

UNITED STATES TRADE AND TOURISM ADVISORY BOARD (TTAB) Meeting
October 13, 2016
1:00 pm CT

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Also, if you should need to place your call on hold please disconnect from the conference to avoid hold music being played into the conference.

This conference is now being recorded. If you have any objections, you may disconnect at this time. I would now like to turn the conference over to Li.
Thank you. You may begin.

Li Zhou: Thank you (Cat). And (unintelligible) with your permission, I'll start the roll call. Going by alphabetical order by the board members, (George Aguel)

(George Aguel): Here.

Li Zhou: (Ted Balestreri) (Ted Balestreri) (Helane Becker)

(Helane Becker): Here.

Li Zhou: Thanks (Helene). (Thella Bowens) I think I heard you before, (Bella). (Bruce Charendoffl)?

(Bruce Charendoff): Here.

(Thella Bowens): This is (Thella), sorry. Here.

Li Zhou: (Unintelligible). Thank you (Thella) and (Bruce). (Henry Cruz) (Henry) Can I just ask that whoever – that folks mute their lines if they're not speaking? Thank you. (Todd Davidson) I believe (Todd) is not able to join today. (Brad Dean)

(Brad Dean): Yes I'm on the call.

Li Zhou: Hi (Brad). (Fred Dickson) (Fred). (Kurt Eckert)

(Kurt Eckert): I'm here.

Li Zhou: Hi (Kurt). (Elliott Ferguson)

(Elliott Ferguson): Here.

Li Zhou: Hi (Elliott).

(Elliott Ferguson): Hi there.

Li Zhou: (Mike Gallagher) (Mike Gallagher) is unable to join the call today. He is on travel. (Adam Goldstein) (Adam)? (James Hagen) I don't believe he's able to join either. (Nick Hentschel)?

(Nick Hentschel): Hi Li. I'm here.

Li Zhou: Hi (Nick). (Taylor Hoang)? (Taylor) (Margaret McKeough

(Margaret McKeough): I'm on the call.

Li Zhou: Hi (Margaret). (Adam Medra) (Adam)

(David): (Unintelligible) (Adam) can't be here today. This is (David), from Trip Advisor.

Li Zhou: Thank you (David). (Steve Morrissey)

(Steve Morrissey): I'm here. Thank you.

Li Zhou: Hi. Thank you (Steve). (Mary Motsenbocker)?

(Mary Motsenbocker): I'm here.

Li Zhou: Hi (Mary). (Sue Presby)

(Sue Presby): I'm here.

Li Zhou: Thanks (Sue). (Trish Primrose)?

(Trish Primrose): I'm here.

Li Zhou: Hi (Trish). (Olga Ramudo)?

(Olga Ramudo): Here.

Li Zhou: Hi (Olga). (Sherry Rubert)?

(Sherry Rubert): Here.

Li Zhou: Thanks (Sherry). (Adam Sacks)?

(Adam Sacks): Here. Hi.

Li Zhou: Hi (Adam). Thank you. (Gary Schluter)

(Gary Schluter): I'm here.

Li Zhou: Thanks (Gary). We have our Chair, (John Sprouls). (Marty St. George)

(Marty St. George): I'm here.

Li Zhou: Thank you (Marty). (Greg Stubblefield), our Vice Chair?

(Greg Stubblefield): Yes I'm here.

Li Zhou: Thank you (Greg). (Bill Talbert) (Bill Talbert) (Denise Thevenot)

(Denise Thevenoto): I'm here.

Li Zhou: Thank you (Denise). And then (Ernie Wooden)?

(Ernie Wooden): Good morning Li. I'm here.

Li Zhou: Thank you.

(Bill Talbert): (Bill Talbert) is here.

Li Zhou: Okay thank you (Bill). So that concludes the roll call of Board Members.
Before – and I now would like to turn to our US – my USG colleagues. Going by – going through the list. Can I ask that US Government Officials identify themselves? And I'll go down by agency. Is there any colleagues from state on the line?

(Claire Kelly): This is (Claire Kelly) with the Department of State.

Li Zhou: Hi (Claire). Thank you for joining.

(Brian Miller): This is (Brian Miller) from the Department of State.

Li Zhou: Thank you (Brian). And is there anyone else from state on the line? Great. Is there anyone from the Department of Interior? Thank you. Is there anyone from the Department of Transportation? No. And then is there anyone from the Department of Homeland Security?

(Jim Vinnie): (Jim Vinnie) from the Private Sector Office.

Li Zhou: Hi (Jim). Thank you for joining. Is there anyone else? Okay. I would like to turn to my commerce colleagues on the line.

(Kelly Craig) Hi, it's (Kelly Craig). I'm here.

Li Zhou: Great thanks.

(Kurt Connell): (Kurt Connell).

(Brian Bell): (Brian Bell), hi.

(Jennifer Avanaada): I'm (Jennifer Avanaada).

(Julie Riser): And (Julie Riser).

Li Zhou: (Julie).

(Ron Erdman): (Ron Erdman).

Li Zhou: (Ron). Great. Is there anyone else from commerce? I think that captures it. And I do want to introduce a new colleague that has joined our office, (Joe Holecko) who is also listening in on the call as well. And I'll formally introduce him very soon. But I think that completes our roll call and I'll turn it back over to our Chair.

(John Sprouls): Thank you Li. Thank you so much and thank you everybody for joining us today. And I really want to thank everybody for all their work and all their input over the summer.

And since our teleconference on October 4 in terms of getting your comments on the draft letters. It has been an incredibly compressed timeframe. And I thank you all for your work and for your attention.

I just want to highlight for everybody that today we are deliberating and doing final review on three letters. And once adopted today, assuming they're adopted, we will be transmitting them to Secretary Pritzker. So at this point I'd like to call on (Kelly), who's got a few brief remarks.

(Kelly Craig): Sure thank you Mr. Chair. I just wanted to first offer our sincere thanks for the amount of work and the work that was done on such an expedited timeframe

to enable us to be able to represent industry's voice at an upcoming TPC meeting, the Tourism Council Meeting that will meet on October 28.

I think Secretary Pritzker is very committed to using that meeting to have clarity on the items that are essential key action items to get us through the remainder of this term, focused on the current travel and tourism priorities.

And these recommendations I think will be helpful in really shaping the conversations that we have at the end of the month. But also helping to set the stage for a presidential transition that will happen later this year.

So really just wanted to thank you for doing such good work on such a quick timeframe. We really appreciate it.

(John Sprouls): Thank you (Kelly). Thank you. So let's get into our work. The first letter we'll be considering is the Travel Security and Customer Service Sub-Committee. So if (Bruce) and (Kurt) are on the line, I would turn it over to you to review the feedback you got from the letter. And anything that was or was not addressed based on the comments.

(Bruce Charendoff): Sure, well I'll start. It's (Bruce). And I'll continue the thanks. That's to the members of the Travel Facilitation and Customer Experience Sub-Committee who stepped up on short notice with a limited amount of time and did some awesome work.

I also want to thank the folks at TSA and CBP that we met with over the last six weeks to help us develop and polish these recommendations. Their input was extremely helpful and important in the development.

I'll turn to (Kurt) in a second to explain part of what we're planning to do going forward. But let me just say what we did with the comments that were offered, which again were helpful.

We had a comment on the first of our recommendations, which is that our recommendation that Congress restore all security fees collected from airline passengers to CVP and TSA. And stop diverting those fees for other unrelated purposes.

In the version that folks reviewed, we said that if that doesn't happen then we should reduce the amount of the fee. Someone raised the issue that perhaps we should lose the last part of that reducing the amount of the fee for fear that we would be confusing the issue that we're really not about reducing the fee, but we're really about trying to get these fees applied for the purposes that they were intended.

And we have in fact cut that reference out of the letter in the final draft that Li circulated. And then the only other change to the letter from what you saw last time was in the introductory paragraphs to the letter, in which I think we had a more – I had a more robust introduction about the collaboration between the Commerce Department and the Department of Homeland Security.

And enumerated a number of the success stories from the past. I'm still enumerating them, but I've done it in a much shorter space so that we could get more quickly to the recommendations. So before we get to the end of Page 1 of the revised letter, we're into the – into Recommendation 1.

So with that, those two small changes – consolidating the intro and eliminating the reference to reducing the fee, that's really the only changes

that were made. And then I'd like to turn to (Kurt) to talk about one other issue – one other comment that we received.

(Kurt Eckert): Thanks (Bruce). And as (Bruce) said, in this phase what we try to do is be very narrow and focused with respect to the recommendations we're making. So these are really targeted at actionable things that can be done during the balance of the current administration.

As we go forward there were a couple of concerns or issues raised. One with respect to who should bear the cost of new technologies. And then a very specific issue about the relatively small percentage, literally about 1% of applicants that are being hired by CVP these days and how those are dealt with.

So I think those two issues in combination with feedback we've gotten through interviews with both CVP and TSA have given us a pretty broad set of things to go after as we get into the New Year – funding, hiring, technologies, issues such as tourist travel enrollment. So we will be exploring that much broader base of issues in the first and second quarter of next year.

(Bruce Charendoff): I think with that Mr. Chairman, we're complete in our presentation.

(John Sprouls): Great thank you (Bruce). Thank you (Kurt). At this point I would open up the floor if there's any questions or comments from anyone on the board. Hearing none, I would thank everybody for their input on this draft letter.

And I would ask if anyone has any objections to adopting this letter for the Travel and Tourism Advisory Board to be moved on to Secretary Pritzker? Again, hearing none I will proclaim the recommendation is adopted by the Travel and Tourism Advisory Board. Thank you all very much.

(Kurt Eckert): Thank you.

(John Sprouls): We can now – thank you. (Kurt) thank you so much. And we now move on to the Research Sub-Committee letter. I would turn it over to (Brad) and (Helene).

(Brad Dean): Thank you Mr. Chairman. We have submitted the draft letter as discussed during our recent call. And that of course, as discussed previously includes two recommendations. And this letter contains no material changes to those.

The first recommendation encourages the Secretary to revisit the timing delays in the I94 arrival data with her colleagues in DHS. And also perhaps to include this in the discussion at the upcoming TPC meeting that (Kelly Craig) had just a few minutes ago alluded to.

And knowing that this may not resolve the issue in timely fashion, we've also included in the letter encouragement to the Secretary to at least investigate the cost and benefits of a temporary workaround that would provide accurate data in a more timely basis.

Based on the feedback on our last call, we did add a specific measurable goal of 45 days after the month of arrival, which is consistent with commerce recommendations to CVP previously. And so those – other than that change, there's really no substantive change in the recommendation.

So second recommendation, the letter pertains to the quarterly forecast purchased from BEA, which are related to the travel and tourism satellite accounts. So the research sub-committee believes that these are not as useful

perhaps as they once were. And recommends that commerce transitions to a single annual analysis, not unlike what other industry sectors have done.

We've also tweaked the introduction to the letter to provide some specific benefits of the research programs managed by commerce and how they positively impact the private sector based on a suggestion from one of our (PTAB) colleagues.

So in general, the two recommendations have not changed substantially. But we do want to again, offer my appreciation to the research sub-committee for some very robust discussions and a lot of great feedback which will not only provide these two recommendations, but also some good recommendations in the long-term that we'll begin working on promptly.

And also want to specifically mention great support from the commerce staff, and specifically Li and (Ron Erdman). And would ask my colleague and the Vice Chair of the research sub-committee, (Helene Becker), if she wants to add anything.

(Helene Becker): Thank you (Brad). No, I think you covered everything pretty eloquently.

(Brad Dean): Mr. Chairman, I think that concludes our work for this phase of the (TFAB) report and we'll turn it back over to you.

(John Sprouls): Thank you (Brad). Thank you (Helene). Thank you to the research sub-committee as well. At this point with respect to this letter, I would open up the floor if there are any questions or comments from anyone on the board.

Great. Hearing none, I would ask if there's any objections to adopting this – the new recommendation in the final research sub-committee letter. Hearing

no objections, I would proclaim the recommendation as adopted by the Travel and Tourism Advisory Board. Thank you all very much.

We now move on to the key market engagement sub-committee letter. And I would turn it over to (Trish) and (Ernie).

(Trish Primrose): Thanks so much Mr. Chairman. So first, I appreciate everybody taking an opportunity to review the key market sub-committee letter. I particularly want to thank (Ernie), my co-chair for all of his input and work on this letter, as well as the members of the sub-committee for their contributions.

We had some good conversation about what we should put into this letter and the actionable recommendations that are a part of it. And we think this is a very timely recommendation.

It supports current work certainly that's underway to really develop a strong strategic plan for US India travel and tourism year. Identifying key moments. Looking at those events and milestones that are really going to maximize the partnership.

From our perspective, one of the key recommendations in the letter is, though, to go deeper. To really understand best practices that have been identified during the US China tourism year.

And so as you will see in the letter, we are really hoping that members of the board will participate in the forum that we've referenced in our letter that we'll be pulling together prior to the November meeting. More details and an agenda and all that will come shortly.

But we have confirmed (Chris Thompson) with Brand US to provide an overview of their China ready program, among others in the private sector and with US Government.

So let me pause for a second and ask (Ernie) for any additional comments or to provide any more information about the letter and what went into putting it together.

(Ernie Wooden): Nothing more to add. (Trish) I think you've summarized it. I want to thank (Kelly Craig) for counseling us and sharing with us the good work that's already been done by the MPTO and others in this regard.

And this forum that we hope to bring together, we really want to focus on what we can substantively recommend to the US Government in terms of these relationships. And hopefully we can get that done pretty quickly. But no substantial changes in the letter or the verbiage of the letter as we presented initially. And I think that (Trish), you've summarized our intent very clearly.

(Trish Primrose): So then let me at this point turn the discussion back over to the Chair.

(John Sprouls): Thank you (Trish) and thank you to you and (Ernie) and all the members of your sub-committee for their hard work. At this point I would open up the floor to the full board, if there's any discussions or questions.

Hearing none, I would then ask if there are any objections to us adopting the recommendations of the key market engagement sub-committee. Hearing none I proclaim the recommendation as adopted by the Tourism and Travel Advisory Board.

And I would note that if we could get the rest of the government to work with the quality and speed and enmity of this board, I can only imagine what would happen.

(Trish Primrose): That's a good point (John).

(John Sprouls): At this point I want to turn it over to Li so that we can get an update on our November meeting.

Li Zhou: Great. Thank you Chair. So just as an update and to provide a brief overview of where we are at with our November meeting. One, we're really looking forward to actually meeting in person in November as opposed to all these plethora of phone calls that we've been doing.

But we are looking at November 17, a block of time right now in the afternoon – the later afternoon to kick off at 3 pm with a tour. And I actually, before I go into this I want to recognize and thank our Vice Chair (Margaret McKeen) as well (Debbie Litman) for all – for hosting and also all the planning that they've sort of facilitated because one thing I would like to highlight is that our November meetings will take place in Washington DC, but at the two lovely airports that we have.

So on November 17 we are looking to do – for anyone who is available, a tour at the TSA Innovation Facility, Reagan National Airport starting at 3 o'clock. And the tour should end by 4:30. Afterwards we are looking and holding time for an informal dinner of the board. We're starting at about 6:30. Details on location and place to come.

And then on November 18, in the morning from 9 to 12 we will have our board meeting at Dulles Airport. And once the board meeting concludes, there

will be lunch. And then a tour for those who are desiring to stay and do the tour through – with CVP.

So that tour should run through I would say 2 pm. So we will have an opportunity to be on site for many of those things. Additional logistics that we are still sort of working through, and we'll send additional details when available is whether or not we can coordinate a hotel box, possibly back at the JW Marriott Downtown DC.

But also for all these travel back and forth, we will hope to arrange shuttle service or a bus service going from Downtown DC to the various – the two airports. Are there any initial questions? I'll recap this in follow up emails as well.

Woman: Just a question. Li did you say Dulles coming back?

Li Zhou: Dulles, yes, on the 18th.

Woman: Okay. Thank you.

Man: And when is the meeting – when do we conclude our time at Dulles?

Li Zhou: So the board meeting should wrap by noon. And then if folks are able and, you know, want to stay for a tour with CVP and the port entry, that should conclude I would say 2, 2:30 to be safe.

Man: Li can you give us a little bit of a sense of the agenda for the board meeting in November? We have adopted the letters today. When we get to the board meeting in November, is it about outlining a strategy for the sub-committees

going forward? Or is it going to be a reaction to the letters shared from the Secretary or her designee? How do you see that?

Li Zhou: I think I can speak first and then I'll defer it to (Kelly) a little bit on the latter part. I think one, it, you know, we do envision, and please jump in (John), (Margaret) and (Greg), that the November meeting will be an opportunity to open up the discussion for – through planning and priorities, looking in the longer-term.

And the work of the sub-committees as you want it to continue through the tran, you know, political transition and with the new administration. I think that certainly is part of the sort of richer discussion that we want to ensure takes place in terms of the work planning.

And then on the latter part we do, you know, want to share updates from commerce and from the rest of the government in terms of where some of these recommendations have led and possibly most immediately, you know, any reactions that have come forth.

And I'll defer to others, (Kelly) and others if you would like to add more color to that.

(Kelly Craig): Sure, and in fact I want to kind of moderate expectations because I think that it is unlikely that we would be able to do anything more than just say that we reported on the recommendations at the (TTAB) meeting, given what I know to be on the plate and the transition planning that we're in the midst of.

I think more than that would be overly ambitious. But I do think as the November meeting is used to organize industry and to start to put forward kind of their own transition information for the next administration, my hope

would be by the end of the administration as we start to put forward our transition documents, we'd be able to share that with you in some other way. But November 18 is probably unlikely to have anything really concrete to share.

I guess it's also a good opportunity to remind the committee particularly that this is the first set of recommendations that you've made. That there's really no obligation to take the recommendations.

I think what we've tried to do in the last iteration of the (TTAB) under Penny Pritzker's direction was to be kind of very narrowly focused on very achievable things that we're very concrete and actionable in the policy recommendation area.

I expect that as you consider your work moving forward and the transition, it will be dependent on the next commerce secretary, kind of the scope. But I think from Penny's point of view, having things that are actionable are things that she's focused on.

And obviously that's why we've encouraged you to exit out your timeline so that if there were things that were immediately actionable, we could consider them as part of the last key steps we take before the administration ends. (John) do you want to add to kind of the thoughts behind the November meeting?

(John Sprouls): No I think you've covered it. I think it would be good for us to hear from the governmental agencies both in terms of recommendations that have happened, things that are going on and also what they see in terms of transition with respect to how it may affect the (TTAB).

Yes, I don't think they'll be much in terms of concrete action beyond the meeting that happens on the 28th, but perhaps you could give us an overview of, you know, what went on in the meeting overall, what the anticipation is, what your plans are with respect to transition.

And then we'll begin the work of laying out the strategy for the rest of the term of this committee. That should be a lot to accomplish and we'll get it done.

(Sue Presby): (John) this is (Sue). I know in our sub-committee conversations, the conference calls we've had there was some talk of actually having the sub-committee meet while we were in DC in November. Is that still on the table or is that not?

Li Zhou: Chair, if I can jump in. This is Li. If the committees' do desire to meet, we can coordinate on that.

(Sue Presby): Okay.

Li Zhou: I think there has been a bit of a, you know, some ungiven desire. So we can certainly accommodate those with sub-committees that do want to meet in the afternoon of the 17th.

(Sue Presby): Okay.

(John Sprouls): Yes Li, I'm wondering if we could coordinate it if there was an ability to get some conference space at Reagan. And maybe they could meet prior to the tour.

Li Zhou: Yes we do have conferences. (Debbie) actually had confirmed that. We have it for the full afternoon, so we can certainly accommodate.

(John Sprouls): Great. So I would ask that, you know, the committee chairs and co-chairs to let Li know if you're going to need a sub-committee meeting. And if so, you know, how much time you need so that we can put it into the agenda.

Man: Perfect.

(John Sprouls): All right. Anything else we need to discuss since we have everyone together? Well if not, I want to thank everybody. Thank you for your work leading up to today. Thank you for attending today.

And us getting, you know, we were given a challenge the day we were put on this committee because of the timeframe. And I think we should all be very, very happy that I think we more than met the challenge of coming up with concrete recommendations that could get in the timeframe and get to the TPA on the 28.

And now we've got a lot more work to do. And I'm really excited about our ability to get it done. So thank you all. And we are adjourned.

Man: (John) thank you.

((Crosstalk))

END