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February 19, 2025

To: The Honorable C. T. Wilson  
Chair, Economic Matters Committee

From: Karen S. Straughn  
Consumer Protection Division

Re: House Bill 1106 – Business Regulation – Travel Services – Surety Requirement (Don't You Worry (Wurie) Act) (LETTER OF CONCERN)

The Consumer Protection Division of the Office of the Attorney General submits the following written testimony expressing our concerns about House Bill 1106 submitted by Delegate Adrian Boaf. This bill requires that certain travel tour operators file security with the Department of Labor to assist in the ability to compensate persons who suffer financial losses as a result of the actions of the travel agent.

Using a travel agent can save you time and money and may provide access to special deals and perks. In addition, travel agents also can be helpful when an individual is not experienced with vacation planning or has time commitments preventing them from planning. However, there have been instances where consumers have paid thousands of dollars for travel and did not receive the services promised or, in some cases, nothing at all and were unable to their money back, including the situation that led to the introduction of this bill.

This bill would help protect against losses by ensuring that there is some form of recovery in the event the agent goes out of business, or becomes otherwise nonresponsive, and the individual is not able to recover their funds. By registering travel agents and requiring some form of security to ensure the financial viability of the agent, consumers will be less likely to sustain losses.

However, the bill requires the Consumer Protection Division to provide information on the requirements of the legislation and to enforce the provisions of the legislation despite the

Department of Labor being the agency having oversight of the travel providers. While the Division appreciates the intent of the bill, we believe that oversight by the Department of Labor would be sufficient and that the Division's inclusion in the bill is unnecessary. Of course, the sale of travel services would still be subject to the Consumer Protection Act. For these reasons, we wanted to advise the Economic Matters Committee of our concerns.

cc: The Honorable Adrian Boafo  
Members, Economic Matters Committee