

Highway 1 Tourism Alliance Board of Directors Meeting

Minutes | April 23, 2025 | Cambria Pines Lodge

H1TA Board Members Present: Gary Setting, Melissa Kurry, Bram Winter, Laila Kollmann

County Liaison: CAO Cheryl Cuming, Tessa Cornejo

Absent: Mike Hanchett, Aaron Graves

Guests: Lori Keller, Kirstin Koszorus, Molly Cano and Lisa Belsanti, SLO CAL

Call to Order

2:29pm

Public Comment

None

Administrative Items

- Roll Call: Gary Setting, Melissa Kurry, Bram Winter, Laila Kollmann are present
- Consent Agenda – Minutes: A motion was made by Bram Winter and seconded by Melissa Kurry to approve the March 26 H1TA minutes. With no further discussion, these minutes were approved by a voice vote of the Board; Laila Kollmann abstained.
- Next board meeting dates are May 28 and June 25. District renewal is May 6 ROI and June 3 Public Meeting. CAO Cuming will be out of the country on June 3 so Gary Setting will attend.

Information Items

- H1TA Updates
 - The domains, highway1tourismalliance.com and highway1tourismalliance.org have been secured and redirect to highway1roadtrip.com.
 - Planned start date of May 1, 2025 for services provided by H1TA non-profit contingent on approval of agreement at Board of Supervisors April 29th meeting
- Marketing
 - Roll-Up Report highlights include nearly 300k new visitors from paid media this quarter. SEM still leads conversions, CPL dropped to \$2.06, video was tops for beach showcasing, and Cambria continues to be the leader for LFAs.

Presentations

- Molly Cano, SLO CAL Lodging Forecast
 - Overall supply is expected to outpace demand, negatively impacting RevPAR and occupancy; short-term rentals and RV parks were not part of the study
 - Tourism Economics predicts consumer spending will strengthen in the next year, attributed to high-income households spending on luxury travel experiences
 - Headwinds for US travel include negative sentiment, border & immigration policies, economic slowing in Canada & Mexico, and uncertainty about the domestic economy
 - The forecast was made prior to the April 2 tariff announcements, which made downside risks more pronounced
 - SLO CAL markets are more dependent on regional visitors, with less exposure to international travel
- Kirstin Koszorus, K2 PR, Public Relations Update and New FY Trends

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- Upcoming media missions are in Los Angeles, Phoenix, Quebec, and the International Media Marketplace
- The 24 | 25 fiscal year efforts resulted in 13 media visits, 50 articles generated with 13 stories in publications such as USA Today, Thrillist, Travel + Leisure, US News & World Report; total possible impressions was 89,372,336
- Partnerships are being cultivated with Paso Robles, Visit SLO CAL, and Visit Santa Maria Valley. Laila asked why SMV and Kirstin confirmed shared opportunities exist with VCA Gold Pass and Central Coast Dream Team journalists.
- Media trends include a return to first-person storytelling and freelancers creating their own content; press trips are becoming less favorable and journalists are looking to explore without heavy PR involvement. Keeping an eye on a potential media shift back towards domestic destinations based on global uncertainty.
- Muck Rack was a successful addition to the PR toolbox

Comments: Board appreciates Kirstin's efforts and is very supportive of continuing to focus on individual journalist visits, specific media missions that bear fruit and 2 small group FAMs per year.

- Lori Keller, 25 | 26 Marketing Strategy Direction
 - Big things await California with 2026 World Cup Soccer and 2028 Olympics being held in LA; partnerships and co-ops are being explored to maximize
 - The Video-First strategy continues and will be supported by Sunshine & Bourbon efforts
 - Opportunities with AI inclusion into the website have been reviewed, but don't currently show a way to improve the site visitor experience
 - Paid media will continue to be refined with both administrative improvements and tactical enhancements
 - Stewardship evolves to work with LFAs and SLO CAL, in addition to focusing on the benefit to the traveler
 - Highway 1 reopening may offer collaboration opportunities with SLO CAL, Monterey, Santa Barbara, Ventura, and Visit California

Comments: Gary said he supports more exploration on YouTube and Bram wants to see videos that are educational and informative. Overall the board supports the direction, and the 'hold steady' approach for the coming fiscal year, as we strive for continuous improvements in paid media KPIs. CAO noted 25 | 26 Marketing Plan will be provided at the May board meeting.

Action Items (each topic will allow for Board Discussion, followed by Public Comment)

- Gary Setting and Bram Winter board renewals
 - The renewals were approved in the CBID meeting and a motion to approve continuation as a Board of Directors member for H1TA was made by Melissa Kurry and seconded by Laila Kollmann. With no further discussion, the motion was approved by a voice vote of the Board.
- Local Fund Area Agreements
 - Avila Beach: A motion was made by Bram Winter and seconded by Melissa Kurry to approve the TJA marketing contract with ABTA for one year at \$242,100, effective July 1, 2025. The Scope of Work was approved as presented; Laila asked about one-year terms with options to renew, and CAO Cuming confirmed that the agreement specifies that the renewal is allowed for us to four times under the same SOW. With no further discussion, the motion was approved by a voice vote of the Board.

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- Avila Beach: A motion was made by Melissa Kurry and seconded by Bram Winter to approve the administrative contract for Stephanie Rowe and the Scope of Work as presented for one year at \$25,121.80, effective July 1, 2025. With no further discussion, the motion was approved by a voice vote of the Board.
- Local Fund Area Funding Applications
 - The updated Events and Beautification & Infrastructure agreement packages were presented. CAO noted that the updated application forms will mimic the legal wording on the application signature page.

A motion was made by Laila Kollmann and seconded by Melissa Kurry to approve the agreements as presented. Bram discussed future interest to review for possible changes to indemnification and additional legal language. The motion was approved by a voice vote of the Board. Bram suggested reviewing for possible changes to indemnification and additional legal language.

Future Agenda Items

- Renewal of Local Fund Area Scopes of Work (admin & marketing)
- Renewal of BID Bunch Scopes of Work

Closing Comments & Adjournment

The board thanked Molly for attending.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:08pm.

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