

UNITED STATES TRAVEL AND TOURISM ADVISORY BOARD CALL

Moderator: Joe Holecko
February 1, 2017
3:30 pm EST

Coordinator: Welcome and thank you for standing by.

All guests will remain in a listen-only mode for the duration of today's conference. We will hold a question and answer session and if you would like to ask a question, you may press Star then 1.

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 to Joe Holecko. Thank you, you may begin.

Joe Holecko: Good afternoon everyone. Thank you very much for taking the time to join us on this call. I thought we'd just real quickly go ahead and go around the horn and see who we have here. So, moderator, if you could put this in open mode here and we'll go ahead and do a roll call.

Coordinator: Thank you. One moment.

You may begin.

Joe Holecko: All right. If everybody could just let us know who's on the call. We've got Joe Holecko and (Susan Lusi) from the Commerce Department.

(Ted Balestreri): (Ted Balestreri).

(Helene Becker): (Helene Becker).

(Olga Ramudo): (Olga Ramudo).

(Sue Presby): (Sue Presby).

(Unintelligible): (Unintelligible).

(Gary Schluter): (Gary Schluter).

(Mike Gallagher): (Mike Gallagher).

(Jim Hagen): (Jim Hagen).

(Adam Burke): (Adam Burke), Los Angeles Tourism.

(Denise Thevenot): (Denise Thevenot), Louisiana.

(Todd Davidson): (Todd Davidson).

(Nick Hentschel): (Nick Hentschel) from ATI.

(Hampton Brown): (Hampton Brown), San Diego.

(Elliott Ferguson): (Elliott Ferguson).

(Tricia Primrose): Hi, it's (Tricia) from Marriott.

(Brad Dean): And this (Brad Dean) from the Myrtle Beach area CVB.

(Daniel Hoff): This is (Daniel Hoff) with MWAA.

(Donna Keren): (Donna Keren) from New York City and Company.

(Jeff Goodell): Hi (Jeff Goodell) with Jet Blue.

(Mike Gallagher): This is (Mike Gallagher) for CityPASS. What a great group we've got.

Joe Holecko: Is there anyone else we missed that hasn't had a chance to chime in?

(Curt Cottle): (Curt Cottle), National Travel and Tourism Office.

(Brian Rothery): Yes, Joe, (Brian Rothery) with Enterprise.

Joe Holecko: Great. Hey (Brian).

(John McReynolds): (John McReynolds) with Universal.

Joe Holecko: Last chance. Anyone else that hasn't been able to announce themselves?

(Ted Balestreri): I think I did. (Ted Balestreri) with Cannery Row Company.

Joe Holecko: Great. How're you doing, (Ted)?

(Ted Balestreri): Good.

Joe Holecko: All right. Moderator, I think we've got everybody. If you could go ahead and just put us back into conference mode. And once we've done that, I'll go ahead and turn it over to (John).

Coordinator: Thank you. All lines are now in a listen-only.

Joe Holecko: Thanks very much. (John), I'll go ahead and turn it over to you.

(John): Thank you, Joe, and thanks to everybody for taking sometime today. Also, want to thank everybody for taking some time to review and provide input to the letter. Hopefully everyone has the final draft in their hands. They should have gotten it today. And I know that everyone's had some opportunity to comment upon it, so I'm hoping that we won't take up too much time today.

But what we do want to do before we go to the point of voting on the letter so that we can forward it on to the Secretary of Commerce. I wanted to see if there are any other additional comments that haven't received already. And moderator, hate to do this to you, but if I could ask you to open up the lines in case there are any comments with respect to our letter.

Coordinator: Thank you. One moment. All lines have been open if you have any comments at this time.

(Hampton Brown): This is (Hampton Brown) with San Diego Airport. I had this discussion with my boss, (Thella Bowens), a Member of the Committee and we felt that on the first paragraph, the statement, "and truly make America great" should be stricken. And it should be ending with the period. Because we feel that that statement's a little partisan? And we're an a-political group and so, and then secondly, there seems to be, since the events of the weekend.

On the paragraph, third paragraph, under travel and tourism industry, “removing unnecessary barriers.” And then the paragraph below that, “travel facilitation and strong security are complimentary.” I don’t know, that seems a little in the current environment, I don’t know, how that’s going to be received.

(John): Well, I guess, I will comment on your comments and I would encourage anyone else who has any thoughts. I don’t disagree with your comment on the first paragraph. We are an a-political body and I think we can make that change, although we’ll vote on accepting the letter with subject to the change unless someone has a very strong opinion otherwise.

With respect to the comments in the third and fourth paragraphs, that is exactly what the TTAB has stood for, for a number of years. “Removing unnecessary barriers that facilitation strong secured are complimentary.” I do not believe either of those are political statements and in fact, in keeping with the fact that the TTAB is to be a-political, that is what our Board exists for. Our Board exists to, through the Secretary of Commerce and the Commerce Department, to try to encourage visitation to the United States from tourists.

We’re not getting involved in any other conversations with respect to anything that’s been going on. So, my own personal opinion, obviously subject to everyone on the Board, is I would not be changing the third or fourth paragraphs. But I do take your point with respect to the first paragraph.

Any other comments?

(Olga Ramudo): This is (Olga Ramudo) in Miami. I totally agree with your comments, (John). I think that striking out “and making America great” makes total sense. I mean, I think many of us think America’s already great and it is a partisan,

you know, backing up what was an election, you know, tagline. And I think that the other paragraphs actually is how we feel where there is, you know, one way or the other. We do want to remove unnecessary barriers and we do want to make the travel experience safe and painless.

So, I don't think that, so yes, I agree with that.

(George Aguel): Yes, (John), this is (George) down in Orlando. I'll just second that. I think it's perfectly important to leave it as it is in that, in the paragraphs.

(John): Thank you.

(Mike Gallagher): This is (Mike Gallagher).

(John): Thank you, (Olga), thank you (George). Anybody else?

(Mike Gallagher): (Mike Gallagher), I agree.

(John): Okay. All right. Are there any other comments with respect to the letter?

Man 1: Very complete.

(John): Great. Thank you. All right. Well the, we need to vote and only those folks who are actually Board Members are allowed to vote. So, I would ask for a voice vote and then if you have any issues, we can also go to a roll call if necessary. But I would ask, "All in favor of adopting the letter and sending it on with the correction that's been made with respect to the first paragraph?" If you would please signify by saying "Aye"?

(Group): Aye.

Man 2: So, what are we changing it to?

(John): We're just putting a period after the word "economy."

Man 2: Okay, Okay.

(John): Okay? All opposed? Great. The letter's been approved and we'll be able to move it forward to the Secretary of Commerce.

So, at this point then, I want to see if there's any other items for discussion. And just remind everybody that what we're going to do between now and our meeting in March, is now start to work within the subcommittees to start putting together those recommendations that we're going to want talk about beginning in March when we're all together. That way, we'll move to get more specific with respect to what we've outlined in this letter for the Secretary of Commerce. Hopefully by then, there will have been confirmation so that we'll have a group in charge of Commerce that we'll be able to start working with.

So, any other items we should bring forward at this point in time?

(Olga Ramudo): (John), this is (Olga). Can you hear me?

(John): Yes, I can.

(Olga Ramudo): Okay. Quick question. Are we, is the meeting moving forward whether the Secretary has been confirmed or not?

(John): Yes. I think we should continue to do our work because our work is going to be about informing the Secretary or whatever time that happens. As to where we think we need to go with respect to the work of the TTAB. So, I think, my guess is the confirmation will have occurred by then, but if not, I still think we move along with our work and are prepared to go forward as soon as we can.

(Olga Ramudo): Okay. Thank you.

(John): All right. If there are no other items for discussion, thanks everybody for joining us and for getting this letter. Thank you all for all the comments that were received. I think we've got a letter that truly represents what this Board and prior Boards have been working on and really expresses the thoughts and recommendations of our entire industry. Which is really what the TTAB is all about.

So, thank you all for your contributions on the letter. Thank you for your time today and unless anybody else has anything, I think we can adjourn?

Joe, do you have anything else?

Joe Holecko: No. I've got nothing else. Thanks, (John).

(John): Great. All right. Thank you all. Thank you very much and if I don't see you before, I'll see you in March.

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