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**Senate Foreign Relations Committee clears way for smoother business travel to 21 of the fastest growing economies in the world**

The National Center for APEC and its Board commend the passage of the APEC Business Travel Card (ABTC) Act by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee today. The passage is the first step in allowing U.S. businesspeople to travel more freely in the Asia Pacific region, a region that is home to four out of the top five export markets for U.S. goods and nearly half of global trade. When the act is finalized U.S. travelers will join those from the 18 other APEC economies who already enjoy the benefits of the ABTC.

In a statement, the President of the National Center, Monica Whaley, stressed that “passage of the APEC Business Travel Card legislation is a critical step toward the issuance of APEC Business Travel Cards to U.S. business leaders. The bill will allow U.S. companies to increase their efficiency and effectiveness when doing business in Asia, promoting exports and further enhancing U.S. economic competitiveness in this critical region. As the United States prepares to host APEC in 2011, we are eager to pursue quick passage of this bill into law.”

The ABTC card will allow qualified U.S. business travelers to use expedited immigration lanes in participating economies and will help promote cross border trade in goods and services in the future. The following APEC economies currently participate in the Travel Card program: Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Chile, China, Hong Kong (China), Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, and Vietnam. Russia, the U.S. and Canada are transitional members.

**About the National Center for APEC** The U.S. National Center for Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (NCAPEC) is the only U.S. business association focused exclusively on facilitating American private sector input to the APEC process. The United States will chair APEC in 2011, and the National Center is coordinating the APEC 2011 USA Host Committee, the private sector host of business activities for the 2011 APEC Meetings. The National Center also functions as a conduit for U.S. businesses into APEC by serving as the Secretariat for the three U.S. executives who are appointed members of the APEC Business Advisory Council. For more information about the APEC 2011 USA Host Committee, visit: [www.appec2011usa.org](http://www.appec2011usa.org).

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