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Subject: Feedback on SIAT--Federal Register Notice OMB Control #0625-0027
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On behalf of the Indigenous Tourism Collaborative of the Americas Steering Committee, I offer the following comments to Federal Register Notice OMB Control # 0625-0227:

Some years ago, a question was added to the Inbound Survey of International Air Travelers (SIAT) that began to measure how many inbound international visitors were planning to visit American Indian lands. The data collected from that question and the analysis of that data performed by the National Travel and Tourism Office has provided the only source of comprehensive data available on international visitation to American Indian tribes. That research has helped make the case to Congress for greater federal financial assistance which resulted in authorizing legislation and appropriated funds for critical Indigenous tourism development needs. (See the NATIVE Act, 2016, PL114-221)

According to the data collected by the Department of Commerce in the inbound survey, pre-COVID, American Indian visitation among international travelers grew demonstrably, raising public, tribal and federal government interest in tourism development on Indian lands. Continuing to collect this information on visitation will be even more important in the future to recover from COVID, attract hospitality infrastructure, develop capacity and secure financing for tourism in Indian Country. Individual tribes, tribal alliances and tribal organizations do not have the resources to conduct this research on their own and rely totally on the Department of Commerce and its International surveys to track Indian Country tourism progress and make its case for public and private investment.

The Commerce international survey and analysis serves as a model economic development tool for data collection in the countries represented in the Indigenous Tourism Collaborative of the Americas, which include many of the countries of Central and South America and the Caribbean.

The Indigenous tourism leaders of the U.S. and the Americas urge the Department of Commerce to return to and to continue the Inbound International Visitor survey. We also urge the Department to work with tribal leaders and organizations to expand the quantifiable data it collects on visitation to U.S. tribes.

Steering Committee Members, Indigenous Tourism Collaborative of the Americas:

Seleni Matus, Executive Director, International Institute of Tourism Studies, The

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