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May 20, 2016

The Honorable Michael Burgess
2336 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Burgess,

Ashford owns 144 hotels across 2 public companies – Ashford Hospitality Trust and Ashford Hospitality Prime. We are a Dallas based company whose hotels employ thousands of American workers. As such, we have a keen interest in legislation affecting our industry.

We understand that the Energy & Commerce Committee will be holding a hearing on May 24th to discuss the Stop Online Booking Scams Act which, we believe, is a common sense measure to help consumers. This bi-partisan legislation seeks to address the widespread problem of websites that prey on consumers by making them believe they are reserving a hotel room directly with the hotel company when, in reality, they are making a reservation with a third-party website that has no relationship with the actual hotel.

When travelers attempt to book a room through one of these sites they may be hit with undisclosed fees, not obtain the type of room they had wanted, or, worst of all, arrive at the hotel only to find there is no record of their reservation. Hotels confronted with situations like these typically do the best they can to address the guests' needs, but often their hands are tied, leaving the guest to, unfortunately, blame the hotel; not realizing they had been victimized by a third-party. The Stop Online Booking Scams Act will address this problem by requiring these websites to clearly disclose that they are not affiliated with the hotel.

Thank you again for examining this important bill for Texas hotels and Texas consumers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. J. Bennett", written in a cursive style.

Monty J. Bennett
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer