



## ASIA-PACIFIC COUNCIL OF AMERICAN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
United State Senate  
311 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

December 11, 2012

Dear Senator Cantwell:

The Asia-Pacific Council of American Chambers of Commerce (APCAC), representing 27 AmChams in 21 economies, remains grateful for your determined leadership in 2011 to enact the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Business Travel Cards (ABTC) Act. Passage of the legislation prior to the successful APEC Leaders' Meeting in Honolulu demonstrated that the United States is committed to bolstering its commercial presence in Asia.

One year later, US business persons in APEC are still not able to obtain the ABTC.

President Obama's decision to make his first trip after his re-election to the Asia-Pacific region sent a powerful signal that the region is a strategic priority for the United States. The President's participation in the Association of South East Asian Nations (Asean) summit as well as the Administration's ongoing leadership in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations underscores the critical importance of this dynamic region to the American economy.

Access to business travel cards will significantly enhance business travel, investment, and trade opportunities for U.S. citizens in the rapidly growing economies in the APEC region. Unfortunately, despite the Administration's focus on the region and the passage of the legislation over a year ago, American businesspeople are not yet able to fully enjoy reciprocal rights as Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has not yet established a mechanism to issue the ABTC to eligible U.S. citizens doing business in the APEC region

We respectfully request that you and your Senate colleagues encourage the CBP to expeditiously finalize the necessary implementing regulations to ensure American business and government personnel traveling in the APEC region will have the same access to expedited visa processing as our competitors in other APEC member economies. At the very latest, the ABTC should be up and running by the 2013 APEC Summit in Indonesia.

Thank you for your continued efforts to strengthen America's global leadership. Please let me know if APCAC can answer any questions about the importance of the ABTC or if I can provide any assistance to you or your team.

Respectfully yours,

Steven R. Okun  
Chairman

*Leverage the Asia-Pacific Growth Engine for U.S. Jobs!*