Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 5, 2015

The Honorable Edith Ramirez
Chairwoman
Federal Trade Commission
600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20580

Dear Chairwoman Ramirez:

We write to urge the Federal Trade Commission to immediately open an investigation into companies deceptively targeting consumers with fake online hotel websites. According to the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AHLA), thousands of consumers are misled every year into making reservations through fraudulent websites and call centers that give the appearance of being connected to a hotel, but actually have no legal relation to them. AHLA estimates that fraudulent online booking scams have cost U.S. travelers upwards of $220 million per year. These deceptive practices hurt both consumers and hotels, and we implore you to look into the issue immediately.

As a result of these illegitimate practices, AHLA has informed us that consumers may be charged additional hidden fees, lose expected loyalty points, or show up at hotels only to learn that their reservation was never made or that Americans with Disabilities Act compliant accommodations were not furnished. This especially affects the State of Florida, which is the top travel destination in the United States.

As Members of Congress from Florida, we respectfully request that you investigate these deceptive acts. We look forward to working with you to educate consumers and rectify these misleading and dishonest practices. Thank you for your consideration of an issue critical to the people of Florida.

Sincerely,

Lois Frankel
Member of Congress

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Member of Congress

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Corrine Brown
Member of Congress

Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress

John Mica
Member of Congress

Ander Crenshaw
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Jeff Miller
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Mario Diaz-Balart
Member of Congress

Debbie Wasserman Schultz
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