NEWS RELEASE

Brand USA appoints Hills Balfour as its international representation agency for travel marketing and public relations in the United Kingdom & Ireland

London, United Kingdom - June 20, 2017

Brand USA, the destination marketing organisation for the United States, has appointed London-based travel representation and PR consultancy Hills Balfour to act as its agency of record in the United Kingdom (UK) and Ireland. The selection followed an in-depth review process initiated by Brand USA in March 2017.
Hills Balfour will work with Brand USA in the UK and Ireland to continue to position the United States as a premier travel destination in order to increase visitation, spend, and market share for the United States. As part of this effort, Hills Balfour will work collaboratively with other Brand USA partners and agencies at the direction of Brand USA leadership to ensure all in-market activity represents Brand USA in ways that support its strategies and mission and protects the organisation's integrity and brand.

"The UK and Ireland represent the largest overseas travel market to the United States and we are confident that Hills Balfour's expertise in travel marketing and public relations will help us reach and welcome even more visitors from the UK and Ireland in the years to come," says Christopher L. Thompson, president and CEO of Brand USA. "We look forward to working with Hills Balfour in order to build upon our strong presence and relationships in-market with the travel trade as well as the media in the UK and Ireland to promote travel to the United States to, through, and beyond the gateways."

Amanda Hills, CEO of Hills Balfour says, "The United States offers travellers some of the most diverse travel experiences of any destination in the world and I am extremely proud that Hills Balfour has been selected to represent Brand USA's interests in the UK and Ireland. After a fiercely competitive pitch, we are excited to have the opportunity to support Brand USA's mission and tell the amazing stories of unique and exceptional travel experiences available in the USA. As market leaders, our innovative approach to destination marketing will keep the United States at the forefront of the global conversation."

According to the National Travel and Tourism Office (NTTO) at the U.S. Department of Commerce:

- The United Kingdom and Ireland represent the largest overseas market for international arrivals to the United States.
- During 2015, 4.9 million travelers from the United Kingdom came to the USA, an 18 percent increase over the prior year.
- UK travelers to the USA spent $16.2 billion during their visit (inclusive of fares on U.S. carriers), a 12 percent increase over 2014.
- Nearly 24 percent of all U.S. service exports to the United Kingdom relate to travel and tourism.
- Travel and tourism exports account for 24 percent of all U.S. services exports to the United Kingdom.
- Through September 2016, there were 3.5 million arrivals from the United Kingdom, a 4.8 percent decrease compared to the same period in 2015.

Brand USA first established international representation in the United Kingdom and Ireland in March 2012.

About Hills Balfour
Hills Balfour is a leading integrated public relations and representation consultancy offering a wide range of services from media relations to consumer marketing to social media. Current USA destination clients include Arizona Office of Tourism, Discover The Palm Beaches, Greater Fort Lauderdale CVB, Hawai`i Tourism Europe, Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority, Nevada Commission on Tourism, NYC & Company, Santa Monica Travel & Tourism, Scottsdale Convention & Visitors Bureau, and Puerto Rico Tourism Company. To read more about Hills Balfour, please visit HillsBalfour.com.

###

About Brand USA
Brand USA is the nation's destination marketing organization, dedicated to attracting legitimate international inbound travel to strengthen the U.S. economy, increase exports, create quality jobs, and promote community prosperity. By running data-driven campaigns and unifying messaging across industry and government, Brand USA positions the United States as a top global destination while providing current visa and entry information.

Over the past 13 years Brand USA has driven 11.3 million additional international visitors who spent $38.1 billion in the United States, leading to $82.9 billion in total economic impact and sustaining an average of more than 40,000 jobs each year. These efforts have generated nearly $11 billion in attributable tax receipts at the federal, state, and local levels.