

Chronological: 11th Annual Texas Conference on Tourist Development, Fort Worth

Senator Daniel K. Inouye Papers
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news from

Senator DANIEL K. INOUE

topic: SPEECH BY SENATOR DANIEL K. INOUE
11th Annual Texas Conference on Tourist
Development, Fort Worth Hilton Inn

date: Fort Worth, Texas

release date: Thursday October 7, 1976 12:00 Noon

I wish to thank Frank Hildebrand and the Texas Tourist Agency for the opportunity to participate in your annual conference on tourist development.

In addition to heading your tourist agency, Frank, of course, is the immediate past Chairman of DATO. He has worked closely with my subcommittee in our common effort to have official Washington recognize the social and economic importance of the tourism industry.

I would, therefore, like to acknowledge publicly my appreciation for Frank's cooperation and able assistance. At the same time, I would caution him not to relax. Our task is far from done, and we will be calling on him in the days ahead.

In my judgment it is particularly appropriate that this conference is concerned with tourist development. Because full development of our natural and man-made tourism resources is the key to the successful achievement of our common goal.

We, in the United States, are particularly fortunate because our potential is practically limitless in this regard.

No country offers a greater abundance and diversity of natural beauty, scenic wonders, and technological attractions.

Nor does any country offer such a wide range of accommodations and services to tourists. Literally, the jet-setter, the businessman, the "once-a-year" traveler, and the student, will all find amenities suitable to his or her needs and budget.

Despite our potential, however, the United States only attracted 7% of the world travel market in 1975. And, according to the last national travel survey in 1972, 45% of Americans failed to take at least one trip that year.

Our task, therefore, is truly still before us.

To be successful everyone in the industry must continually send the message of tourism's importance to official Washington. This has been, and for the foreseeable future will continue to be, the fundamental first step.

If there is any doubt in this regard, one need only recall some of the recent pronouncements on tourism from the federal government.

Just a few months ago the Administration advocated zero funding in fiscal year 1977 for the domestic tourism program of the United States Travel Service. Nevertheless, Congress funded the program over the Administration's opposition.

More recently, the Secretary of Commerce told members of your industry that there was a "danger of over-reliance on numerical measures of evaluation of the tourism industry," and that there was "a growing perception of the costs of tourism."

The Secretary further maintained that weekend gas station closings was the best answer to any future energy crisis.

These are hardly statements and actions in support of tourism.

The other necessary step to achieve our common goal involves rationalizing the extensive federal government involvement in tourism and tourism related programs. As we know, there are over 50 government agencies administering over 100 such programs.

Making sense of the government's role is, of course, the objective of the National Tourism Policy Study which is currently being undertaken in cooperation with the public and private sectors of the tourism industry.

Recently Robert R. Nathan & Associates completed a project which was intended to assist the Committee in formulating a conceptual basis for the remainder of our study. The policy study is in the process of publishing a report which encompasses the major portion of the Nathan Project.

Our Policy Study is now far enough along to enable me to tell you more specifically about its ultimate objectives and how it expects to accomplish them.

A National Tourism Policy, as we envision it, should be a prescription for assuring that the significant federal tourism efforts effectively respond to the national interests in tourism, and, where appropriate, meet the needs of state and local governments and the private sector of the industry.

In this regard, I think it is noteworthy that recently in separate resolutions, the National Governors' Conference and the National Lieutenant Governors' Conference expressed the need for a centralized federal role.

As a consequence of the work done by Nathan & Associates and others, we know that the significant federal tourism efforts primarily center around approximately 30 programs and related policies. Another 25 or so programs have lesser importance.

In order to achieve its objectives, the National Tourism Policy envisioned by our study must prescribe specific directions and mechanisms to assure that existing federal policies and programs significantly affecting tourism do the following:

1. Evaluate their effects on the national interests in tourism; and, their responsiveness to the tourism needs of state and local governments and the private sector.
2. Coordinate their activities when they have common or related objectives pertaining to tourism planning, development, and promotion.
3. Eliminate (where possible) those aspects of their activities which contradict or are counter-productive of the federal tourism effort.
4. Receive continuing in-put and recommendations from state and local governments, and the private sector with respect to their tourism needs, and their evaluation of the individual federal policies and programs which are intended to meet those needs.

The precise directions, mechanisms and/or techniques to achieve the foregoing are, of course, what the National Tourism Policy Study is all about. The "pay-off" of the study will be specific legislative and other recommendations spelling out those necessary directions, mechanisms and/or techniques.

Most immediately, during the next few months, the study will undertake to ascertain the tourism needs of state and local governments, and the private sector. This will include your evaluation of existing federal programs and your recommendations for improvement.

We expect to carry out this ascertainment process through a series of regional meetings which will be general in nature, followed by a questionnaire of a more specific nature based on the information obtained at those regional meetings.

I urge you to assist us in what I believe to be the most critical and important phase of the study.

Finally this afternoon, I would like to mention another specific project which the National Tourism Policy Study has under preliminary consideration. To me, it is the most challenging and potentially the most rewarding part of our entire effort.

Over the years, the federal government has recognized its public health responsibilities in such areas as cancer, TB, polio, heart disease, and high blood pressure.

To meet those responsibilities, the government has conducted research, and taken a variety of other preventative and therapeutic measures to combat these diseases.

It occurred to me, however, very little in the way of medical research of government effort had examined the potential of tourism as a technique for dealing with hypertension, stress, and stress induced diseases.

It seemed to me that if medical science made some specific and definitive findings in this area, an entire new dimension of importance would be added to tourism.

Some months ago, therefore, I directed the staff to explore this subject with the Institute of Medicine in the National Academy of Science.

A series of preliminary staff meetings, including one with the head of the Institute, apparently have confirmed my belief.

Based on the reports of those meetings, I have requested the Institute of Medicine to submit an outline of the kinds of research and study which should be done. I should be receiving the Institute's recommendations shortly, and I will have more to say on this subject after that.

Briefly this afternoon, I have tried to be a bit more specific than usual. I have sensed that your industry's efforts are beginning to coalesce, and I felt it might be helpful if you had a more precise idea of what those of us in official Washington who support your efforts are trying to do.

If we are to succeed, your continued assistance and cooperation is, of course, absolutely essential.

May I again thank you, and offer my very best wishes for a successful and productive Conference.