHAIRMAN

August 7, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
528 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Leader:

In response to your letter of July 28, 2009, I am pleased to advise you that the Federal Election Commission does not consider any specific U.S. cities, including Las Vegas and Reno, as inappropriate venues for official agency travel and meetings, regardless of whether they are considered resort or vacation destinations.

The Federal Election Commission typically hosts three regional conferences at a variety of locations around the United States in each two year election cycle. These conferences usually attract approximately 100 attendees and are funded in large part by the registration fees paid by attendees. In order to make the conferences attractive to the greatest number of potential attendees, we aim to host the conferences in a variety of geographic regions and in locations with convenient air travel service. The conference venues are selected with these considerations in mind, and we use a cost-benefit analysis to select particular cities and their conference facilities. Below is a list of locations and dates for our regional conferences held in the 2007-2008 election cycle and scheduled for the 2009-2010 election cycle.

Location	Dates
Seattle, Washington	September 26-27, 2007
St. Louis, Missouri	November 6-7, 2007
Orlando, Florida	February 12-13, 2008
Chicago, Illinois	September 15-16, 2009
San Francisco, California	October 28-29, 2009
New Orleans, Louisiana	February 9-10, 2010

Additionally, we typically offer several conferences in Washington, DC each election cycle as well.

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Page 2

Further, there is no policy or practice to deny reimbursement to any Commissioner or member of our staff, for travel or other appropriate expenses, when attending conferences, events or meetings in any specific U.S. cities, including Las Vegas, Reno, or any other city the State of Nevada.

We trust that this information responds to your request of July 28, 2009. Please do not hesitate to contact us again if you or your staff would like further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven T. Walther". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Steven T. Walther
Chairman

CS



BOARD OF GOVERNORS
OF THE
FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20551

BEN S. BERNANKE
CHAIRMAN

August 11, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Leader:

I am responding to your letter of July 28, 2009, in which you express concern that an agency's travel policy may discriminate against specific U.S. cities, particularly Las Vegas and Reno. The Travel Policy of the Board of Governors does not identify any cities or destinations as inappropriate for official travel. An employee's division director or designee is authorized to approve a travel request, which is generally done on a case-by-case basis.

When reviewing a request for travel authorization, the approving official takes into consideration the business needs of the Board, which would include staff development and training, as well as any budget limitations. Each division at the Board establishes a budget for travel, and decisions regarding a request for travel take into account the justification for the trip and the costs and benefits for that division.

I hope this information is helpful. Please let me know if you have any further questions on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Ben Bernanke", written over a horizontal dashed line.



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Office of the Secretary

Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management
Washington, D.C. 20201

AUG 18 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
528 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-7012

Dear Senator Reid:

Thank you for your letter of inquiry concerning the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) policy regarding official travel for our employees that might discriminate against specific U.S. cities. I am writing on behalf of the Secretary to confirm that the HHS travel policy regarding official travel is consistent with the policy articulated by the White House Chief of Staff's letter dated July 14, 2009.

If you have any questions or concerns, please have a member of your staff contact either me or Paul Hoffmann, the HHS Director of Travel Policy and Programs, at paul.hoffmann@hhs.gov or (202) 690-7960.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E.J. Holland, Jr.", written over a faint circular stamp.

E.J. Holland, Jr.
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Suite 309-F
Washington, DC 20201
(202) 690-7431
Ned.Holland@hhs.gov

Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

20 August 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Reid:

This is in response to your letter to the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) dated 28 July 2009, regarding travel restrictions to Las Vegas and Reno.

In your letter you asked that if the CIA had any restrictions on travel to any US city, particularly Las Vegas and Reno, that the restrictions be lifted. I have confirmed that the CIA has no restrictions on Agency travel to any US city, including Las Vegas and Reno.

Thank you for your letter and your continued dedication to national security. If you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at (703) 482-6122.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. Danvers".

William C. Danvers
Director of Congressional Affairs



Office of the Chairman

National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

AUG 14 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid
United States Senate
528 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Reid:

Thank you for your letter of July 28, 2009, in which you express your concern about federal agency policy decisions that restrict travel to certain cities in the United States.

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) does not have any policy either restricting or prohibiting staff travel to any U.S. city. As you are aware, NTSB staff travel to any city in which an accident has occurred. The NTSB will also send staff to conferences, seminars, or training sessions where the agency believes it can best explain its mission, advocate for its safety recommendations, or receive information that will assist its employees in accomplishing the NTSB's mission.

If you have any additional questions or concerns regarding NTSB travel policy, please do not hesitate to contact me at 202-314-6662.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Deborah A.P. Hersman". The signature is stylized and somewhat cursive.

Deborah A.P. Hersman
Chairman



U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Legislative Affairs

Office of the Assistant Attorney General

Washington, D.C. 20530
August 11, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Leader:

This responds to your July 27, 2009, letter to the Attorney General regarding the Justice Department's travel policies. We share the view expressed by the White House Chief of Staff in his July 14 letter to you that "the test of government travel is what will be accomplished by that travel and whether the cost to the government is reasonable as opposed to other options." Accordingly, no policy of the Department or its component law enforcement agencies, including the FBI, prohibits official travel to, or holding a conference or meeting in, any city or location.

Consistent with the guidance cited in your letter, and as required by the Federal Travel Regulations, the Department selects official travel destinations and conference locations based on business need and the minimization of travel and other costs. The Assistant Attorney General for Administration (AAG/A) helps ensure that conference costs are minimized by reviewing all requests to hold predominantly internal conferences in non-federal facilities, as required by section 1173 of Public Law 109-162 (the Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005). It is true that Department policy requires Component Heads to approve, before submission to the AAG/A, any such requests to hold conferences in resort and vacation areas. We do not, however, preclude such conference locations where they are cost effective. In fact, the Department has held more than two dozen official conferences in Nevada in the past eighteen months and I have no reason to doubt that we will continue to hold conferences in Nevada where appropriate for our business needs.

We are committed to wisely using taxpayer funds for our official travel and conferences without prohibiting travel to any U.S. city. Our travel guidance is premised on that goal. I hope this information is helpful to you.

Sincerely,

Ronald Weich
Assistant Attorney General



THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON

August 7, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United State Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Leader:

This is in response to your letter concerning the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) policy regarding official travel to specific cities within the United States. You expressed concern that certain cities may be viewed as resort or vacation destinations and, therefore, inappropriate for Federal travel.

VA does not restrict its employees to travel to or arrange for conferences in any area of the country. Current policies require that employees, who travel or schedule VA-sponsored conferences for the purposes of work, exercise the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent person would if traveling on personal business.

In fact, I spent July 21 in Las Vegas where I was the keynote speaker at a VA-sponsored event, the Annual Champions of Veterans Enterprise Awards Ceremony. This event was held by VA's Center for Veterans Enterprise in conjunction with the 5th Annual National Veterans Small Business Conference and Expo.

I hope this information is helpful to you. Thank you for your continuing support of our mission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Eric K. Shinseki", is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Eric K. Shinseki



Office of Compliance

August 21, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid
United States Senate
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Reid:

I am in receipt of your correspondence of July 28, 2009, wherein you request my rejection or reversal of any agency travel policy that would discriminate against specific U.S. cities, Las Vegas and Reno, in particular. In your letter, you write of the benefits of Las Vegas and Reno for business and government travelers, and you request a written response regarding my agency's travel policy with respect to this issue.

I am pleased to report that the Office of Compliance engages in comprehensive evaluation of all travel conducted by our staff. Specifically, we utilize a cost/benefit analysis and justification process in determining the location of any meetings initiated by our agency, as well as determining the attendance of staff at meetings held by sister agencies.

The Office of Compliance agrees that the purpose, justification, cost/benefit ratio, and results achieved should be the guiding principles when scheduling conferences and/or official meetings.

Thank you for giving the Office of Compliance the opportunity to provide input on this very important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tamara E. Chrisler".

Tamara E. Chrisler
Executive Director



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

September 1, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Reid:

In response to your letter of July 28, 2009, I want to confirm that the U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) does not have a policy in place that prohibits or discourages employees from traveling to specific destinations in the U. S. to conduct official business or attend meetings. The NRC's travel policy conforms to the Federal Travel Regulation. Our focus is on authorizing travel that is in the agency's best interest and is cost beneficial, not on whether or not a city is known as a resort or vacation destination.

If you have any questions or need any additional information, please contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gregory B. Jaczko". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Gregory B. Jaczko



9/9/09
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
The Secretary of Commerce
Washington D.C. 20230

August 21, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

9/10/09
to David K
or

Dear Senator Reid:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Department of Commerce's (Department) travel policies. Your point is well taken that certain cities, such as Las Vegas and Reno, can offer value and convenience and should not be overlooked by the Government when considering locations for meetings and conferences.

Please be assured that the Department's policy does not prohibit employees from traveling to or conducting official business in specific U.S. cities. Departmental policy requires considering costs and ensuring that travel and meeting arrangements are in the best interest of the Government and taxpayers, regardless of destination.

You have been a leader in Congress in fostering economic recovery for American families and key industries such as tourism. I welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss what I have been doing to focus the Department of Commerce's resources on creating jobs and growing American businesses. Specifically, the work of the Department's Office of Travel and Tourism within the International Trade Administration may be of interest to you.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me or John Charles, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration, at (202) 482-8354.

Sincerely,


Gary Locke



Office of the Chairman

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20580

September 9, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Reid:

Thank you for your letter requesting that the Federal Trade Commission reject or reverse any agency policy regarding official travel for Commission employees that discriminates against specific U.S. cities, particularly Las Vegas and Reno, Nevada.

Let me assure you that the Commission has no policy prohibiting official agency travel to or meetings in Las Vegas, Reno, or any other U.S. locations known as vacation destinations. The purpose and associated costs of travel are the key factors considered when the Commission approves official travel, with the goal of advancing the agency's mission to promote competition and protect consumers at a reasonable cost to taxpayers.

With your letter, you have enclosed a copy of a letter to you from the Honorable Rahm Emanuel, White House Chief of Staff, in which Mr. Emanuel states that federal policy should not dictate the locations where government meetings and conferences are held, and that the test of government travel should be what will be accomplished by that travel, and whether the cost to the government is reasonable when compared to other options. You have requested confirmation that the Commission has adopted a travel policy consistent with the policy endorsed by Mr. Emanuel. I am able to confirm that the Commission's travel policy is entirely consistent with White House policy.

As always, we appreciate your interest in the Commission. Please let me know whenever we can be of service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jon Leibowitz".

Jon Leibowitz
Chairman



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

AUG 17 2009

OFFICE OF
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Leader:

Thank you for your letter dated July 28, 2009, to Lisa Jackson, Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), expressing your concern regarding the guidelines of some federal agencies that prohibit official travel to specific U.S. cities, particularly Las Vegas and Reno. I have been asked to respond to your inquiry. I agree that cost-benefit factors should determine the location for official meetings and conferences. Please be assured that the EPA policy does not restrict travel to resort areas or vacation destinations, and that EPA policy is consistent with the views described by the President's Chief of Staff in his letter to you, dated July 14, 2009.

The EPA travel policy, dated November 14, 1995, states, "Resorts that offer an overall cost savings to the Agency, especially during off-season should not be avoided strictly because they are located in what is considered a resort. In all cases, especially where resort areas are involved, a cost comparison should be done to determine the most cost effective location."

Again, thank you for your letter. If you have further questions, please contact me or your staff may call Sven-Erik Kaiser in EPA's Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations at 202-566-2753.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Maryann Froehlich".

Maryann Froehlich
Acting Chief Financial Officer

Secretary

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528



**Homeland
Security**

August 25, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Reid:

Thank you for your July 28, 2009 letter regarding the policy on site selection for official travel at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). I am pleased to confirm that DHS's travel policy is consistent with the policy that was articulated in Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel's July 14, 2009 letter to you.

DHS has no policy or guidelines discriminating against specific U.S. cities or prohibiting "vacation destination" or "resort" cities as venues for official agency travel and meetings. Decision-makers must select a location for an official event based on the degree to which it meets cost and mission-support criteria.

The Department takes seriously its fiduciary duty to the American taxpayer to allocate its resources responsibly. Employees must provide a compelling reason for official travel, including an explanation of how the trip would support mission requirements. When selecting a location for an official meeting or conference, the decision is based on cost-effectiveness and the practicality of locating the event at a particular site.

I appreciate your bringing this important matter to our attention, and I look forward to working with you on future homeland security issues. Should you need additional assistance please don't hesitate to contact me at (202) 282-8203.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Janet Napolitano", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Janet Napolitano

THE DIRECTOR OF THE PEACE CORPS
WASHINGTON, D.C.

August 5, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid
United States Senator
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Attention: Caren Street/Mark Wetjen

Dear Senator Reid:

This letter is in response to your request that the Peace Corps “reject or reverse any agency policy regarding official travel for your employees that discriminates against specific U.S. cities, particularly Las Vegas and Reno.”

The Peace Corps does not have a travel policy that discriminates against specific U.S. cities, and I can confirm that the agency’s travel policy is consistent with the one articulated by Mr. Emanuel in his July 14, 2009, letter to you.

Please contact us if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jody K. Olsen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Jody K. Olsen
Acting Director

U.S. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20507



Office of the Chairman

August 21, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Reid:

This is in response to your letter of July 28th in which you ask that I confirm that the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has travel policies that are consistent with those set forth in the letter to you from White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel.

The EEOC has no policy or guideline that would preclude a particular location from consideration as a locale for official meetings or training. When we decide that an off-site venue is appropriate, it is our goal to select a location that best meets our needs and provides good value.

We currently have pending a solicitation for our annual Examining Conflicts in Employment Law Conference (EXCEL). Las Vegas is included among a number of cities in that solicitation, and in fact the EXCEL conference has been held in Las Vegas on several occasions. As you are aware Las Vegas is also the location of one of the newest EEOC field offices.

I trust this is responsive to your request and that this information is helpful to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stuart J. Ishimaru".

Stuart J. Ishimaru
Acting Chairman



United States
Office of Government Ethics

1201 New York Avenue, NW., Suite 500
Washington, DC 20005-3917

August 7, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Leader:

Thank you for your inquiry into the travel and conference location policies of the Office of Government Ethics (OGE). When approving employee travel and choosing conference locations, OGE's primary goal is to ensure that public funds are used in a manner that is most beneficial to the Government. Neither employee travel nor conference locations are prohibited merely because the destination may be considered a resort or vacation destination.

In the past year, OGE employees have provided ethics training in places such as Denver, CO; San Francisco, CA; Baltimore, MD; Charleston, SC; and Glynco, GA. OGE employees have also conducted in-person reviews of agency ethics programs in Ft. Lee, VA and Boston, MA.

OGE hosts a National Government Ethics Conference approximately every 18 months. To ensure that public funds are used most efficiently, OGE selects the location of OGE meetings, conferences or similar functions through a competitive process. When determining the location for the conference, OGE solicits proposals through hotel national sales offices and convention and visitors bureaus without prejudice regarding location. OGE's primary criteria in selecting the location of the National Conference are: 1) capacity (can the property accommodate our conference/meeting space requirements), 2) cost (includes room rates offered, charge for meeting space, food and anticipated travel expenses), and 3) available dates. In the past, OGE has hosted conferences in various locations including Virginia Beach, VA; Orlando, FL; and New York, NY. OGE's next conference will be in Chicago in May 2010.

I trust this information addresses your inquiry about OGE's travel policies. If you have additional questions for OGE, please contact Karena Dees, Acting Congressional Liaison, at 202-482-9275.

Sincerely,

Robert I. Cusick
Director



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

WASHINGTON, DC 20410-1000

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR CONGRESSIONAL
AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

AUG 10 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-7012

Dear Senator Reid:

This correspondence is in response to your letter dated July 28, 2009, regarding the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) travel policy on locations known as resort or vacation destinations. HUD does not currently, nor have we ever had a written policy that prohibits employees, on official Department travel, from participating in meetings/conferences in locations that are known as resort or vacation destinations. It is currently the practice of the Department, when determining where to locate official meetings, to conduct a cost-benefit analysis.

If you or your staff has additional questions or require further clarification, please feel free to contact me at (202) 402-4802.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donny Williams", written over a horizontal line.

Donny R. Williams
General Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Congressional and
Intergovernmental Relations



U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20416

OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

September 10, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

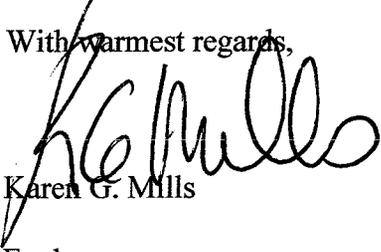
Dear Senator Reid:

Thank you for your recent letter regarding the U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) policies concerning official travel.

The SBA does not have a travel policy that excludes travel to cities that are considered "resort" or "vacation" destinations such as Las Vegas or Reno, Nevada. As described in White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel's letter, SBA has a policy that focuses on the cost/benefit to the Government, not on the specific city of the conference site selected. As our official conference Standard Operating Procedure describes (enclosed), we take a total cost comparison approach. This approach takes into consideration several factors to determine the location that provides the most cost efficient and convenient location.

Again, thank you for your interest in SBA. If you have any further questions, don't hesitate to contact me at (202) 205-6914.

With warmest regards,



Karen G. Mills

Enclosure

PLANNING A CONFERENCE

1. When Must You Follow the Guidelines For Planning a Conference?

A conference is a meeting, retreat, seminar, symposium or event that involves attendee travel. The term “conference” also applies to training activities that are considered to be conferences under 5 CFR 410.404. The guidelines set forth below must be followed:

- a. When SBA sponsors or funds a conference in whole or in part; and
- b. When attendees stay at a chosen location.

2. What Costs Should Be Considered When Planning a Conference?

When planning a conference, you should consider all direct and indirect costs to SBA such as travel and per diem, hire of rooms for official business, audiovisual and other equipment, computer and telephone access fees, light refreshments, printing, ground transportation, and employees’ time at the conference and enroute travel.

3. How Can SBA Minimize Conference Facility Costs?

The office responsible for the conference must:

- a. **Point of Contact.** Designate a point of contact with responsibility for following the guidelines in this chapter;
- b. **Management Oversight.** Assure that there is appropriate management oversight of the conference planning process;
- c. **Cost Comparison.** Do a cost comparison of the size, scope, and location of the proposed conference. Cost comparisons should identify opportunities to reduce costs in selecting a particular conference location. For example, you should take advantage of lower rates during the off-season at a site with seasonal rates, (see example below) determine the adequacy of lodging rooms at the established per diem rates, assess overall convenience of the location, fees, availability of meeting space, equipment and supplies, and commuting or travel distance of attendees. You should use the Travel Management Center to find the best place for hotel accommodations or conference facilities;



The SBA is planning a summer management conference with regional participants from around the country. A resort in the Colorado mountains is offering an off-season deal on lodging at \$60 per room, with meeting space and audiovisual equipment included. The cost comparison between three locations is displayed below.

Item	KC, MO	Vail, CO	Wash., DC
Airfare	\$1890	\$2095	\$2091
Lodging	850	600	1500
M&IE	420	460	460
Meeting Rooms	200	0	500
AV Equipment	250	0	100
Ground Transportation	500	750	500
Totals	\$4,110	\$3,905	\$5,151

- d. **Government Facility.** Determine if a Government facility is available at a cheaper rate than a commercial facility;
- e. **Alternatives.** Consider alternatives to a conference, such as teleconferencing;
- f. **Documentation.** Maintain written documentation of the alternatives considered and the selection rationale used. Decisions regarding conferences are often scrutinized by third party reviewers (IG, GAO, Congress, etc.); and
- g. **Limit Attendees.** Limit attendance of the conference to only those individuals that are absolutely necessary to accomplish the objectives.



GSA Administrator

August 19, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-7012

Dear Senator Reid:

This is in response to your letter dated July 28, 2009, requesting that the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) reject or reverse internal agency policy regarding official travel for GSA employees that discriminates against specific United States cities, particularly Las Vegas and Reno, Nevada.

GSA does not have policies or guidelines that discriminate against any specific location, including any U.S. city, in regard to official travel, meetings or conference planning. GSA's Internal Travel Regulations and Control of Official Travel handbook, PFM P 4290.1, Chapter 14, Conference Planning, mandates that conference planners exercise strict fiscal responsibility to minimize all costs when selecting a site at which to hold a meeting or conference. Conference planners must perform cost comparisons for such things as adequate lodging rooms at the established locality per diem rate, convenience of the location, fees, availability of meeting space, equipment and supplies, and the commuting or travel distance of attendees.

GSA's policy regarding conference planning is consistent with the views expressed by the President's Chief of Staff, Mr. Rahm Emanuel, in his letter dated July 14, 2009. GSA focuses on obtaining the best value for the Government when planning meetings or conferences. In fact, GSA's Acquisition Workforce Training Conference is scheduled to be held in Las Vegas, this November.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me. Staff inquiries may be directed to Mr. Ralph Conner, Acting Associate Administrator, Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs. Mr. Conner may be reached at (202) 501-0563.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul F. Prouty".

Paul F. Prouty
Acting Administrator

U.S. General Services Administration
1800 F Street, NW
Washington, DC 20405-0002
Telephone: (202) 501-0800
Fax: (202) 219-1243
www.gsa.gov



THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

September 14, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Reid:

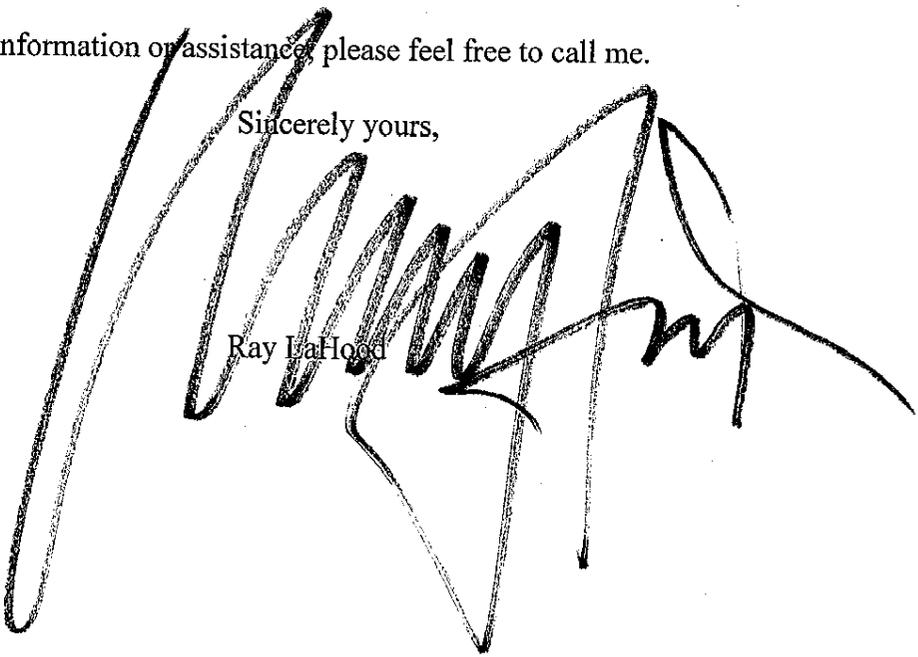
Thank you for your letter of July 28 regarding the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) travel policies to specific United States cities, particularly Las Vegas and Reno.

I am pleased to say that a review of our written travel policies has confirmed that DOT does not discriminate against specific cities in its travel decisions. We do comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for Federal travelers in a manner consistent with the recent letter from the President's Chief of Staff. Further, as stewards of public tax dollars, we apply prudent analysis to decisions regarding travel, including cost benefit analyses. The DOT appreciates the need to support travel associated with its mission and in keeping with the appropriate use of resources.

If I can provide further information or assistance, please feel free to call me.

Sincerely yours,

Ray LaHood

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be "Ray LaHood". The signature is written over the typed name and extends significantly above and to the right of the text.

9/10/09



2009 SEP 15 PM 2:58

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY

August 12, 2009

to David K

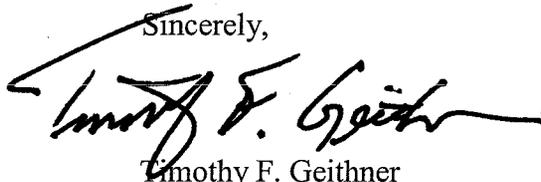
The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Reid:

Thank you for expressing your concerns regarding any travel policies at the Department of the Treasury that may discriminate against specific U.S. cities, such as Las Vegas, Reno, or other locations known for attracting vacationers. Let me assure you that Treasury's travel policies contain no such provisions.

Treasury emphasizes the importance of adhering to federal travel regulations, as well as the appropriate consideration of mission requirements and cost-benefit analysis in travel planning. Our travel guidelines will remain focused on maintaining a system in which taxpayer dollars are used judiciously.

Sincerely,



Timothy F. Geithner

National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Headquarters
Washington, DC 20546-0001



August 21, 2009

Reply to Attn of:

OLIA/2009-00530:TB:eel

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington DC 20510

Dear Mr. Reid:

Thank you for your letter regarding NASA policies for selecting venues for official Agency travel and meetings. Your letter enclosed a copy of a letter to you from Mr. Rahm Emanuel, Chief of Staff to the President, on the same topic.

Please be assured that the NASA site selection decisions for travel and meetings are governed entirely by the Federal Travel Regulations (FTR) and the NASA Federal Travel Regulations Supplement (NFTRS); no other policy or direction supersedes these in terms of Agency site selection decisions. These regulations emphasize the need to maximize the utility to the government of such meetings while minimizing their cost to the taxpayer.

In emphasizing cost-effectiveness, these regulations never require nor suggest that agencies avoid venues simply because they may also appeal to leisure travelers. The focus is entirely on whether venues maximize utility and value to the Government. This is, and will continue to be, NASA's standard for selecting sites for meetings. Our decisions are based on comparative analyses, as specified in the regulations, to identify the venues that will most fully enable NASA to accomplish the mission objectives that the event is intended to address, while holding down overall costs.

You may be assured that Nevada's cities and its conference and meeting facilities will receive the same consideration as any other venue in site selection decisions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary D. Kerwin".

Mary D. Kerwin
Assistant Administrator
for Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs (Acting)