

Bill Marriott Joins Voices Calling For Action on Energy and Fuel Costs

2008-07-28

With sky-high fuel prices threatening the airline industry and potentially stifling travel throughout the U.S., Marriott International, Inc. (NYSE:MAR) today joined other leaders in the travel and tourism industry to call on the U.S. Congress and the Administration to forge a bipartisan response to the new energy crisis.

J.W. "Bill" Marriott, Jr. chairman and chief executive officer of the company, supported an industry letter calling on senators, representatives and the president to stay in Washington through the summer to develop a comprehensive national energy policy. He said that Americans' family budgets have been squeezed both by higher prices at the pump as well as much costlier airline seats.

"If any of you have tried to make holiday travel plans lately, you probably know the rising cost of fuel is hitting the airlines hard. I'm sure you've also noticed that the airlines have raised ticket prices and added fuel surcharges. In some cities, flights have been cut, which makes it harder to get a seat," he said.

"What this means is that a lot of airlines are really strapped. We've already seen nine small or mid-sized carriers cease operations in the last year. From what economists are saying, the day when long-familiar airlines go under is looming."

"That prospect concerns me," said Marriott. He pointed out that the impact of less available and more costly airline service to destinations large and small would create a "huge ripple effect affecting the entire travel industry," including hotels, car rental companies, and cruise lines." Marriott also said the list of sectors feeling the impact could include amusement parks, national parks, taxi services, restaurants, shops, travel agents, and others.

"Travel and tourism employs 7.5 million people in the U.S. alone. A lot of people could lose their jobs!" he said. Marriott suggested Hawaii is already feeling the pinch, where two airlines have gone out of business recently.

Marriott urged Congress and the Administration to stay in Washington and pass legislation. He said the joint letter with travel industry partners suggests that there is no one solution to the energy problem, but that a workable agreement could include some elements of strengthening the U.S. dollar, changing rules related to commodities futures trading, encouraging conservation measures and development of alternative energy, and increasing U.S. energy supplies by expanding refining capacity and releasing some oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

"The American people -- and travelers and tourists in the U.S. -- need our help. Let's all let Congress know that the time to get something done on energy and fuel prices is now. They shouldn't be going home in August while travelers in America are finding it harder and harder to go anywhere," said Marriott.

This article comes from Hotel News Resource

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